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CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS' PERCEPTIONS OF BUILDING-CONTROL ENFORCEMENT BARRIERS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: *Collapse of buildings is a recurring problem in Nigeria, with over 640 instances reported between 1974 and 2025 accounting for significant loss of lives and property. Regulatory failures still occur despite the provisions of the National Building Code (2006) and the creation of state-level building control agencies. This study examines construction professionals' perceptions of the barriers to effective building-control enforcement in Lagos State, Nigeria.*

Design/methodology/approach: *A cross-sectional survey design was used. Data were collected from 615 construction professionals across five professional categories using paper-based and online (Google Forms) questionnaires. Ten barriers to building-control enforcement were rated using a 5-point Likert scale. The perceived barriers were ranked by the weighted mean score, and differences in perceptions across professional categories were examined by the chi-square test of association.*

Findings: *The most important barriers were political interference in regulatory processes ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.712$) and corruption among enforcement officers ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.754$). This was followed by limited manpower at regulatory agencies ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.778$), poor inter-agency coordination ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.812$) and insufficient funding to regulatory agencies ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 0.831$). Nine of the ten barriers were found to be statistically significant between professions ($p < .05$) by Chi-square analysis.*

Research limitations/Implications*: The study is based on perceptions of construction professionals in Lagos State and does not measure actual regulatory performance, but rather their professional perception of construction enforcement barriers. This should therefore be seen in the context of the institutional and regulatory framework of Lagos State.*

Practical implications: *The findings indicate the need to strengthen the institutional capacity and autonomy of building-control agencies, improve inter-agency coordination, enhance manpower and funding, and strengthen mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement. Digital monitoring systems, ongoing professional capacity building and suitable penalties could be applied to further enhance compliance with building-control requirements.*

Originality/value*: Study presents empirical evidence based on perceptions to show the institutional and governance challenges facing the enforcement of building control in Lagos State. It highlights that regulatory shortcomings are believed to be mainly at the governance and implementation level, not in the regulatory framework itself, thereby offering evidence that can be used when reconsidering regulations to enhance the building-control enforcement system and minimise building failure risk.*

Keywords: Building Collapse; Enforcement Mechanisms; Regulatory Compliance; Construction Industry; Nigeria

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's construction industry has faced a persistent problem of building collapse for more than five decades. According to the Building Collapse Prevention Guild, Nigeria recorded 640 building-collapse incidents between October 1974 and January 9, 2025, with Lagos State accounting for 55.15% of the reported cases (Ogundeji, 2025). The problem is even more serious in recent years, as shown by the annual trends. 62 collapses were recorded in 2022, the highest on record, followed by 52 in 2023 and 47 in 2024, across 14 states (Ogundeji, 2025). This is an issue that has not abated, as a building on Oriwu Street, Lekki Phase 1, Lagos, collapsed in March 2025, killing four people and injuring 15 others (Lewis, 2025).

The issue of non-existent regulations has never been the problem. It's always been an issue of enforcement, experts and industry professionals say. The National Building Code of Nigeria, which was established in 2006, contains detailed requirements to address structural design, materials quality, site control and occupancy requirements as well. The state, like Lagos State, has established agencies like the Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) and Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority (LASPPPA) to help in the implementation of the standards. Despite these institutions, building collapses still occur, and there is a great gap between the intentions of the policy and the actual implementation of the policy (Mrabure & Awhefeada, 2021; Salau & Anifowose, 2026).

This disconnect comes with serious repercussions. The repercussions of building collapse are not only immediate but also long-lasting, as they impact consumers' trust in the construction industry and drive down the appetite of investors in the real estate market, as well as creating a significant economic burden on households, insurance companies and governments (Oseghale et al., 2015; Ajayi et al., 2024). The report from LASBCA in 2024 shows that 40% of the construction projects in progress in the city of Lagos do not have the necessary authorisations and/or show structural problems, which demonstrates the magnitude of the non-conformity to the regulations in the construction sector in the city (Lewis, 2025).

Research on factors contributing to building collapse has been done in general terms (Adebowale et al., 2016; Odeyemi et al., 2019; Ajayi et al., 2024), but few empirical studies have focused on the enforcement mechanisms as independent variables to explain the level of building failures. This is an important gap, as it is the gap between legal prescription and safe construction outcomes. In Enugu, Okeke et al (2020) showed that inadequate staffing of the planning approval offices and a lack of professional interaction with the staff in such offices were major factors in the occurrence of building failures. Salau & Anifowose (2026) also identified political interference and corruption as systemic problems of enforcement in Lagos. What remains unknown is whether, and how strongly, perceptions of these enforcement barriers differ across the distinct professional groups (town planners, architects, quantity surveyors, project managers/engineers and estate surveyors and valuers), who each encounter the enforcement system at different stages of the development process. Existing studies report enforcement weaknesses in aggregate or for regulatory-institution staff (for instance, Salau & Anifowose, 2026), but none has systematically compared perceptions across the full range of built-environment professions using a large, multi-category sample. This is the specific gap the present study addresses.

This study, hence, aims to fill this gap through an empirical study on the most critical obstacles that construction professionals feel are most significant in the increase in building collapses in Nigeria. This paper builds on the respondents and sampling framework of a previous study on leadership roles in construction companies (Ichendu et al., 2024) to achieve four key objectives: (i) to identify and rank the perceived greatest barriers to enforcement in construction firms; (ii) to determine the magnitude of inter-professional differences in perceived enforcement barriers; (iii) to examine whether these

perceived enforcement barriers differ statistically significantly across professional groups; and (iv) to propose specific recommendations for the improvement of the enforcement ecosystem in the construction industry in Nigeria.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Regulatory Frameworks for Building Control in Nigeria

The building regulatory regime in Nigeria is tripartite, comprising the Federal Government, State and local government. The Federal Ministry of Works and Housing is the custodian at the federal level of the National Building Code, which has the responsibility of ensuring professional and technical standards in conjunction with professional regulatory bodies like the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria, the Nigerian Institute of Architects, the Nigerian Institute of Building and the Nigerian Institute of Town Planners (Osuizugbo, 2019). The state-level agencies, such as the Lagos State Building Control Agency and the Lagos State Physical Planning Permit Authority, have been given approval, inspection and enforcement functions for construction compliance (Salau & Anifowose, 2026).

However, it has been extensively recorded that implementation is not working in the context of this multiple-layered structure. Mrabure and Awhefeada (2021) studied the existing planning legislation, such as the Nigerian Urban and Regional Planning Act (1992) and the Urban and Regional Planning and Development Law of Lagos State (2010) and found that although the law is substantive enough, its implementation is still a major problem. Likewise, Okeke et al. (2020) found that building plans in local town planning approval authorities in Enugu were not well staffed with professionals to effectively review building plans, let alone monitor compliance on building sites. Using a mixed-method design with 165 respondents from regulatory institutions and 10 structured professional interviews in Lagos State, Salau & Anifowose (2026) evaluated the perceived effectiveness of the regulatory institutions and found that enforcement and supervision were hampered by political interference (RII = 0.87), corruption (RII = 0.86), lack of manpower and poor interagency coordination. Spatial analysis also indicated that regulatory agencies were clustered in urban areas, where enforcement of regulations is weakest.

2.2 Corruption and Political Interference as Enforcement Barriers

Corruption is a prominent feature in academic discourse and explanations of the failure to enforce in the construction industry in Nigeria. The practice of bribery in the building inspection system has been found to have compromised building inspection officers, in accepting bribes to ignore violations, thereby compromising the integrity of the building inspection system (Windapo & Rotimi, 2012; Salau & Anifowose, 2026). The most obvious impact of this practice is on structural safety. Substandard materials are accepted for use in construction, unapproved design changes are not identified, and construction work on storeys above approved levels is not authorised. Corruption in the building industry can be found in both government and private sector parastatals, as revealed by Adebowale et al. (2016) and is one of the biggest factors in unsafe buildings.

The problem of corruption is deepened by political interference, which shields those who are corrupt from being held to account. The institutional autonomy of regulatory agencies is often a weak point in their ability to take punitive measures against politically connected developers, and reform is often delayed by changes in government administrations with different priorities for enforcement regulations (Salau & Anifowose, 2026). The Human Rights Writers Association of Nigeria described the frequent collapse of buildings in Abuja as indicative of the dangerous combination of regulatory laxness, political patronage and poor engineering practices (Eme & Chukwuma, 2025). These findings are consistent with institutional theory, which holds that regulatory outcomes are shaped not only by the formal quality of rules but by the incentives facing the officials who apply them. However, in agencies with low levels of enforcement authority and high levels of political discretion over agency leadership, officers have little incentive to resist accepting a bribe, and agencies have little incentive to stop a well-

connected developer from violating rules. Enforcement failure, therefore, becomes a predictable governance outcome, rather than a series of isolated technical failures (North, 1990).

2.3 Manpower, Funding, and Inter-Agency Coordination Deficits

Enforcement is limited by underfunding and understaffing of enforcement agencies. Human and material resources for systematic testing and monitoring of the building codes in fast-urbanising construction environments are often lacking in government bodies tasked with enforcing the codes (Salau & Anifowose, 2026). This resource limitation is especially serious in the outskirts of urban centres, where the spatial clustering of regulatory offices makes it difficult to regularly monitor many of the building sites (Osuizugbo, 2019). Coordination of inter-agency coordination is another challenge. Salau & Anifowose (2026) reported on the lack of coordination between the approval, inspection and enforcement bodies in Lagos, as well as poor feedback mechanisms between these bodies, to affect regulatory effectiveness. This divides the processes into two stages: for planning approval, the building may be approved by one agency, but the building is being breached on site with no communication to the relevant enforcement agency. Similarly, Okeke et al. (2020) reported that there were poor relationships between the planning approval authority and site inspection functions in Enugu, which directly affected incidents of building collapse in the city.

Lewis (2025) reports that the Nigerian Institute of Building (NIOB) has revealed that about 80% of building collapses are due to a lack of skills among building contractors and poor supervision of building projects. This indicates a major flaw in construction practice, namely insufficient control over the verification of the professional competence and qualifications of the staff engaged in the process of building production. These deficiencies can lead to unqualified people being hired and increase the chances of structural failure (Okolie et al., 2016). Manpower shortages, inadequate funding and poor inter-agency coordination are conceptually distinct but mutually reinforcing. Understaffed agencies cannot conduct the site visits that would generate the data needed to justify larger budgets. Underfunded agencies cannot invest in the systems (shared registers, joint inspection protocols) that coordination requires, and poor coordination duplicates effort across the agencies that do exist. Together these constitute an institutional-capacity construct distinct from the governance-failure construct (corruption and political interference) discussed in Section 2.2.

2.4 Technology, Digital Monitoring, and the Enforcement Gap

Modern building control systems are increasingly being supplemented with digital means such as Building Information Modelling (BIM), structural health monitoring (SHM), drone surveillance, geospatial databases, etc. However, the use of these technologies in the enforcement situation is still in its infancy in Nigeria. Muhammad et al. (2024) showed that the combination of SHM and BIM as preventive tools can have a significant impact in Nigeria's construction industry, which has a significant enforcement gap. Without digital monitoring, there are enforcement asymmetries: construction activities between inspections, or at sites that are not easily accessed by field officers, are actually not regulated. Nigeria does not lack technical guidelines; it has simply been a failure of the guidelines to be implemented consistently and comprehensively, as the Building Collapse Prevention Guild has insisted (Agwana & Umeh-Saboyo, 2025). The absence of digital monitoring tools is treated as one of the ten enforcement barriers rated by respondents in this study (Section 4.1) precisely because it constrains the continuity of enforcement between scheduled physical inspections, the gap described above.

In a nutshell, across this body of work, three points recur consistently. Enforcement, not the absence of rules, is identified as the primary weakness (Mrabure & Awhefeada, 2021; Okeke et al., 2020); governance-level failures, corruption and political interference, are repeatedly named as the most serious barriers (Salau & Anifowose, 2026; Eme & Chukwuma, 2025); and institutional-capacity constraints (manpower, funding, coordination) compound these governance failures (Osuizugbo, 2019; Okeke et al., 2020). What the literature has not yet done is to scompare how these perceived barriers are weighted across the different professional groups who interact with the enforcement system at different points (design approval, cost management, site supervision and valuation), using a

single, comparably measured instrument across a large multi-professional sample. This is the gap the present study addresses, using the same five-category professional framework and sampling approach as Ichendu et al. (2024).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Population

This study uses a cross-sectional survey design similar to the study conducted by Ichendu et al. (2024) on leadership roles in construction companies. The advantage of the cross-sectional design is that it allows one to gather perceptions of the professionals at one time in the same disciplinary domain and then make comparisons across professions. The study population consists of construction professionals in Lagos State, which includes five professional categories (Town Planners, Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Builders/Project Managers (including Site Managers and Engineers), and Estate Surveyors and Valuers). The sampling frame consisted of lists of professional firms publicly accessible and registered with the related regulatory bodies in Lagos. Sample sizes were obtained using Yamane's (1967) formula [$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$] with a margin of error of 5% ($e = 0.05$), consistent with the method used in the previous study. A full census of the sampling frame was taken for the two categories with fewer than 200 registered firms (Quantity Surveying, n = 82, and Town Planning, n = 115). Yamane's formula was applied to determine the sample size for the three categories with frames exceeding 200 firms (Architectural, Builders/Engineering/Project Management, and Estate Surveying and Valuation). Within each sampled firm, one respondent was invited to participate, preferably the principal, partner, or most senior technical professional with relevant experience in the firm's regulatory and construction-related activities. Thus, each sampled firm contributed a maximum of one response. The inclusion criteria were professionals who were registered with their respective professional bodies, actively practising in Lagos State, and had sufficient professional experience to provide informed responses on construction regulation and enforcement. Individuals who were not professionally registered, were not actively practising in Lagos State, or were unable to provide informed responses on the study subject were excluded.

Table 1: Construction Professional Firms' Sampling Frame and Sample Sizes

Professional Category	Sampling Frame	Sample Size
Quantity Surveying Firms	82	82
Architectural Firms	459	214
Builders/Engineering/Project Management Firms	1,448	313
Estate Surveying and Valuation Firms	367	192
Town Planning Firms	115	115
Total	2,471	916

3.2 Instrument Development and Data Collection

Data were gathered using a structured questionnaire which has two parts. Section A gathered data on respondents' professional experiences and years of experience. The ten barriers to building collapse in Nigeria identified from the literature were presented in Section B and then rated on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Undecided, Agree and Strongly Agree) on how much each barrier would contribute to building collapse. The ten barriers were sourced from previous empirical studies (Adebowale et al., 2016; Okeke et al., 2020; Mrabure & Awhefeada, 2021; Salau & Anifowose, 2026), which formed the basis for the instrument's content validity. The questionnaire was reviewed by three academic experts in built-environment studies to ensure face and content validity, and minor changes were made after a pilot test with 30 professionals, who were not included in the main survey. The internal consistency of the 10 items of the enforcement barrier scale when used as a single construct was tested with Cronbach's alpha, which showed $\alpha = .847$, suggesting good reliability. The

questionnaire was carried out online (Google Forms) and on paper. The answers to the barrier items were given on a five-point Likert scale of 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree.

3.3 Response Rate

Table 2 shows how questionnaires were distributed and retrieved by professional category. The recovery rate was 67.1%, with 615 questionnaires retrieved.

Table 2: Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval Rate

Professional Category	Distributed	Retrieved & Fit for Analysis	Retrieval Rate (%)
Town Planners	115	30	26%
Architects	214	100	47%
Quantity Surveyors	82	75	91%
Project Managers (Builders, Engineers, Site Managers)	313	280	89%
Estate Surveyors and Valuers	192	130	68%
Total	916	615	67.1%

There were wide disparities between the retrieval rates for different categories of respondents, ranging from 26% for Town Planners to 91% for Quantity Surveyors. There is a possibility of nonresponse bias with this differential response. The perceptions of the Town Planners who responded in Section 4 may not be representative of the profession as a whole in Lagos State of Nigeria if there are any differences in the perceptions as expressed by the different groups of planners. This is an asymmetry that is pointed out as a limitation in Section 5.

3.4 Data Analysis

IBM SPSS Statistics 26 was used for analysis. Weighted mean scores (WMS) were used to rank the enforcement barriers in terms of the degree to which each one is perceived to contribute to building collapse. In contrast, Pearson's chi-square test of association was used to examine differences in response distributions across professional groups. The descriptive criterion that was used to identify barriers perceived as significant was a mean score of 2.50, which falls at the midpoint of the five-point scale. All chi-square tests were evaluated at the .05 level of significance. The questionnaires that had considerable missing or incomplete responses were dropped from the analysis, whereas those that were completed were included. The contingency tables were created to compare the response categories for the enforcement-barrier items with the professional category. The structure for the response categories and their respective degrees of freedom were checked from the original SPSS output before the results were reported (Table 4).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before participation. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to decline or withdraw at any time. The confidentiality and anonymity of respondents and their firms were maintained, with findings reported only in aggregate form for academic purposes.

4.0 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1. Weighted Mean Score of Perceived Enforcement Barriers

Table 3 shows the weighted mean scores, standard deviations and ranks of the ten enforcement barriers across the 615 respondents in the five professional categories. Each of the ten barriers had a score greater than the 2.50 threshold, suggesting that respondents believed each of the barriers was a factor in the occurrence of building collapse. The reported mean is a weighted mean (over all 615 valid responses).

Table 3: Weighted Mean Scores of Enforcement Barriers Perceived to Impact Building Collapse Frequency

Enforcement Barrier	SD(1)	D(2)	U(3)	A(4)	SA(5)	Mean	SD	Rank
Political interference in regulatory processes	0	8	47	312	248	4.29	0.712	1
Corruption among enforcement officers	0	12	54	289	260	4.28	0.754	2
Inadequate manpower in regulatory agencies	2	15	68	298	232	4.21	0.778	3
Lack of inter-agency coordination	3	18	82	291	221	4.16	0.812	4
Insufficient funding of regulatory bodies	4	21	91	278	221	4.13	0.831	5
Low awareness of building codes by developers	5	27	104	281	198	4.06	0.843	6
Inadequate penalty for non-compliance	6	34	112	264	199	4.00	0.876	7
Absence of digital monitoring tools	8	41	121	254	191	3.93	0.901	8
Peripheral spatial distribution of agencies	11	49	138	241	176	3.85	0.934	9
Non-professionalisation of inspection roles	14	57	152	223	169	3.76	0.962	10

Note: SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; U = Undecided; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree

Political interference in regulatory processes (M = 4.29, SD = 0.712) is the top-rated barrier, followed closely by corruption among enforcement officers (M = 4.28, SD = 0.754). These findings align with Salau & Anifowose's (2026) Relative Importance Index analysis, in which political interference (RII = 0.87) and corruption (RII = 0.86) were also the top-ranked enforcement constraints in Lagos. The high level of consensus across professional categories on these two barriers suggests that governance-related barriers received the highest perceived ratings, consistent with the institutional-theory proposition that the formal quality of codes matters less than the incentive environment surrounding those who enforce them (North, 1990). The third-ranked barrier, inadequate manpower in regulatory agencies (M = 4.21, SD = 0.778), is consistent with Okeke et al. (2020), who reported that Enugu's planning approval agencies were inadequately staffed to review building plans or conduct meaningful

site supervision. The fourth- and fifth-ranked barriers, lack of inter-agency coordination (M = 4.16) and insufficient funding (M = 4.13), reinforce the systemic capacity constraints reported by Salau & Anifowose (2026), reflecting a lack of horizontal communication that leaves construction violations unaddressed across departmental lines.

Low awareness of building codes among developers (M = 4.06, SD = 0.843) was rated sixth among the ten barriers. Respondents may associate this barrier with unintentional, rather than deliberate, non-compliance. However, the survey measured perceived barrier salience, not developers' actual motives, and this interpretation should be treated as plausible rather than demonstrated. The seventh-ranked barrier, inadequate penalties for non-compliance (M = 4.00), suggests that current sanctions may not provide a strong deterrent: where the cost of compliance is not perceived as financially or reputationally significant relative to the cost of non-compliance, developers may be more inclined to bypass the process. The lower-ranked barriers, absence of digital monitoring tools (M = 3.93), peripheral spatial distribution of agencies (M = 3.85) and non-professionalisation of inspection roles (M = 3.76), remain well above the 2.50 threshold. Their standard deviations, approaching 1.00, indicate greater diversity of professional opinion on these barriers than on the top-ranked governance barriers, plausibly reflecting the different degrees to which digital tools, agency location, and inspector professionalisation are visible to different professional groups in their day-to-day practice.

4.2. Chi-Square Analysis of Inter-professional Variation

Table 4 shows the chi-square analysis conducted to determine whether professional groups differed significantly in their ratings of the enforcement barriers.

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis of Inter-professional Variation in Enforcement Barrier Perceptions

Enforcement barrier	χ^2	df	p	Cramer's V
Political interference	48.21	16	<.001	.140
Corruption among officers	51.34	16	<.001	.144
Inadequate manpower	43.67	16	<.001	.133
Inter-agency coordination	39.88	16	<.001	.127
Insufficient funding	38.14	16	.001	.125
Awareness of building codes	35.92	16	.003	.121
Inadequate penalties	34.41	16	.005	.118
Absence of digital tools	31.77	16	.011	.114
Spatial agency distribution	28.93	16	.024	.108
Non-professionalisation	26.14	16	.052	.103

Note: ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$

The inter-professional differences in the ten barriers are statistically significant for nine of them, as shown in Table 4. The strongest reported associations are between professional group and corruption ($\chi^2 = 51.34$, $p < .001$) and political interference ($\chi^2 = 48.21$, $p < .001$). The extent to which professionals see enforcement corruption and political interference may be related to the extent to which they come into contact with regulatory gatekeeping in their work. Town Planners and Estate Surveyors have more direct contact with planning authorities than Quantity Surveyors, whose contact is focused at the procurement stage. In addition, there are statistically significant differences between professionals in the phases of design, cost management, construction and valuation, regarding the factors of inadequate manpower ($\chi^2 = 43.67$, $p < .001$), inter-agency coordination ($\chi^2 = 39.88$, $p < .001$), insufficient funding ($\chi^2 = 38.14$, $p = .001$) and low awareness of building codes ($\chi^2 = 35.92$, $p = .003$). The only barrier that was not found to be significantly different is also consistently rated above 2.50 by all professional groups, indicating that it is broadly recognised across professions, though with varying degrees of salience.

4.3. Enforcement Deficits and Perceived Building-Collapse Risk

These findings collectively illustrate a regulatory enforcement system operating on a few points. Political interference and corruption at the governance level hamper the independence and integrity of enforcement agencies and mean that well-connected developers can go unregulated. The institutional level also experiences a low practical capacity in terms of manpower shortages, insufficient funding

and inter-agency fragmentation, which makes it difficult to identify and respond to violations. At the information level, gaps in developers' knowledge of the building code may contribute to unintentional non-compliance. Technologically speaking, there are deficiencies in enforcement coverage between scheduled inspections because there are no digital monitoring tools. The overlapping nature of these deficiencies could realistically reduce the likelihood of detecting non-compliance when compared to the possible payoff of compliance, as reported in the broader literature (Mrabure & Awhefeada, 2021; Ajayi et al., 2024; Ogundeji, 2025). This is an interpretation and not a tested relationship. However, this study didn't directly measure detection probability or economic incentive. The survey results corroborated the theories that building collapse is as much a governance and enforcement challenge as it is a technical challenge, as there was empirical evidence to support it from the survey results, where professionals identified enforcement weaknesses as important barriers in building safety.

The ranking is similar to that of Salau & Anifowose (2026), whose Relative Importance Index identified political interference and corruption as the top-ranking barriers, followed by manpower and coordination and funding constraints, when the sample was expanded to include practising built-environment professionals outside the regulatory institutions. The manpower and supervision findings are also similar to the findings of Okeke et al. (2020) in Enugu and Mrabure & Awhefeada (2021) in Nigeria, who both found inadequate manpower and supervision as causes of building failure. This study has contributed to the literature by providing insight into the perceived salience of these barriers among the different professional groups, which was not examined in the previous single-institution or single-locality studies.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provides evidence that construction professionals in Lagos State perceive weak enforcement as strongly associated with the frequency of building collapse in Nigeria. Across all ten barriers assessed, professionals rated each as a significant obstacle to effective enforcement, with political interference and corruption rated most critical. Statistically significant inter-professional differences in the perception of several barriers further indicate that the experience of enforcement failure is not uniform across the construction industry's professional ecosystem, implying that reform strategies may need to be tailored by professional context.

The following policy implications are drawn from the barriers identified above, but should be viewed as guidance for discussion only and not proven interventions. Regarding institutional autonomy, it is noted that political meddling is prominent and so there is a need to protect agencies like LASBCA and LASPPPA from political control, for instance by having a conflict-of-interest clause in place that is binding on directors. Regarding anti-corruption mechanisms, the corruption finding calls for a system of independent oversight with civil-society and professional bodies' representation, and confidential, digitised channels for reporting solicitations of bribes. The capacity building findings highlight the need for mandatory professional qualification for inspectors, continuous professional development and budgets ring-fenced from general administration to meet the reported constraints on professionals. Respondents' rating of the lack of a monitoring tool as a barrier is consistent with the case for extending the reach of enforcement between the scheduled visits in the context of drone-based inspection, structural sensors that integrate with IoT, and BIM-integrated databases for inspection (Muhammad et al., 2024). However, on penalties, the apparently moderate salience of weak penalties also warrants reworking, allowing for professional deregistration of all complicit practitioners, an unsafe building demolition order and a structural assessment at the developer's cost. Finally, in terms of awareness, a multi-channel public education campaign via digital media and professional associations could help overcome the awareness gap identified by respondents. Future studies should compare the relative importance of enforcement failures with technical construction shortcomings in building collapse risk, and assess the impact of particular reform interventions in jurisdictions where they have already been used.

6.0 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

There are some limitations to this study. First, the sample is limited to Lagos State, and results might not be representative of other Nigerian states with varying institutional capacity and enforcement culture. Second, the cross-sectional design is only to measure perceptions at one time and does not allow for inferring causality between enforcement barriers and building-collapse outcomes. Third, the data are self-reported perceptions of the level of enforcement, rather than observed enforcement behaviour or verified data on the frequency of collapses, and, as with all perception-based measures, suffer from the usual limitations of perception, such as social desirability and recall effects. Fourth, there was considerable difference in the retrieval rates for different professions (26%-91%; Section 3.3), suggesting nonresponse bias, especially for the under-represented category of Town Planner. Finally, the study cannot comment on the actual rate of building collapse or the role that enforcement plays in that collapse; it can only comment on the perceived relative role of the various enforcement barriers.

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