

Assessment of Compliance with Pre-Construction Documentation in Lagos State

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Abstract

Purpose – Submission of pre-construction documentation is central to building control and a prerequisite for regulatory approval, yet compliance level varies widely across the industry. In Lagos State, inconsistent submission patterns raise concerns about procedural adherence and regulatory effectiveness. This study evaluates construction professionals' perceptions of compliance with required documentation and variations by professional role, years of experience, and educational qualification. It is framed by regulatory enforcement theory and professional practice perspectives, which emphasise that compliance is shaped by institutional oversight and role-based exposure.

Design/methodology/approach – A quantitative design was adopted. From 309 questionnaires distributed among registered professionals in construction firms operating within Lagos State, 288 valid responses were analysed. Descriptive statistics and the Kruskal–Wallis test were applied. Documents were grouped into legal, technical, and regulatory categories to assess compliance levels.

Findings – Compliance level varied across categories. Technical documents such as architectural drawings and structural designs were more consistently submitted than legal (e.g., land title) and regulatory documents (e.g., Environmental Impact Assessment). Compliance also differed significantly by profession and years of experience but not by educational qualification.

Conclusion/Theoretical/Social/Practical implications – The results support regulatory enforcement and professional practice theories, showing that compliance is shaped more by institutional processes and practical experience than academic training. Practical implications include digital submission platforms, standardised checklists, stronger enforcement, and compliance-focused professional training.

Originality/value – This study empirically assesses pre-construction documentation compliance in Lagos State within broader compliance theories and provides evidence-based insights to strengthen Nigeria's regulatory framework and reduce risks of building collapse.

Keywords: Building control, Compliance, Documentation, Pre-construction, Regulatory.

Introduction

The construction industry remains a vital driver of economic development in both developed and developing countries like Nigeria (Okereke, Pepple, & Ihekwe, 2022). It is one of the highest employers of labour in the country, yet it still largely depends on individual skills and informal practices, even in an era of technological advancement (Ojo, Yusuf, & Anjonrin-Ohu, 2020). A major challenge is inadequate building control, which undermines safety and sustainability by compromising structural integrity.

At the heart of this problem lies the lack of a uniformly implemented national building code across Nigeria. Although the National Building Code (NBC) was introduced in 2006 to establish minimum standards for design and construction across all project stages, from pre-design to post-construction, enforcement has been uneven. Many states have not adopted or operationalised the Urban and Regional Planning Law necessary for enforcing the code, thus weakening regulatory consistency and enabling the use of substandard materials (Osuizugbo, 2018; Wordu & Kanu, 2021).

Lagos State, Nigeria's economic hub and one of the fastest-growing cities in Africa, offers a revealing case of these systemic issues. With a population exceeding 15 million, Lagos has recorded over 300 building collapses between 1978 and 2022, resulting in more than 400 deaths, displacing about 6,000 households, and leading to property losses estimated at over US\$3.2 trillion (Ohenhen & Shirzaei, 2022; Okunola, 2022). These incidents highlight a glaring weakness in building control, particularly at the early stages of project development, a phase that

begins with the submission of required pre-construction documentation.

While building inspections, quality control, and enforcement have received considerable attention in the literature, pre-construction documentation compliance has been understudied. This early-phase requirement includes legal documents (e.g., title documents), technical designs (e.g., architectural and structural drawings), and regulatory submissions (e.g., environmental impact assessments), which collectively serve as the foundation for monitoring and approval. However, anecdotal evidence and field observations suggest that many construction projects in Lagos proceed without complete or valid documentation, often due to ignorance, cost barriers, or deliberate non-compliance (Odeyemi, Giwa, & Abdulwahab, 2019).

This study addresses this gap by investigating construction professionals' perceptions of compliance with required pre-construction documentation by building development clients in Lagos State. The specific objectives are to evaluate construction professionals' perceptions of compliance level with required pre-construction documentation by building development clients in Lagos State; to compare compliance level across categories of pre-construction documentation, namely technical, legal, and regulatory documents; and to examine whether perceptions of compliance level with pre-construction documentation vary across construction professionals' disciplines, years of experience, and educational qualifications.

Literature Review

Effective building control requires a clearly defined and enforceable regulatory framework, which starts at the pre-

construction stage. The purpose of pre-construction documentation is to ensure that construction projects comply with planning, legal, environmental, and technical standards before physical development begins (Oke & Aigbavboa, 2017). These documents form the basis upon which monitoring, inspection, and approval decisions are made throughout the project lifecycle.

Globally, building control systems are strengthened through transparent documentation processes supported by digital permit platforms, strict review procedures, and professional accountability mechanisms (Noardo *et al.*, 2022)

Countries like Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Australia have shown that digital document validation, backed by legislative enforcement, greatly reduces the risk of non-compliant construction practices and structural failures.

In Nigeria, the introduction of the National Building Code (NBC, 2006) was intended to standardise construction practices and mandate clear procedural requirements across all stages of development. However, as Osuizugbo (2018) and Wordu and Kanu (2021) observed, enforcement of the NBC remains weak across many states due to the absence of formal adoption and the lack of supporting regulatory laws. This has led to widespread procedural inconsistencies and a culture of informal construction activities.

The Lagos State Building Control Agency (LASBCA) has been tasked with ensuring compliance through document verification and development approval processes. Despite this institutional framework, studies show that building collapses and construction-related failures persist, often linked to poor

documentation practices and regulatory evasion (Odeyemi *et al.*, 2019). For instance, legal documents such as land titles and insurance certificates are often missing or forged, while technical and regulatory documents are either improperly reviewed or completely omitted.

Moreover, several studies acknowledge that factors such as ignorance of requirements, cost of documentation, corruption, and lack of awareness among clients all contribute to low documentation compliance (Opawole, Alao, Yusuf, Adu & Ofoetan, 2022; Ameh & Osegbo, 2011). Yet, these studies largely provide generalised insights or focus on enforcement challenges, with minimal empirical work specifically targeting pre-construction documentation.

Also underexplored is the influence of professional demographics — such as field of practice, years of experience, and educational qualification — on how construction professionals perceive client compliance. Given that these professionals are often the ones interfacing with clients during project initiation, their perceptions provide a valuable proxy for understanding how well documentation requirements are followed on the ground.

This aligns with regulatory enforcement perspectives, which emphasise that weak oversight and fragmented adoption of the National Building Code drive poor compliance in Nigeria (Odeyemi *et al.*, 2019; Osuizugbo, 2018; Wordu & Kanu, 2021). Similarly, professional practice perspectives emphasise that compliance behaviour is shaped by role-specific exposure and experiential learning rather than academic qualifications alone (Adeyinka *et al.*, 2013;

Oke & Aigbavboa, 2017; Opawole et al., 2022).

This study contributes to the literature by grouping pre-construction documents into legal, technical, and regulatory categories for better analysis, and by evaluating construction professionals' perceptions of client compliance across these categories as well as variations based on background and experience. To provide a structured lens for interpreting these dynamics, this study anchors its analysis in established theoretical perspectives on compliance and professional behaviour. This study is guided by regulatory enforcement theory, which emphasises that compliance behaviour is shaped by institutional oversight, sanctions, and the consistency of enforcement. It also draws on professional practice perspectives, which highlight that role-specific engagement and experiential learning influence how professionals interpret and implement compliance requirements. By applying these lenses, the study extends existing research on building control and situates Lagos State within broader debates on regulatory compliance and professional behaviour.

Pre-construction documentation requirements in building projects generally fall into three broad categories: technical, legal, and regulatory documents. Technical documents include design and engineering drawings such as architectural plans, structural drawings, site plans, and mechanical and electrical layouts, which ensure that proposed structures meet engineering and safety standards before construction begins. Legal documents, such as land title documents, tax clearance certificates, and insurance certificates, establish the legal status of the project and confirm ownership, statutory obligations, and

risk coverage. Regulatory documents, including development permits, environmental impact assessments, fire service reports, and development levy receipts, are required by government agencies to ensure that proposed developments comply with planning regulations, environmental safeguards, and safety standards. These documentation requirements collectively form the foundation of building control systems and enable regulatory authorities to assess project compliance prior to construction commencement (Noardo et al., 2022; Oke & Aigbavboa, 2017).

Research Methods

This study adopted a quantitative, descriptive survey design to evaluate construction professionals' perceptions of compliance with required pre-construction documentation in Lagos State. This design was considered appropriate given the objective nature of the research, which focused on measuring perceptions across specific compliance variables using structured responses. It also allowed for the analysis of trends and differences across professional groups using descriptive and inferential statistical tools.

For this study, the population consists of registered contractors under the Lagos state Public Procurement Agency in Lagos state. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a representative sample of construction firms from the population of interest.

Based on administrative records obtained from the Lagos State Public Procurement Agency (LSPPA), the population for this study comprised 967 registered professionals in construction firms operating within Lagos

State. The sample size was calculated using Yamane's (1967) formula for a finite population, with a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence level. The formula is:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} \quad [1]$$

Where n = sample size,
 N = Population size,
 e = confidence interval
 N = Construction Firms (For Lagos State)
 e = 0.05 (for a 5% margin of error)

$$n = \frac{967}{1 + 967(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 283$$

Therefore, the sample size for the study was 283.

To allow for non-responses, 309 questionnaires were randomly distributed to professionals within construction firms in Lagos State. Using a simple random sampling approach, the random number function in Microsoft Excel was used to select firms from the sample frame, and respondents were invited to participate voluntarily through electronic questionnaire distribution. Out of the 309 questionnaires administered, 288 were duly completed and retrieved, resulting in a response rate of 93.2%.

The structured questionnaire comprised two sections; section A gathered demographic and background information about the respondents, including their field of profession, years of experience, and educational qualification. Section B focused on the respondents' perceptions of the submission of 15 required pre-construction documents by building clients. Respondents were asked to indicate "Yes" or "No" to whether, in their experience, these documents are typically submitted during project

initiation. This approach was adopted to reflect the regulatory nature of documentation requirements, which are generally either present or absent within the approval process.

Consistent with documentation categories identified in previous studies on building control and regulatory compliance, the fifteen pre-construction documents were grouped into three categories: technical documents, legal documents, and regulatory documents. Data from the completed questionnaires were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0 and Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) were used to examine perceived compliance levels across documents and grouped categories. Inferential statistics, particularly the Kruskal-Wallis test, were used to determine whether perceptions of compliance varied significantly across professional categories, years of experience, and qualifications. Results were presented using tables, bar

charts, and other relevant visualisation techniques.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 presents the demographic breakdown of the 288 respondents who participated in the study. The data highlights their professions, professional status, years of experience, educational qualifications, and involvement in construction projects in Lagos State.

The distribution shows that the majority of respondents are from the fields of Building

(30.56%) and Architecture (28.13%), with additional representation from Civil Engineering (20.83%) and Structural Engineering (9.03%). Other professions such as Mechanical, Electrical Engineering, and Quantity Surveying were also represented.

In terms of professional status, most of the respondents are Graduate members (59.38%), while Corporate members accounted for 38.19%, and Fellows comprised a small portion (2.43%).

TABLE 1. Summary of Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Profession/Discipline		
Architecture	81	28.13%
Building	88	30.56%
Civil Engineering	60	20.83%
Electrical Engineering	2	0.69%
Mechanical Engineering	8	2.78%
Quantity Surveyor	23	7.98%
Structural Engineering	26	9.03%
Professional Status		
None	0	0.00%
Graduate	171	59.38%
Corporate	110	38.19%
Fellow	7	2.43%
Years of Experience		
1 - 5 years	114	39.58%
6 - 10 years	68	23.61%
11 - 15 years	90	31.25%
16 - 20 years	13	4.51%
Over 20 years	3	1.04%
Educational Qualification		
ND	0	0.00%
HND	5	1.74%
B.Sc/B.Tech	187	64.93%
M.Sc/M.Tech	92	31.94%
Ph.D	4	1.39%
Others	0	0.00%

Construction projects involvement in Lagos state

1 - 5	132	45.83%
6 - 10	33	11.46%
11 - 15	28	9.72%
16 - 20	7	2.43%
Over 20	88	30.56%

Regarding professional experience, a significant share of the respondents has 1–5 years (39.58%) or 11–15 years (31.25%) of experience in the construction industry, suggesting the presence of both early-career and mid-career professionals in the sample.

The educational background of respondents indicates that the majority hold Bachelor's degrees (64.93%), followed by Master's degrees (31.94%), with a smaller fraction holding PhDs (1.39%).

Lastly, the number of construction projects respondents had been involved in within

Lagos State also varied. Nearly half (45.83%) reported experience with 1–5 projects, while 30.56% had worked on over 20 projects, indicating strong practical exposure among respondents.

Perceived Compliance Level with Pre-Construction Documentation

This was examined based on data collected for fifteen factors using a binary Yes/No scale. Table 2 presents the distribution of responses for each of the 15 pre-construction documents.

TABLE 2. Compliance Level with Documentation Required Prior to Construction

	N	Frequency		Yes %	No %	Rank
		Yes	No			
Title Document (C of O or Deed)	288	241	47	83.70%	16.30%	10
Survey Plan	288	252	36	87.50%	12.50%	9
Site Plan	288	283	5	98.30%	1.70%	2
Architectural Drawings	288	288	0	100.00%	0.00%	1
Structural Drawings	288	265	23	92.00%	8.00%	6
Mechanical/Electrical Drawings	288	262	26	91.00%	9.00%	7
Soil Test Report	288	210	78	72.90%	27.10%	12
Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Certificate	288	208	80	72.20%	27.80%	13
Development Permit from LASPPPA	288	280	8	97.20%	2.80%	4
Tax Clearance Certificate	288	282	6	97.90%	2.10%	3
Building Permit Application Form	288	262	26	91.00%	9.00%	7
Fire Service Report	288	175	113	60.80%	39.20%	15
Insurance Certificate	288	227	61	78.80%	21.20%	11
Project Management Plan/Statement of Responsibility	288	188	100	65.30%	34.70%	14

Proof of Payment of Development Levy	288	267	21	92.70%	7.30%	5
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Table 2 summarises responses to the 15 required pre-construction documents. The results show that Architectural Drawings (100%), Site Plan (98.3%), and Tax Clearance Certificate (97.9%) recorded the highest levels of perceived compliance. Similarly, Development Permit from LASPPA (97.2%), Proof of Payment of Development Levy (92.7%), and Structural Drawings (92.0%) were also perceived as highly submitted.

On the lower end, documents such as the Fire Service Report (60.8%), Project Management Plan/Statement of Responsibility (65.3%), and EIA Certificate (72.2%) received lower compliance ratings. This suggests that while core design and approval documents are widely adhered to, compliance with supplementary regulatory and supervisory submissions remains inconsistent.

Compliance Level by Documentation Category

To better assess trends, the 15 documents were grouped into the following categories:

- a) Technical Documents: Architectural Drawings, Structural Drawings, Mechanical/Electrical Drawings, Site Plan, Survey Plan
- b) Legal Documents: Title Document, Tax Clearance Certificate, Insurance Certificate
- c) Regulatory Documents: EIA Certificate, Development Permit, Building Permit Application Form, Fire Service Report, Soil Test Report, Project Supervision Docs, Development Levy Receipt

To compute the average compliance rate for each documentation category, the percentage of “Yes” responses for all documents within each group was summed and divided by the number of documents in that group. This provided a mean perceived compliance rate for technical, legal, and regulatory categories respectively.

TABLE 3. Average Compliance Level by Documentation Category

Category	Documents Included	Average Compliance (%)
Technical	5 documents	93.76%
Legal	3 documents	86.80%
Regulatory	7 documents	76.73%

The results indicate that technical documents have the highest compliance perception, averaging 93.76%, followed by legal documents (86.80%). Regulatory documents, which often involve inter-agency processes or safety/environmental protocols, showed the lowest compliance perception (76.73%).

This suggests that clients may prioritise design and title-related requirements while being less consistent with compliance in regulatory areas — possibly due to complexity, cost, or lack of awareness.

Variations in Construction Professionals’ Perceptions of Documentation Compliance Levels Based on their Field, Years of experience, and Qualification

To enable comparison across respondents, a Total Compliance Score was calculated for each participant. Each “Yes” response to a documentation item was assigned a score of 1, and each “No” response a 0, giving each respondent a total score out of 15 (i.e., the number of pre-construction documents). This total was used as the dependent variable.

Due to the ordinal and categorical nature of the grouping variables, the Kruskal-Wallis H

test, a non-parametric test suitable for comparing more than two independent groups, was used to determine if statistically significant differences existed in perceptions across professional field, work experience, and educational qualification.

Variation by Professional Field

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics showing the compliance level for each profession. Building had the highest percentage (30.6%), while electrical engineers had the lowest (0.7%). The mean rank results from the Kruskal-Wallis test are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 4. Rank Scores of Perceived Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance Across Professional Fields

Rank		Profession	N	Percentage
Total	Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance	Architecture	81	28.12%
		Building	88	30.56%
		Civil Engineering	60	20.83%
		Structural Engineering	26	9.03%
		Mechanical Engineering	8	2.78%
		Electrical Engineering	2	0.69%
		Quantity Surveyor	23	7.99%
		Total	288	

The Kruskal-Wallis test result in Table 5 indicates a statistically significant difference in compliance perceptions across professions:

$$\chi^2(6) = 79.921, p = .000.$$

TABLE 5. Kruskal-Wallis Test of Differences in Perceived Compliance by Profession

Test Statistics ^{a,b}		Total Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance
Kruskal-Wallis H		79.921
df		6
Asymp. Sig.		.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: What is your Profession/Discipline?

There is a statistically significant difference in the perception of documentation compliance among professional fields, with Civil Engineers perceiving the highest compliance and Mechanical Engineers the lowest.

Variation by Years of Experience

Tables 6 and 7 present the compliance level based on professional experience using percentages and the Kruskal-Wallis H test. The analysis in Table 6 shows that those with 11 - 15 years experience had the highest percentage (31.25%), while respondents with over 20 years experience had the lowest (1.04%).

TABLE 6. Rank Scores of Perceived Compliance Across Years of Experience

Rank		Experience	N	Percentage
Total Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance	1 - 5 years	114	39.58%	
	6 - 10 years	68	23.61%	
	11 - 15 years	90	31.25%	
	16 - 20 years	13	4.51%	
	Over 20 years	3	1.04%	
	Total	288		

TABLE 7. Kruskal-Wallis Test of Differences in Perceived Compliance by Years of Experience

Test Statistics^{a,b}

Total Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance	
Kruskal-Wallis H	23.834
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: What is the length of your construction work experience?

There is a statistically significant difference in perceptions across experience levels ($p = .000$). More experienced professionals (especially over 10 years) tended to report higher compliance, suggesting that perception of documentation processes may improve with increased industry exposure.

Variation by Educational Qualification

Tables 8 and 9 summarise the differences in the perceptions of the respondents based on highest academic qualification. Based on the analysis in Table 8, respondents with B.Sc/B.Tech degrees had the highest percentage (64.93%), while Ph.D holders had the lowest (1.39%).

TABLE 8. Rank Scores of Perceived Compliance Across Educational Qualification Levels
Rank

		Qualification	N	Percentage
Total	Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance	HND	5	1.74%
		B.Sc/B.Tech	187	64.93%
		M.Sc/M.Tech	92	31.94%
		Ph.D	4	1.39%
		Total	288	

TABLE 9. Kruskal-Wallis Test of Differences in Perceived Compliance by Educational Qualification**Test Statistics^{a,b}**

		Total Pre-Construction Documentation Compliance
Kruskal-Wallis H		3.150
df		3
Asymp. Sig.		.369

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: What is your Highest Educational Qualification?

No statistically significant difference was found in perceived compliance based on educational qualification ($p = .369$). This suggests that perceptions are consistent regardless of academic background.

This study aimed to evaluate the level of compliance with pre-construction documentation requirements among building clients in Lagos State and to assess how perceptions of this compliance vary among construction professionals. The findings reveal several key insights that are significant both to the body of knowledge and to practical implementation in regulatory and industry practice.

The results show that compliance with documentation requirements is uneven across document categories. Technical documents such as architectural and structural drawings had the highest compliance rates, with scores

approaching or exceeding 90%, and even reaching 100% in the case of architectural drawings. Legal documents, including land titles and tax clearance certificates, showed slightly lower but still strong compliance rates. However, regulatory documents, such as the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Fire Service Report, and Project Management Plan, recorded the lowest compliance rates, with some under 70%.

These findings align with previous studies highlighting that many construction projects in Lagos proceed with incomplete regulatory documentation, often due to perceived complexity, cost implications, or lack of enforcement (Odeyemi et al., 2019; Wordu & Kanu, 2021). Similarly, Osuizugbo (2018) highlighted weak regulatory enforcement and gaps in the adoption of the National Building Code (NBC), which hinder the consistent submission of required documents.

Regulatory submissions often require inter-agency engagement and may not be immediately perceived as critical for project commencement, especially in informal or small-scale construction projects.

The Kruskal-Wallis test results revealed significant differences in perception across professional disciplines. Civil Engineers reported the highest perceived compliance, followed by Quantity Surveyors and Structural Engineers. Conversely, Mechanical and Electrical Engineers reported lower perceived compliance. This variation may reflect differences in the level of direct engagement each profession has with pre-construction documentation. For instance, civil engineers are frequently involved in structural approvals and may be more familiar with formal documentation workflows.

Moreover, professionals such as quantity surveyors and architects, who are often involved in early-stage planning and client advisory roles, might have a more informed or optimistic view of compliance levels, while others who come in later or peripherally may notice gaps more easily. These findings confirm prior assertions by Adeyinka, Jagboro, Ojo and Odeiran (2013) that professional roles influence documentation expectations and compliance reporting. These results further validate the theoretical framing, showing that regulatory enforcement gaps and professional role exposure jointly explain uneven compliance patterns.

Work experience was also a significant factor in shaping perceptions. Professionals with more than 10 years of experience reported higher compliance levels than those with fewer years in practice. This could be

attributed to their broader exposure to different project types, greater understanding of procedural expectations, job prospects, or more interaction with regulatory processes. This supports professional practice perspectives, which emphasise that compliance behaviour is strengthened through experiential learning and role-specific engagement over time, rather than through academic qualifications alone.

This result supports the notion of Oke and Aigbavboa, (2017), who emphasised that professional maturity over time contributes to better awareness of the requirements and more realistic assessments of industry behaviour. It also suggests that less experienced professionals may require targeted training on documentation protocols to strengthen their capacity to interpret and comply with requirements.

Interestingly, educational qualification showed no statistically significant influence on compliance perception ($p = 0.369$). Respondents across HND, B.Sc./B.Tech, M.Sc./M.Tech, and Ph.D levels displayed comparable views, suggesting that academic knowledge alone does not necessarily translate to stronger documentation culture.

This finding implies that academic qualifications alone may not significantly alter a professional's experience or expectations regarding client compliance. Instead, field exposure, specialisation, and years of practice may have a more substantial influence on perception. It aligns with previous conclusions by Wordu and Kanu (2021), who found that even well-qualified professionals may lack practical familiarity with regulatory obligations if their roles don't involve direct compliance management.

Implications of Findings

This study contributes to the growing discourse on building control by focusing on pre-construction documentation, a phase often overshadowed by enforcement, post-construction inspections and quality assurance studies. While much of the literature emphasises enforcement failures and fragmented oversight (Odeyemi et al., 2019; Osuizugbo, 2018), this study empirically demonstrates that even at the preliminary documentation stage, systemic compliance issues persist, and that even among professionals, there is uneven awareness or perception of compliance across disciplines and experience levels.

Moreover, by grouping documents into technical, legal, and regulatory categories, this research offers a nuanced perspective on which areas demand targeted intervention. The disparity in compliance rates across categories highlights an ongoing need for reform — including digital platforms for submission, streamlined document checklists, better inter-agency integration, and clearer document requirements to improve compliance consistency (Noardo et al., 2022). This pattern also reinforces regulatory enforcement theory, which predicts that compliance will be highest where requirements are straightforward and closely monitored, but weakest where oversight is fragmented or perceived as secondary.

These findings imply that regulatory bodies and professional associations need to place stronger emphasis on regulatory documentation, which is often overlooked despite its safety and environmental significance. Policymakers should prioritise reforms that simplify inter-agency processes and make regulatory documents more

accessible and transparent, ensuring that clients understand their importance for safety and sustainability.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined compliance with required pre-construction documentation among construction professionals in Lagos State. The findings indicate that while technical and legal documentation requirements are generally well complied with, regulatory documents relating to safety, environmental protection, and project management demonstrate comparatively lower levels of compliance. The results further suggest that awareness and perceived adherence to documentation requirements are influenced more strongly by professional roles and practical industry experience than by formal educational qualifications.

The uneven compliance pattern highlights an important gap within the building control framework. Although core design and ownership documents receive significant attention due to their direct link to project approval and land security, several regulatory documents—despite their importance for safety and environmental protection—receive comparatively less emphasis. This situation suggests that procedural complexity, enforcement limitations, and varying levels of professional exposure may affect adherence to regulatory documentation requirements. If these gaps remain unaddressed, they may weaken the effectiveness of building control systems and undermine efforts to ensure safe, compliant, and sustainable construction practices.

This study contributes to knowledge by empirically categorising pre-construction documentation into legal, technical, and regulatory groups and demonstrating

variations in the level of perceived compliance across professional disciplines and experience levels in Lagos State.

The findings point to the need for stronger enforcement of regulatory documentation requirements, particularly those related to safety, environmental performance, and project management. Regulatory authorities may also improve compliance by simplifying submission procedures through digital platforms, standardised documentation checklists, and improved coordination among relevant regulatory agencies.

Professional bodies and construction firms should further strengthen compliance awareness through continuous professional development programmes, industry training, and structured mentorship initiatives. Such initiatives can enhance the practical understanding of regulatory documentation requirements among professionals, particularly those whose roles involve limited direct interaction with regulatory approval processes.

In addition, academic programmes in construction-related disciplines should incorporate more practice-oriented modules on regulatory compliance and building control procedures. Integrating practical exposure to documentation requirements during professional training can help bridge the gap between theoretical instruction and industry practice.

Overall, by identifying uneven compliance patterns and differences in perceptions across professional disciplines and experience levels, this study contributes empirical evidence to ongoing discussions on strengthening building control systems in Nigeria. The findings highlight the

importance of policy reform, professional training, and continued research in improving compliance with pre-construction documentation requirements and promoting safer and more sustainable construction practices in Lagos State and similar regulatory environments.

Limitations of the Study

This study, however, is not without limitations. The analysis was based on self-reported perceptions, which may not always correspond with actual compliance practices in the field. In addition, the research focused on Lagos State alone, which may limit the generalisability of the findings to other regions in Nigeria. The use of a binary Yes/No scale for compliance assessment may also oversimplify the nuances of documentation practices.

While professional perceptions provide useful insights into industry practices, future studies could complement survey data with case studies and project-level audits of documentation submitted to regulatory authorities to provide a more practice-based assessment of compliance levels, broaden the geographic scope beyond Lagos, and employ mixed methods, including qualitative interviews, to uncover barriers such as bureaucratic complexity, weak enforcement, and cost.

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