

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE AMONG FEMALE REAL ESTATE PROFESSIONALS IN NIGERIA: EVIDENCE FROM ABUJA METROPOLIS

¹Ajibade Rasheed Kayode, ^{2*}Sakariyau Jamiu Kayode, ³Hassan Olanrewaju Abdul and
Alao Rasheed Olamide

^{1,2}Department of Estate Management, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of
Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria

³Department of Estate Management and Valuation, Institute of Environmental Studies,
Kwara State Polytechnic, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

⁴Department of Estate Management, Faculty of Environmental Sciences, University of Ilorin,
Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author's email: sakariyau.jamiu@uniabuja.edu.ng

Corresponding Author's ORCID:0000-0002-2624-2070

ABSTRACT

The increasing engagement of women in Nigeria's real estate market has highlighted the necessity to investigate work-life balance (WLB) characteristics among female professionals. Despite industry development, female professionals continue to encounter major hurdles in balancing career obligations with personal and family commitments. This study evaluated the work-life balance (WLB) habits of female real estate professionals in Federal Capital, Abuja, Nigeria, and investigated their impact on professional performance. A descriptive survey study design was used, with structured questionnaires distributed to 75 female real estate professionals from chosen public and private agencies by census sampling. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and linear regression via SPSS. Findings revealed that burnout frequency and limited family time were the most prevalent indicators of work-life imbalance, while job flexibility and WLB satisfaction were rated low. Mental and emotional stress alongside limited childcare options emerged as the most critical challenges. Despite these pressures, respondents demonstrated moderate to high professional performance, with most reporting an ability to meet deadlines despite personal responsibilities. The study found a high positive correlation ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.01$) between work-life balance and job performance. Regression results showed that WLB practices explain for 41.1% of the variance in job performance ($R^2 = 0.411$). The study suggests that institutional flaws such as insufficient supervisor assistance, a lack of childcare policies, and restricted wellness programs reduce female professionals' long-term output. Real estate firms are urged to implement flexible scheduling and gender-sensitive policies in order to build inclusive work cultures.

KEYWORDS: Work-life balance, professional performance, female real estate professionals, organisational support, gender bias

1. INTRODUCTION

Women's increased participation in the workforce has had a substantial impact on professional environments in a variety of industries, particularly real estate. While progress has been achieved toward gender equality, female professionals still encounter considerable challenges in managing their work and personal life (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018). Women in the real estate industry frequently confront tight work schedules, family responsibilities, and cultural constraints, making it difficult to maintain a healthy balance between work and life. The real estate sector has traditionally been dominated by men since its inception as a

profession field in the nineteenth century. Despite the fact that women currently account for around 65% of real estate practitioners, men continue to dominate leadership and executive roles (Robbins, 2017),

Highlighting greater gender disparities in career advancement and workplace justice.

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to the ability to balance professional responsibilities and personal commitments without jeopardizing overall well-being. Striking this balance is especially difficult for female real estate professionals, who must balance career performance with family duties. According to research, women frequently emphasize family requirements, which might have an impact on their professional development and job prospects. Pay inequalities, gender discrimination, and a lack of professional development opportunities exacerbate these difficulties (Abiola & Adewumi, 2021; Ejidike & Mewomo, 2023).

In Nigeria, female professionals have to deal with both professional demands and deeply ingrained cultural expectations about family roles, frequently encountering disparate compensation, limited career advancement opportunities, and harassment in the workplace, all of which negatively impact their ability to establish a stable work-life balance (Adeoye & Sulaimon, 2020). Workplace culture as well as gender dynamics have a significant impact on WLB for women in the real estate industry. Flexible work schedules, supportive management, and gender-responsive policies have been found to help employees manage their work and personal lives (Kossek et al., 2011).

Female workers face additional problems in many Nigerian real estate organizations due to restrictive work schedules, excessive hours, and limited support systems. The lack of maternity leave rules, insufficient childcare support, and expectation of availability outside regular working hours all put a burden on women's work-life balance. Besides that, male-dominated leadership structures frequently perpetuate traditional gender norms, makes it difficult for women to bargain for flexible work arrangements or seek leadership positions without experiencing bias (Ibrahim & Lawal, 2021).

Despite a growing body of research on WLB in larger organizational contexts, little empirical focus has been paid to the unique experiences of female professionals in male-dominated industries such as real estate (Onwukwe & Udo, 2020; Oparah, 2022). This disparity is especially obvious in urban areas like Abuja, where societal norms, economic constraints, and organizational rigidity combine to exacerbate work-life problems for women. This study fills this gap by empirically investigating the association between WLB practices and professional success among female real estate professionals in Federal Capital, Abuja, Nigeria. The findings are intended to influence strategic policy actions and organizational reforms aimed at creating more diverse and gender-sensitive workplace settings in Nigeria's real estate industry.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

Abuja, Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT), was officially recognized as Nigeria's capital in 1991, displacing Lagos as the seat of administration. Abuja is strategically located at around 9°4'N and 7°29'E, with a land area of approximately 713 square kilometers within the larger FCT of 8,000 square kilometers (Ajibade, Jamiu, Bitrus & Yusuf, 2024) figure 1.

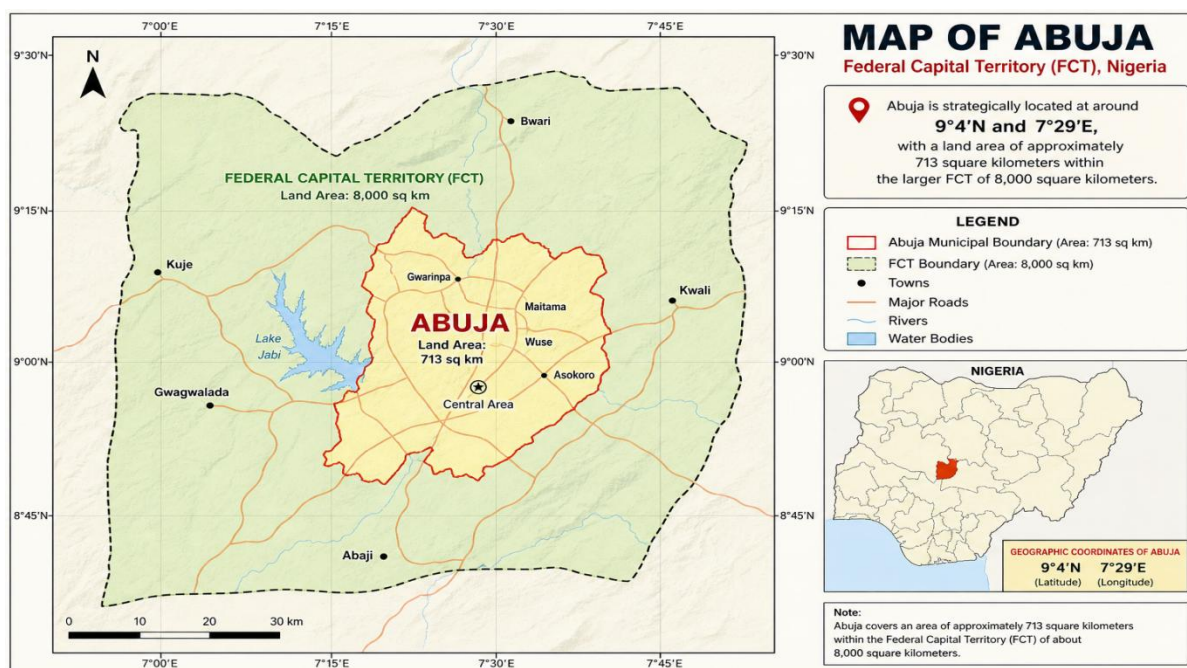


Figure 1: Abuja Municipal area within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Nigeria: Geographic Location and Spatial EXTENT Source: Google.com (2026)

The city was designed to function as an executive, political, and socioeconomic hub, and it has since become one of Africa's most rapidly developed urban centers. Abuja's real estate sector is one of the most active and competitive in Nigeria, thanks to fast urbanisation, strong population growth, and ongoing development of infrastructure (Amadi & Nwankwo, 2023). The city supports a diverse range of real estate operations, including residential development, business properties management, property appraisal, urban development, and investment consulting, resulting in a sizable workforce of professionals in real estate. Female workers in Abuja's real estate business work in a very demanding workplace characterized by strict time constraints, client-driven timetables, and culturally embedded expectations regarding gender (Adeoye & Sulaimon, 2020). The city's cosmopolitan demographic makeup, in addition to the concentration of both government and private real estate organizations, make it an ideal and representative environment for studying work-life balance issues among female real estate workers in Nigeria.

2.2 Research Design

This study used a descriptive survey study approach that is appropriate for gathering data from a sample in order to represent the perspectives of a greater number of people (Ibrahim & Lawal, 2021). The design allowed for the collection of measurable data via a structured questionnaire to elicit important information from respondents. This technique is congruent with the research aims of examining female real estate professionals' opinions, attitudes, and experiences with work-life balance and its impact on professional performance. The target audience consisted of all female professionals currently employed in real estate-related professions in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, operating for both public and private enterprises. These professionals operate in a variety of roles, including estate surveying and appraisal, property management, property agency and brokerage services, property development, urban design, and the financing of real estate (Ezeokoli, 2020). The sample were chosen from identifiable organizations with traceable female employees involved in current real estate practice, guaranteeing that respondents had firsthand knowledge of the work-life balance issues under research.

Primary data were collected directly from female real estate professionals working in various real estate firms and public agencies within Abuja metropolis using structured questionnaires (Oparah, 2022). This approach was adopted to ensure the collection of firsthand, accurate and current information directly relevant to the objectives of the study. The use of primary data was considered most appropriate given the study's focus on personal experiences and perceptions of work-life balance, which cannot be adequately captured through secondary sources alone.

A structured questionnaire intended to record respondents' experiences and opinions in five theme areas related to the study's goals served as the main tool for gathering data (Durojaiye & Olanrewaju, 2023). The present status of balance between work and life, the difficulties in attaining WLB, the influence of WLB practices on professional performance, the impact of WLB practices on personal well-being, and the degree of organizational support for WLB practices within real estate firms were among these topics. In order to enable systematic measurement of responses across all domains, items were measured using a three-point Likert scale, where 3 = High, 2 = Moderate, and 1 = Low.

2.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the five variable constructions was confirmed by testing the research instrument's reliability using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (Ganiyu & Ibrahim, 2021). The Alpha values, as shown in Table 1, were all within acceptable bounds for social science research, ranging from 0.75 to 0.83. These results attest to the questionnaire's reliability in measuring the desired variables across all aspects of work-life balance.

Table 1: Results of Reliability Test

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Interpretation
Work-life balance among female real estate professionals	10	0.82	High Reliability
Challenges faced in achieving work-life balance	10	0.79	Acceptable Reliability
WLB practices and professional performance	10	0.81	High Reliability
Impact of WLB on personal well-being	10	0.75	Acceptable Reliability
Organisational support for WLB practices	10	0.83	High Reliability

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

2.4 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

In order to ensure complete representation of the research population and reduce sample bias, the study used a census sampling technique that targeted all known female real estate professionals inside specific private and government departments in Abuja (Onwukwe & Udo, 2020). Within the chosen groups, a thorough list of female experts employed in pertinent positions, such as property developers, valuers, estate surveyors and urban planners, was created. Based on their active participation in the real estate industry, 75 appropriate female respondents were found, and all 75 of them were given structured questionnaires.

2.5 Method of Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to analyze the collected data; the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to evaluate the quantitative data (Akinsola & Musa, 2023). While inferential statistics like Pearson correlation and linear regression analysis were used to ascertain correlations between variables, descriptive statistics like mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were used to summarize the data. When appropriate, the Range of Dissatisfaction Index (RDI) and Cooperative Satisfaction Index (CSI) were used to gauge respondents' levels of satisfaction and discontent.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Current State of Work-Life Balance among Female Real Estate Professionals

Four important indicators burnout frequency, family time, career flexibility and overall work-life balance satisfaction were used to evaluate the health of work-life balance among female real estate professionals. Table 3 displays the results.

Table 3: State of Work-Life Balance among Female Real Estate Professionals

Descriptions	3	2	1	SMV	NR	SWI	\bar{x}	$(x-\bar{x})$	D ²	
Burnout frequency	108	48	15	171	75	2.28	2.08	-0.20	0.04	
Family time	120	30	20	170	75	2.27	2.08	-0.19	0.03	
Job flexibility	51	66	25	142	75	1.89	2.08	0.19	0.03	
Work-life balance satisfaction	69	40	32	141	75	1.88	2.08	0.20	0.04	
Total						8.32				

Source: Author's Analysis, 2025

On a Likert scale with 3 representing high, 2 representing moderate, and 1 representing low, the weighted mean scores show how each variable stands in relation to the others. Burnout frequency had the greatest ranking (SWI = 2.28), closely followed by family time (SWI = 2.27). These values show a mild but persistent sense of physical and emotional tiredness among respondents, despite being somewhat over the midpoint. However, employment flexibility and overall work-life balance satisfaction scored lower at 1.89 and 1.88, respectively, indicating as many female professionals in real estate find it difficult to find enough time and flexibility to balance work and personal obligations. These results are consistent with a research by Okafor & Abiodun (2020) on Nigerian women who experience burnout as a result of strict schedules and few family-friendly regulations. While Clark (2018) demonstrates increased satisfaction in flexible, hybrid models, Ibrahim & Lawal (2021) highlight gendered care-giving expectations in real estate. The necessity for gender-inclusive policy initiatives in Nigeria's real estate sector is highlighted by the persistence of structural hurdles.

3.2 Challenges Faced by Female Real Estate Professionals in Achieving Work-Life Balance

This section evaluates the challenges faced by female real estate professionals in achieving work-life balance, with particular attention to how they affect estate management practice. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Female Real Estate Professionals in Achieving Work-Life Balance

Challenges	3	2	1	SMV	NR	CI	\bar{x}	$(x-\bar{x})$	D ²
Mental or emotional stress	93	76	6	175	75	2.33	2.12	-0.21	0.05
Limited childcare options	120	40	15	175	75	2.33	2.12	-0.21	0.05
Workplace harassment	102	56	13	171	75	2.28	2.12	-0.16	0.03
Inadequate income	99	54	15	168	75	2.24	2.12	-0.12	0.01
Gender bias at work	90	52	19	161	75	2.15	2.12	-0.03	0.00
Household responsibilities	99	38	23	160	75	2.13	2.12	-0.01	0.00
Lack of organisational policies	54	90	12	156	75	2.08	2.12	0.04	0.00
Lack of flexible working hours	87	40	25	152	75	2.03	2.12	0.09	0.01
Long working hours	60	74	18	152	75	2.03	2.12	0.09	0.01
Lack of family support	51	32	42	125	75	1.67	2.12	0.45	0.21
Total						21.27			

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

The most significant obstacles for female real estate professionals were found to be restricted childcare choices (2.33), mental and emotional stress (2.33), workplace harassment (2.28), and insufficient income (2.24). These results point to important structural and psychological obstacles to juggling work and personal obligations (Osagie, 2024). Long hours (2.03) and family support (1.67) get lower values, indicating that these are less urgent. Moderate to high difficulty is indicated by the overall average (2.12). In line with Nduna & Mjoli (2020), Epie & Ituma (2014), and Johnson & Okere (2021), the findings highlight the need for immediate policy changes for gender-sensitive work environments and validate systemic gendered workplace issues (Ige & Okafor, 2022).

In line with the results of Okafor & Abiodun (2020) and Ibrahim & Lawal (2021), who found that strict schedules and gendered caregiving expectations were the main causes of burnout among Nigerian female professionals, the results show a work environment where professional demands consistently overshadow personal time and well-being. According to Clark (2018), the lack of flexible and hybrid work models exacerbates these structural flaws in the Nigerian real estate industry. The study also revealed that the most significant obstacles to attaining work-life balance were inadequate childcare alternatives and mental and emotional stress, both of which had the highest challenge index values of 2.33. Significant

institutional and financial barriers also included workplace harassment (2.28) and low income (2.24).

These results are in line with those of Nduna & Mjoli (2020), Epie & Ituma (2014), and Ige & Okafor (2022), all of whom affirm the systemic and gendered nature of workplace obstacles faced by women in professional environments dominated by men.

3.3 Work-Life Balance Practices and Professional Performance of Female Real Estate Professionals

Respondents were asked about work-life balance practices affecting their professional performance. Results are presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7.

Table 5: Professional Performance Index

Descriptions	3	2	1	SMV	NR	PPI	\bar{x}	$(x-\bar{x})$	D ²	
I meet deadlines despite personal responsibilities	120	66	2	188	75	2.51	2.16	0.35	0.12	
My employer encourages healthy work habits	84	80	7	171	75	2.28	2.16	0.12	0.01	
I am confident in my job role despite life pressures	102	46	18	166	75	2.21	2.16	0.05	0.00	
Work-life imbalance has affected my job performance	57	82	15	154	75	2.05	2.16	0.11	0.01	
I experience fatigue that affects my performance	45	52	34	131	75	1.75	2.16	0.41	0.17	
Total						10.80				

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

Table 5 gives information about the expert performance of female real estate professionals in terms of their work-life balance. The Performance Index (PPI) data reveal that female real estate professionals perform moderately to well. Meeting time constraints despite personal duties had the highest PPI (2.51), indicating resilience under duress (Ejidike & Mewomo, 2023). Job confidence was also quite high (2.21), while weariness (1.75) and work-life imbalance (2.05) were sources of concern. The overall PPI score of 2.16 indicates modest resilience. Similar studies in the urban development and real estate sectors in Sub-Saharan Africa show that organizational culture, individual drive, and informal support systems greatly buffer the negative impacts of fatigue and family duties (UN-Habitat, 2022). These findings are consistent with Ejidike & Mewomo's (2023) observation that coping techniques and informal support systems buffer stress. However, low scores for employer support (2.28) and exhaustion indicate insufficient institutional structures (Adegbite & Fashola, 2022), emphasizing the need for flexible laws and wellness programs (Ojo, 2021). Thus, the statistics highlight the importance of real estate organizations instituting flexible work practices, wellness programs, and performance support frameworks to ensure female workers' long-term productivity. These statistical results, which are supported by Gidado (2020) and Ilesanmi & Onigbinde (2023), provide a convincing case for institutional investment in balancing work and life programs in Nigerian real estate companies.

Table 6: Correlation between Work-Life Balance and Job Performance

Variables	Work-life Balance	Job Performance
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	1.000	0.641**
Job Performance (JP)	0.641**	1.000

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) Source: Author's Computation, 2025

Table 6 summarizes the findings on the association between work-life balance and job performance among female real estate practitioners. The study found a significant positive association ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.01$) between work-life balance and job performance, suggesting that better balance leads to higher performance. This finding is consistent with Ilesanmi & Onigbinde's (2023) discovery that female professionals who feel empowered to manage their personal duties are more dedicated to their organizations and contribute meaningfully to their employment.

Table 7: Linear Regression Analysis

Model R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.641	0.411	0.403
			0.88932

Source: Author's Computation, 2025

The linear regression model in Table 7 shows a relatively substantial link between work-life balance practices and professional performance among female real estate professionals, with a R value of 0.641. The R Square score of 0.411 indicates that work-life balance practices account for approximately 41.1% of the variation in professional performance. The Adjusted R Square of 0.403, which accounts for the model's predictors, demonstrates the consistency and reliability of the association between work-life balance and job performance (Gidado, 2020). Furthermore, the estimate's standard error of 0.88932 indicates a moderate amount of prediction error in a model, justifying the inclusion of additional institution parameters in future study.

4. CONCLUSION

The balance between work and life of female real estate professionals and its effects on professional performance in the real estate industry were investigated in this study. The results offer strong empirical proof that, in this male-dominated field, work-life balance continues to be a major obstacle for female professionals, with far-reaching effects on their career advancement, productivity, and well-being. Burnout frequently (SWI = 2.28) and restricted family time (SWI = 2.27) were the most common signs of imbalance among respondents, according to the evaluation of the current state of work-life balance.

A moderate to high degree of difficulty juggling conflicting professional and personal obligations is shown by the overall challenge average of 2.12. Despite these obstacles, female real estate agents showed a great deal of professional fortitude. According to the Performance Index, respondents performed at a moderate to high level, with meeting deadlines in spite of personal obligations receiving the highest score of 2.51.

Improving work-life balance directly and significantly increases professional output, as evidenced by a significant positive relationship between work-life balance and job performance ($r = 0.641$, $p < 0.01$) and regression analysis that shows WLB practices account

for 41.1% of variability in professional performance ($R^2 = 0.411$). In conclusion, fundamental, psychological, and institutional hurdles continue to jeopardize the long-term productivity, career progression, and personal well-being of female real estate professionals, despite their remarkable ability to maintain performance under pressure. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate, policy-driven and culturally sensitive interventions at both organisational and regulatory levels.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions are made in light of the study's empirical findings. In order to help female professionals better balance work and family obligations, real estate companies should institutionalize flexible working arrangements, such as remote work alternatives and customizable work hours. To address the widespread emotional tiredness noted among respondents, organizations should equally prioritize employee wellness programs that include counseling, mental health assistance, and stress management seminars. Additionally, management needs to create work environments that promote candid discussion of personal struggles without discrimination or professional repercussions. Gender-sensitive policies such as equal opportunity, maternity rights, and harassment-free workplaces should be promoted by professional associations in the real estate industry. Lastly, government agencies should collaborate with private organizations to develop and implement national labor laws that promote work-life balance, offering tax breaks to businesses who clearly implement gender-inclusive and family-friendly workplace rules.

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