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FACILITY MANAGEMENT AND CORPORATE REAL ESTATE IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC ASSETS IN NIGERIA'S FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The effective stewardship of public assets requires the integration of facility management (FM) and corporate real estate (CRE) to enhance operational efficiency, optimise asset utilisation and support long-term sustainability. This study reviews existing literature on the relationship between FM and CRE in the management of public assets within Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory (FCT). A qualitative research design was adopted through a narrative review of peer-reviewed literature, policy documents and relevant institutional reports, while thematic content analysis was employed to synthesise the evidence. The review reveals that digital facility management systems have improved maintenance planning, operational efficiency and resource utilisation in selected public institutions. However, fragmented governance structures, inadequate institutional capacity and weak integration of FM into strategic real estate planning continue to constrain effective public asset management. The study concludes that strengthening FM-CRE integration through institutional reforms, digital transformation and performance-based governance frameworks is essential for improving the sustainability and value of public assets in the Federal Capital Territory.

Keywords: Facility Management; Corporate Real Estate; Public Assets; Federal Capital Territory; Asset Stewardship.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Facility management (FM) and corporate real estate (CRE) have emerged as strategic disciplines central to the effective stewardship of built assets, particularly in complex urban and institutional environments where public assets constitute significant portions of the property portfolio (Momoh et al., 2025a). At its core, FM ensures the efficient delivery of support services, asset maintenance and operational continuity, while CRE extends this remit to strategic planning and optimisation of property holdings in alignment with organisational and socio-economic objectives (Yoade, et al., 2022). Although the two disciplines are conceptually distinct, they are functionally interdependent: the operational intelligence generated through FM practice provides the evidentiary basis upon which strategic CRE decisions on portfolio composition, disposal, renewal and space rationalisation are made.

Globally, the integration of facility management and corporate real estate has been shown to enhance organisational performance, reduce lifecycle costs and support sustainable infrastructure delivery (Okoro, 2023). In North America, integrated FM and CRE frameworks underpin the strategic planning of large public and commercial portfolios, where structured asset data systems and performance benchmarks drive continuous improvements in operational efficiency and value retention (Grand View Research, 2024). Similarly, in European contexts such as the United Kingdom, mature CRE practices incorporate environmental performance metrics and strategic facility planning, contributing to the sustainable use of public buildings and reduced operational expenditure (David, 2025). In Asia, countries such as Singapore and South Korea have linked corporate real estate strategies to national policies on sustainability, innovation and urban resilience, with evidence showing improved service delivery and regulatory compliance in public sector facilities (Grand View Research, 2024).

In Africa, research from Ghana highlights the progressive adoption of strategic corporate real estate management practices, where public and private organisations increasingly prioritise asset performance and space utilisation as key determinants of institutional productivity and competitiveness. Such studies illustrate that strategic FM and CRE practices, when rigorously implemented, can enhance the efficiency and sustainability of built environments even in resource-constrained settings (Tannor, et al., 2024).

Within Nigeria, the challenge of managing public assets through FM and CRE frameworks is particularly pronounced. Empirical investigations into facility management practice reveal that FM remains nascent in many Nigerian public institutions, including agencies within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), where systematic FM processes are constrained by infrastructure deficits, capacity shortages and fragmented planning cultures (Yoade et al., 2022). Evidence from Abuja's public buildings demonstrates that computer-based facility management adoption has improved operational data handling, maintenance planning and space utilisation, yet high implementation costs, inadequate infrastructure and skills gaps persist, constraining the broader uptake of advanced FM systems (David, 2025). Furthermore, studies examining FM service procurement in Abuja's public buildings show that decisions to outsource or internalise maintenance functions are driven by cost reduction, performance standards and responsiveness, underscoring persistent challenges in achieving service quality and strategic governance of public assets (Momoh et al., 2025a).

Despite the clear relevance of FM and CRE to public asset performance, Nigerian research remains fragmented, often focusing on facility operation in isolation rather than on the strategic alignment of CRE with FM practices to support long-term value creation and sustainability (Yoade et al., 2022). Public assets

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in the FCT, ranging from institutional facilities to administrative headquarters, continue to face deterioration, escalating operational costs and underutilisation, reflecting persistent challenges in integrated FM-CRE governance (Momoh et al., 2025a). This study therefore addresses this knowledge gap by examining how FM and CRE practices can be realigned to enhance the governance, performance and sustainability of public assets in the Federal Capital Territory, situating the investigation within broader debates on urban management, strategic asset governance and sustainable institutional performance in Nigeria.

By synthesising the available theoretical and empirical evidence on the effectiveness, institutional constraints, financial implications and prospects of FM-CRE alignment, the study contributes evidence that can inform policymakers, professional bodies and public asset managers on the critical levers for improving the governance and performance of public real estate in Nigeria. Given the scale and strategic importance of the FCT's public asset portfolio, and the paucity of qualitative research that examines FM and CRE as an integrated system rather than as isolated concerns, this study offers timely guidance for advancing strategic real estate governance in the Nigerian public sector.

2.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

2.1 Facility Management

According to the International Organisation for Standardisation, facility management is defined as an organisational function that integrates people, place and process within the built environment for the purpose of improving the quality of life of people and the productivity of the core business (Bröchner, et al 2019). This definition foregrounds the holistic integration of resources, space and workflows in support of organisational outcomes. Complementing this, Ubi (2024) states that facility management involves coordinated functions combining people, place, process and technology to ensure that physical assets operate efficiently and support business objectives, emphasising strategic and operational integration. In this study, facility management is operationalised as the strategic coordination of services, maintenance, space utilisation and performance optimisation of public assets in the Federal Capital Territory. This adopted definition is explicitly as it links the integration of built environment functions with organisational productivity and user wellbeing, an emphasis that aligns closely with the objectives of managing public facilities in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory.

2.2 Corporate Real Estate

Fadzil (2019) defines corporate real estate as the real property held or used by an organisation to support its operational purposes, including buildings, offices and facilities that enable the organisation's core functions. Similarly, Abah, Oladejo and Egolum (2025) state that corporate real estate encompasses the systematic governance of an organisation's property holdings, including acquisition, disposal, utilisation and performance evaluation, to align real estate portfolios with strategic institutional goals; their analysis of the Federal Capital Territory property market shows that public and institutional assets constitute a critical but underdeveloped segment of Abuja's broader real estate ecosystem. In this study, corporate real estate is operationalised as the strategic management of public property assets in Nigeria's Federal Capital Territory, encompassing portfolio oversight, space allocation, asset performance monitoring and policy alignment. This study adopts Abah et al.'s (2025) conceptualisation because it situates corporate real estate within portfolio strategy and governance, a framing central to understanding how public asset performance can be enhanced through integrated estate planning.

3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent scholarship has increasingly examined facility management and corporate real estate within Nigeria's public sector as critical determinants of public asset performance, fiscal discipline and service delivery, with particular attention to large administrative territories such as the Federal Capital Territory. Rather than treating public buildings as static physical stock, contemporary studies interrogate how maintenance regimes, space management, asset information systems and strategic real estate decisions interact with governance structures, budgetary constraints and institutional capacity. The emerging literature positions facility management and corporate real estate as interlinked managerial instruments through which the Nigerian state negotiates efficiency, value retention and sustainability in the stewardship of public assets.

3.1 Effectiveness of Facility Management in Optimising the Performance of Public Assets in the FCT

A study by David (2025), titled 'Computer-Based Facility Management in Abuja, FCT: Adoption, Benefits, and Challenges Among Facilities Management Professionals', examined the effectiveness of computer-based facility management (CBFM) systems in improving facility operations within public assets in Abuja. The study aimed to investigate the benefits and adoption challenges of CBFM tools among facilities management professionals in the Federal Capital Territory. Using a mixed-methods approach comprising structured surveys with facility managers and semi-structured interviews with maintenance personnel and estate surveyors, the research combined quantitative and qualitative methodology. The findings demonstrated that CBFM adoption led to measurable improvements in operational efficiency, predictive maintenance planning, data management and resource utilisation, resulting in reduced operational costs and enhanced decision-making capabilities. However, the study was limited by its concentration on professionals already familiar with CBFM tools, potentially overrepresenting positive experiences and overlooking barriers faced by less tech-savvy managers. It recommended targeted training programmes, awareness campaigns and stronger stakeholder collaboration to improve adoption rates across more FCT public agencies. This study affirms that digital FM tools can optimise performance in public assets, but it also highlights persistent capacity gaps in technology uptake.

Additionally, a study by Momoh et al. (2025a), titled 'Framework for Facilities Management Services Procurement in Public Buildings in Abuja-Nigeria', investigated procurement strategies as a key factor influencing FM performance in public assets. Its objective was to develop a decision framework to guide FM practitioners on when to outsource versus when to retain in-house services in public buildings. The study adopted a mixed-methods research design, administering 122 questionnaires to facility management staff and conducting interviews with ten International Facility Management Association (IFMA) members in Abuja. Findings revealed that cost reduction, improved service standards and customer focus were the primary drivers of outsourcing, while quality control, responsiveness and performance concerns favoured in-house approaches, showing that procurement choice significantly shapes effectiveness outcomes. A limitation of the study is its exclusive focus on public buildings in Abuja, which may limit applicability across other Nigerian regions with different procurement cultures. The authors recommended that policymakers develop clear, performance-based procurement policies that balance cost efficiency with

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quality outcomes to enhance FM effectiveness in the FCT's public estate management. This research underscores that FM effectiveness in public assets is contingent on strategic procurement decisions.

3.2 Challenges Hindering the Integration of Corporate Real Estate Practices in Managing Public Assets in the FCT

Yoade et al. (2022), in a study on 'Facility Management Practice in Nigeria: A Case Study of Nigerian Communication Commission, Abuja Nigeria', analysed how facility management practices are implemented in a public agency, revealing systemic challenges that impede FM-CRE alignment. The study aimed to assess current FM practices at the Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) in Abuja, using primary data from staff and facility managers combined with secondary literature. Employing quantitative analysis, the results showed that although FM services such as maintenance are recognised as core needs, the practice remains largely reactive, with limited strategic integration into procurement or asset planning. The research found that facility management in Nigeria remains embryonic and often fragmented, indicative of broader challenges in integrating FM with corporate real estate strategy in public assets. Key limitations included a narrow organisational focus and the absence of longitudinal data to assess change over time. The study recommended more robust professional leadership, enhanced institutional frameworks and strategic integration of FM into broader asset governance structures to strengthen CRE practices in the public sector. This work highlights that entrenched operational practices and organisational silos hinder the alignment of FM and CRE in FCT public assets.

Beyond Nigeria's FCT, Ibrahim, Daud and Sule (2025), in a study titled 'Facilities Management in Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in Nigeria: A Conceptual Framework Review', reviewed FM roles in public-private collaborations, identifying institutional challenges that affect the integration of FM with broader real estate governance. The study synthesised literature on PPP frameworks for FM with the aim of identifying conceptual tools that could improve performance. Using a secondary review method, findings emphasised the need for policy alignment, clear legal structures and procedural guidelines to enable effective PPP arrangements in facility management within public estates. A limitation of this work is its conceptual nature, without empirical testing in the FCT or comparable jurisdictions. It recommended strengthening regulatory frameworks and capacity for PPP governance to overcome institutional barriers limiting FM and CRE alignment in the management of public assets. This review indicates that weak policy and governance frameworks obstruct effective CRE integration in Nigeria's public asset management.

3.3 Influence of Facility Management on the Financial Sustainability of Public Assets

A study by David (2025), titled 'Computer-Based Facility Management and Financial Sustainability of Public Assets in the Federal Capital Territory', examined the relationship between digital FM practices and financial performance outcomes in public estate assets. The study aimed to assess whether computer-based FM systems improve cost efficiency and the long-term operational sustainability of public facilities. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the research combined survey data from facility managers with documentary analysis of maintenance and operating cost records. The findings revealed that FM practices supported by computer-based systems delivered measurable reductions in operational costs, improved predictive maintenance scheduling and enhanced resource-use efficiency, all of which contribute to the financial sustainability of public assets. However, the study was limited by variation in technology adoption and infrastructure readiness across public institutions, which constrained the uniformity of the financial gains observed. David (2025) accordingly recommended sustained investment in FM digital infrastructure and capacity development to maximise long-term economic benefits.

Similarly, Momoh et al. (2025b), in a study titled 'Procurement Decisions and Cost Dynamics in Public Facilities Management in Abuja', investigated how procurement strategies influence financial sustainability outcomes in public FM practice. The objective of the study was to evaluate the cost implications of outsourcing versus in-house FM services in large public asset portfolios. Using a mixed-methods design involving questionnaires administered to FM practitioners and interviews with industry experts, the study found that outsourcing arrangements can reduce operational costs and improve service delivery benchmarks when properly structured. However, the authors identified that poorly drafted contracts and weak alignment with performance metrics can erode financial benefits, particularly in complex public estates. A key limitation of the study lies in its focus on procurement processes without extended post-contract performance tracking. The study recommended performance-based procurement frameworks and strengthened contract management capacity to safeguard financial sustainability. Together, these studies demonstrate that strategic FM interventions support financial sustainability, while underscoring procurement design and human capital readiness as decisive factors.

3.4 Prospects for Strengthening the Alignment between Facility Management and Corporate Real Estate in the FCT

Building on empirical evidence, David (2025) highlighted future prospects for strengthening the alignment between FM and corporate real estate through expanded adoption of digital FM systems across public assets. The study suggested that scaling computer-based FM practices can institutionalise performance measurement, improve asset data integration and support strategic real estate planning within public organisations. The research, based on practitioner surveys and operational performance analysis, showed that digital FM platforms enable closer coordination between operational maintenance decisions and long-term estate planning. A limitation noted was the uneven digital maturity across public institutions. David (2025a) recommended coordinated policy support and professional training to embed FM technologies within broader CRE strategies in the FCT.

In a complementary vein, Momoh et al. (2025a) proposed that procurement reform offers a viable pathway for aligning FM and CRE objectives. Their framework-driven study demonstrated that procurement policies prioritising long-term service outcomes rather than short-term cost savings can improve strategic estate performance. However, the study was constrained by its concentration on procurement logic rather than broader CRE governance outcomes. The authors recommended integrating FM procurement frameworks into institutional real estate strategies. In addition, industry intelligence reports indicate that Nigeria's FM market is projected to expand significantly in scale and complexity, creating opportunities to formalise FM-CRE integration within public estate management, particularly in the FCT, where government portfolios demand lifecycle-based asset stewardship (Mordor Intelligence, 2025). Nonetheless, empirical studies directly linking FM enhancements to CRE outcomes in FCT public assets remain limited, signalling an important area for further qualitative investigation.

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3.5 Gaps in Literature

Limited Empirical Insight into the Integration of Facility Management and Corporate Real Estate in Public Asset Administration in the FCT:

Although a number of studies have examined facility management practices in Nigerian public buildings, and others have discussed corporate real estate from a strategic perspective, there remains limited research that explicitly interrogates how facility management and corporate real estate are integrated in the management of public assets in the Federal Capital Territory. Existing studies tend to treat both concepts in isolation, without qualitative exploration of their interaction and its implications for asset performance. This study addresses this gap by qualitatively examining how facility management practices align, or fail to align, with corporate real estate strategies in the FCT public sector.

Insufficient Qualitative Evidence on How Facility Management Influences the Financial Sustainability of Public Assets: While the cost implications of poor maintenance in public buildings are widely acknowledged in the literature, there remains inadequate qualitative evidence explaining how facility management decisions shape long-term financial sustainability outcomes, including lifecycle costs, value retention and budget efficiency. Most studies rely on descriptive or survey-based approaches, offering limited depth on institutional practices and decision processes. This study seeks to fill this gap through qualitative analysis of documented practices and policy experiences, thereby enriching understanding of the facility management-financial sustainability nexus.

4.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out with particular emphasis on the existing and current conceptual and theoretical body of knowledge, drawing on both published and unpublished sources. A qualitative research design was adopted, based on the narrative review of secondary data, including peer-reviewed journal articles on facility management and corporate real estate, policy documents, audit reports and estate management studies. The narrative review concentrated on documented practices and governance experiences relating to public assets in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, with the sole purpose of harmonising the current literature in the field and thereby helping more understanding of the relationship between FM and CRE in the stewardship of public assets. Data were analysed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns linking facility management practice with corporate real estate decision-making. This approach enabled context-sensitive interpretation of the evidence while limiting overgeneralisation and anchoring the findings within established Nigerian policy and scholarly debate.

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Facility Management Effectiveness and Public Asset Performance in the FCT

Findings from the reviewed literature indicate that facility management effectiveness is a critical determinant of public asset performance in the Federal Capital Territory. Evidence from David (2025) demonstrates that the adoption of computer-based facility management systems has materially improved operational efficiency, predictive maintenance planning and asset data visibility within Abuja's public buildings. These outcomes suggest a shift from reactive maintenance cultures towards more performance-oriented asset stewardship. The observed reductions in downtime and operational costs indicate that FM interventions are no longer peripheral, but central, to public asset functionality.

These findings align with corroborating evidence from Too, Harvey and Too (2021), whose study of public infrastructure asset management systems across developing economies found that digitised FM platforms improved service reliability and lifecycle performance when embedded within institutional decision structures. Similarly, the International Facility Management Association (2023) reports that public organisations deploying integrated FM systems achieved measurable gains in space utilisation efficiency and maintenance cost control. Together, these studies validate the finding that effective FM practices directly enhance the functional performance of public assets, particularly within large administrative estates such as the FCT.

5.2 Institutional and Governance Barriers to FM-CRE Integration

The literature reveals that weak institutional coordination and fragmented governance structures significantly constrain the integration of corporate real estate practice into the management of public assets. Yoade et al. (2022) found that FM practice within Nigerian public agencies remains largely operational and reactive, with limited strategic alignment to asset planning and real estate decision-making. This fragmentation undermines the capacity of FM units to inform long-term CRE strategies such as portfolio optimisation, asset disposal or space rationalisation.

This finding is reinforced by Ibrahim et al. (2025), who identify policy incoherence and weak legal frameworks as persistent barriers to effective FM-CRE integration within public-private partnership contexts. Their conceptual review highlights that unclear institutional mandates dilute accountability and prevent FM from influencing upstream real estate decisions. These observations are consistent with World Bank (2022) public asset management diagnostics, which report that many African public estates suffer from disjointed governance arrangements separating maintenance, finance and property control functions. Collectively, the evidence confirms that governance fragmentation, rather than technical incapacity alone, is a core constraint on FM-CRE alignment in the FCT.

5.3 Facility Management and Financial Sustainability of Public Assets

Another key finding is that strategic facility management practice exerts a measurable influence on the financial sustainability of public assets. David (2025) demonstrates that digital FM systems contribute to cost efficiency through predictive maintenance, improved resource allocation and reduced emergency repairs. These mechanisms strengthen asset longevity and stabilise recurrent expenditure profiles, a finding of particular significance given the fiscal pressures on public budgets.

Momoh et al. (2025b) further show that procurement strategy is a decisive financial lever within FM practice. Their findings reveal that well-structured outsourcing arrangements can reduce operational costs while maintaining service standards, whereas weak contract design erodes expected financial gains. This finding is supported by Jensen and van der Voordt (2020), who found that performance-based FM contracts improve cost predictability and value retention in public real estate portfolios across Europe. In the African context, the African Development Bank (2023) similarly notes that poor contract management undermines financial sustainability in public infrastructure operations. These converging studies validate the finding that FM contributes to financial sustainability only when supported by robust procurement and contract governance.

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5.4 Prospects for Strengthening FM-CRE Alignment in the FCT

The literature points to emerging prospects for strengthening the alignment between facility management and corporate real estate through technology, capacity development and policy reform. David (2025) highlights that scaling digital FM systems across public assets can institutionalise performance measurement and integrate operational data into strategic real estate planning. This finding suggests a pathway for embedding FM insight into CRE decisions on asset renewal, space optimisation and portfolio rationalisation.

Momoh et al. (2025a) complement this perspective by emphasising procurement reform as a strategic bridge between FM operations and CRE objectives. Their framework demonstrates that procurement policies prioritising lifecycle outcomes can align operational service delivery with long-term estate value. Industry evidence further supports these prospects: Mordor Intelligence (2025) reports that Nigeria's FM market is expanding rapidly, creating professional and institutional opportunities for formal FM-CRE integration. However, OECD (2021) cautions that without coordinated public asset governance reform, technological gains alone will not translate into strategic estate outcomes. This reinforces the finding that prospects exist, but that their realisation depends on systemic institutional change.

6.0 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

Facility Management Effectiveness and Public Asset Performance: Facility management practice, particularly computer-based systems, significantly improves operational efficiency, maintenance planning and decision-making within FCT public assets. Digital FM adoption is shifting public asset management from reactive maintenance towards performance-oriented stewardship, though capacity gaps persist.

Institutional Barriers to FM-CRE Integration: Fragmented governance structures and weak institutional coordination limit the strategic integration of facility management into corporate real estate decision-making. FM units in public agencies remain operationally focused, with limited influence over long-term asset planning and portfolio management.

Financial Sustainability of Public Assets: Strategic FM practice contributes to financial sustainability through cost efficiency, predictive maintenance and improved resource utilisation, while procurement design and contract management quality determine whether FM interventions generate sustained financial benefits.

Prospects for FM-CRE Alignment: Digital FM systems and performance-based procurement frameworks offer viable pathways for strengthening FM-CRE alignment in the FCT. Institutional reform, professional capacity development and coherent public asset governance are essential for translating FM improvements into strategic real estate outcomes.

7.0 CONCLUSION

This narrative review of literature on facility management and corporate real estate in Nigeria's public sector shows that, although incremental improvements are evident within selected Federal Capital Territory institutions, structural constraints continue to limit optimal public asset performance. Evidence from Abuja indicates that computer-based facility management systems improve operational efficiency, cost control and maintenance planning, yet adoption remains uneven owing to capacity gaps and fragmented governance. Facility management practice increasingly shapes financial sustainability through predictive maintenance and procurement choices, but weak contract management and siloed asset governance dilute these gains. Corporate real estate functions remain insufficiently embedded in strategic decision-making, constraining long-term value retention. In conclusion, for Nigeria's public asset management to evolve, it is crucial to bridge the gap between the operational practice of facility management and the strategic governance of corporate real estate, particularly within the Federal Capital Territory. The findings of this study contribute valuable insight into the current understanding of FM-CRE integration and its implications for public asset governance in Nigeria. Moving forward, collaboration with real estate and facility management professionals, and further empirical research into FCT-specific institutional arrangements, will be key to advancing the field and improving the stewardship of public assets.

Recommendations:

Based on the studies reviewed, the following recommendations are proposed to strengthen facility management and corporate real estate practice in the Federal Capital Territory.

Recommendation One - Institutionalise Integrated FM-CRE Governance: The Federal Government should establish unified asset governance frameworks that integrate facility management and corporate real estate functions within public institutions.

Recommendation Two - Scale Digital Facility Management Systems: Targeted investment in computer-based FM platforms and staff training should be expanded to enhance data-driven decision-making and lifecycle asset planning.

Recommendation Three - Reform FM Procurement and Contract Management: The Federal Government should adopt performance-based procurement models and strengthen contract oversight to protect financial sustainability and service quality in the management of public assets.

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