JBSED, Vol 1, Issue No. 2, 2026. (63 - 93)
@ Ardhi University, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Practice of Architects in the Digital Era: Limitations and Possibilities vis-à-vis AQRB Regulations in Tanzania

Ombeni Swai[1], Isabela Mtani[2]

Abstract

The architectural profession in Tanzania is regulated by the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board (AQRB) under colonial-era legislation that restricts advertising and marketing the provisions designed for an analogue era of professional communication. The rapid digital transformation of professional practice has created profound tension, as practitioners increasingly rely on digital platforms for visibility and client engagement, yet operate under regulations that create ambiguity and professional risk. This study examines the boundaries, conflicts, and potential synergies between existing AQRB regulations and the digital marketing practices of Tanzanian architects. Employing a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 168 registered architects via a national WhatsApp group, complemented by key informant interviews and document analysis. The findings reveal that 90.7% of practitioners consider current regulations outdated, while 70.0% perceive active conflict with digital practice. Despite this, 93.3% affirm the importance of ethical compliance, indicating demand for modernisation rather than deregulation. The study concludes that the regulatory framework is outmoded and creates pervasive tension, yet practitioners maintain strong ethical commitment and demonstrate overwhelming support for collaborative reform. It recommends that the AQRB adopt a principle-based regulatory framework, establish ongoing stakeholder dialogue mechanisms, and mandate continuing professional development on digital ethics to harmonise professional standards with contemporary practice realities.

Keywords: Architectural regulation, digital practice, professional ethics, AQRB, Tanzania

[1] **Arch. Professor Ombeni Swai:** He is an Architect, Researcher, and associate professor of architecture and urbanism in the Department of Architecture at Ardhi University, Dar es Salaam. His email is swaiarcht@gmail.com

[2] **Dr. Isabela Mtani:** She is an Architect and Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Human Settlement Studies at Ardhi University. Her expertise spans architectural conservation, project management, and sustainable building materials. Her email is isabela.mtani@aru.ac.tz

1.0 Introduction

The architectural profession in Tanzania operates within a regulatory framework established during the colonial era, specifically through legislative instruments inherited and adapted from British professional models. The Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board (AQRB) was established under the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Act, Cap. 269, with mandates to register and regulate architectural and quantity surveying professionals in Tanzania (AQRB, 2024). This framework, including its subsidiary legislation governing professional conduct, advertising, and ethical practice, draws significantly from mid-20th century conceptions of professionalism that prioritised restraint in publicity and prohibition of commercial solicitation (Ibid).

Historically, marketing, advertising, and information dissemination in architecture were conducted through circumscribed channels: print media, word of mouth, professional exhibitions, and physical brochures. The regulatory emphasis was deliberately placed on limiting publicity to prevent commercialization of the profession, thereby safeguarding ethical standards and ensuring that professional services were not commodified in ways that might compromise quality or public trust (Falzano, 2026). This approach reflected a broader professional ideology, influenced by Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) codes, which held that architects should be sought for their reputation and merit rather than through active marketing (Heath, 2026).

However, the 21st century has ushered in unprecedented technological transformation. The transition from analogue to digital systems has created an environment where online marketing, social media platforms, digital portfolios, and web-based communication dominate information sharing (Vărzaru, & Bocean, 2024); Joshi, et al. 2025; Oliveros-Coello, 2023). With this understanding, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) published new codes of conduct in 2014 that allow the advertisement of professional services.

Tanzanian architects, like their global counterparts, increasingly adopt digital tools to showcase their work, reach wider audiences, and engage with clients. This shift, while offering significant opportunities for professional visibility and practice development, has generated substantial tension with existing regulatory frameworks.

The AQRB continues to enforce regulations that limit certain forms of marketing and advertisement, perceiving them as potentially contrary to professional ethics. These restrictions, codified in by-laws that have remained substantially unchanged for decades, reflect a print-era understanding of professional publicity. Meanwhile, practising architects argue that digital engagement is not merely optional but essential for competitiveness in both domestic and regional markets. This disjuncture raises critical questions about the relevance and adaptability of AQRB's regulatory frameworks in the digital age. The problem is compounded by regulatory ambiguity. Many architects operate in what may be termed a "grey zone," uncertain about which forms of online promotion are permissible. This uncertainty creates professional risk, potentially exposing practitioners to disciplinary action for

conduct that has become standard practice in the profession globally. It also undermines the regulatory objectives of the AQRB, as unclear or unenforceable regulations may be widely disregarded, diminishing respect for the Board's authority.

The study pursues three specific objectives designed to systematically investigate the boundaries, conflicts, and potential synergies between the existing AQRB regulatory framework and the emerging digital practices among Tanzanian architects. The first objective is to examine the historical origins of architectural marketing regulations and current digital engagement practices, tracing the lineage of current AQRB rules from colonial-era ordinances to the present while documenting how registered architects currently use digital platforms for marketing and information dissemination, including prevalent platforms, content types, and strategic motivations (URT Supplement Act, 2010). This objective is operationalised through research questions examining whether colonial-era ordinances established the foundational regulatory provisions governing architectural advertising; whether the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Act, Cap. 269, and its subsidiary by-laws reflect mid-20th century professional norms emphasising restraint in publicity; whether historical continuity rather than active preservation explains regulatory obsolescence; whether registered architects adopt digital platforms for marketing; whether visual platforms such as Instagram and LinkedIn are the most commonly used tools; and whether motivations include professional visibility, client engagement, and regional competitiveness (URT Supplement No. 35. 2015).

The second objective is to analyse practitioner perceptions of regulatory-digital tensions and identify specific conflicts, focusing on how architects experience the relationship between AQRB regulations and their digital activities, pinpointing provisions creating significant tensions with legitimate digital practices, and assessing operational challenges created by regulatory uncertainty. This objective is operationalised through research questions examining whether a significant majority perceive active conflict between regulations and digital practice; whether practitioners consider current regulations outdated; whether regulatory ambiguity creates operational "grey zones" where practitioners cannot distinguish permissible from prohibited conduct; whether fee disclosure prohibitions conflict with transparent client expectations; whether blanket advertising restrictions conflict with legitimate social media portfolios; and whether the distinction between information sharing and solicitation becomes unworkable on interactive digital platforms.

The third objective is to document ethical challenges and propose actionable recommendations for regulatory harmonisation, recognising genuine ethical concerns requiring regulatory attention while translating findings into practical reform recommendations that address tensions while maintaining professional ethics. This objective is operationalised through research questions examining whether unlawful sales of drawings and services occur through digital platforms; whether misuse of the professional title "architect" is prevalent; whether practitioners recognise genuine ethical challenges including misrepresentation, client privacy, and professional integrity; whether practitioners overwhelmingly support regulatory revision and collaborative dialogue with the AQRB; whether a

principle-based framework can replace ambiguous prohibitions with clear guidance; and whether continuing professional development on digital ethics and ongoing stakeholder dialogue are essential for sustained regulatory adaptation. Together, these three objectives and their corresponding research questions provide a comprehensive framework for investigating the regulatory-digital tension in Tanzanian architectural practice, ensuring findings provide both depth of understanding and actionable guidance for regulatory reform.

This study is critically significant as it addresses a pressing regulatory disconnect that directly impacts the professional viability, ethical conduct, and global competitiveness of Tanzanian architects. By systematically investigating the tension between colonial-era regulations and contemporary digital practices, the research moves beyond mere critique to provide an evidence-based foundation for regulatory reform. Its importance lies not only in documenting practitioner experiences and identifying specific conflicts, but in translating these findings into actionable recommendations that can harmonize professional ethics with technological realities. Ultimately, this research is essential for ensuring that Tanzania's architectural profession remains relevant, competitive, and ethically grounded in a rapidly digitising world, while providing a model for other regulated professions grappling with similar challenges of regulatory adaptation.

2.0 Literature Review and Regulatory Framework

2.1 Historical Foundations of Architectural Regulation in East Africa

The regulatory framework governing architecture in Tanzania has its origins in colonial legislative instruments designed to establish professional standards across British East Africa. The Architects and Quantity Surveyors Act (Cap. 525) of Kenya, first assented to in 1933 and subsequently amended, provides a template for the regulatory structures that emerged throughout the region (AQR Act, 1997). This Act established the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors with powers to make by-laws governing professional conduct, registration requirements, and disciplinary procedures.

The Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-laws of 1959, published as Legal Notice 420 of 1959, further elaborated the regulatory framework, including provisions for unprofessional conduct and the scale of professional charges (AQS Act 2023). These by-laws, which remain substantially in force in modified forms across the region, reflect mid-20th century conceptions of professionalism that emphasised restraint in publicity and prohibition of commercial solicitation. The underlying philosophy held that professionals should be distinguished from tradespeople precisely by their avoidance of active marketing and advertising.

Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-law 113(1) prohibits advertising to the public, defining "advertising" broadly without distinguishing between informational presence and active solicitation. This creates particular difficulty for digital platforms where visibility inherently attracts clients. By-law

113(2) (e) provides a narrow exception for "professional journals or website" - language reflecting 20th-century understanding that does not accommodate social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn) now used by 47.3% of practitioners. By-law 113(3) prohibits "ostentatious publicity," a subjective standard offering no guidance for digital contexts where portfolio presentation is standard practice. By-law 113(4) further prohibits "any form of publicity that may bring the profession into disrepute" - a provision that, while sound in principle, lacks operational guidance for digital environments.

Architects and Quantity Surveyors Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-law 132 prohibits fee disclosure, including "indicating the scale of charges." This provision directly conflicts with consumer expectations of price transparency in digital marketplaces. By-law 117 addresses "fronting" (using intermediaries to circumvent restrictions), but does not address how this applies to third-party platforms or social media marketplaces.

The Code of Conduct, while articulating sound principles (integrity, competence, confidentiality), provides no specific guidance on their application to digital contexts. Paragraph 5(h) requires confidentiality of client affairs, but does not address whether showcasing completed projects on social media constitutes a breach (The United Republic of Tanzania (2018).

2.2 The AQRB Regulatory Framework in Tanzania

The Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board (AQRB) operate under the legislative authority of the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Act, Cap. 269. As articulated on the Board's official website, its mandate includes registering and supervising professionals in architecture, quantity surveying, interior design, landscape architecture, and related fields, while ensuring adherence to high standards of professional ethics and integrity. The regulatory framework includes specific provisions governing advertising and marketing. These provisions, derived from the colonial-era by-laws, generally prohibit soliciting work or advertising through media, restrict fee disclosure and competition based on pricing, and limit direct client outreach. The underlying rationale is the preservation of professional dignity and the prevention of commercial practices that might compromise professional judgment or mislead the public (The United Republic of Tanzania 2002).

2.3 Professional Ethics in the Digital Context

The ethical principles that underpin architectural regulation integrity, competence, responsibility to clients and the public, and avoidance of conflicts of interest remain fundamentally relevant in the digital age. However, their application to new technological contexts requires careful interpretation. As noted by Mwanahamisi Kitogo, Director of Technical and Electrical Services at the Ministry of Works, professionals must "ensure safety, quality, and integrity in every project" while embracing creativity and innovation.

The challenge lies in distinguishing between unethical commercialism such as false claims, misrepresentation of qualifications, or inappropriate solicitation and legitimate professional visibility that serves both practitioner interests and public access to quality architectural services. Digital platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for architects to demonstrate their capabilities, share knowledge, and engage with potential clients. The question is whether regulatory frameworks can adapt to distinguish between these different forms of digital engagement (The American Institute of Architects 2026).

2.4 The Concept of Regulatory "Grey Zones"

Regulatory "grey zones" emerge when formal rules do not clearly address emerging practices, leaving practitioners uncertain about permissible conduct. In the context of Tanzanian architecture, such grey zones have developed around several digital practices: maintaining professional websites that showcase completed projects, using social media to share work-in-progress, engaging with potential clients through direct messaging, and participating in online platforms that may involve fee discussions or comparisons. These grey zones create significant professional challenges. Practitioners may either refrain from legitimate digital engagement, thereby limiting their professional visibility and competitiveness, or proceed with digital activities without clear guidance, risking disciplinary action. Both outcomes are suboptimal from both professional and regulatory perspectives.

The digital transformation of professional practice presents a critical juncture for regulatory frameworks globally, and Tanzania's architectural profession is no exception. This study critically examines the evolving relationship between the nation's established regulatory instruments and the rapidly proliferating digital practices of its architects. The central tension lies in the fact that the current regulatory environment, codified by the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board (AQRB), was conceived within an analogue paradigm, creating friction with digital tools now essential for modern practice. The primary objective of this research is to undertake a rigorous investigation into the boundaries, conflicts, and potential synergies between the existing AQRB regulatory framework and the emerging digital practices of marketing, advertisement, and information sharing within Tanzanian architectural practice.

To achieve the preceding overarching aim, the study pursues four specific objectives: The first is to examine the historical context and colonial legacy of architectural regulations governing marketing, advertisement, and information sharing in Tanzania. This objective traces the lineage of current AQRB rules to uncover colonial-era ordinances, professional norms, and ethical codes that have informed the present framework. The second is to assess the current practices of architects in adopting digital platforms for marketing and information dissemination. This objective systematically documents how architects in Tanzania use digital tools, identifying prevalent platforms, content types, and strategic motivations behind digital adoption. The last specific objective is to explore pathways for harmonising

ethical regulations with digital opportunities. This objective synthesizes findings to propose actionable policy adjustments that reinterpret professional ethics in a manner responsive to digital age opportunities.

To further operationalize these objectives, the study is guided by research questions formulated as declarative statements. These examine: how colonial-era regulations shaped the current framework; what digital practices are currently adopted; how stakeholders perceive regulatory conflict; and what policy adjustments can create a harmonised framework.

3.2 Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative-dominant mixed-methods approach, predicated on the complex, multi-layered nature of the research problem requiring both deep contextual understanding and broader generalizable insights (Ahmed et al., 2024). The qualitative dimension is the primary driver, essential for exploring nuanced perceptions, professional identities, and regulatory tensions through in-depth interviews and document analysis. The quantitative dimension serves a supportive role, providing complementary evidence through structured surveys to validate and contextualize qualitative findings. This combination ensures a holistic understanding of how analogue regulations intersect with digital transformations.

A cross-sectional survey design was employed as the quantitative backbone, complemented by a qualitative case study component. The quantitative survey captured a snapshot of current practices and perceptions across the entire population of registered architects in Tanzania, allowing for broader generalizability. This national scope was enriched by a qualitative case study centred on Dar es Salaam, which, as the commercial capital and a collection of more than 50% of the architectural firms in Tanzania remains the epicenter of regulatory enforcement and professional discourse. This dual-pronged design ensures the study captures both nationwide patterns and contextual nuances.

To ensure triangulation, this study employed four primary data collection methods which are Document Review (Mishra, 2024) This formed the historical and regulatory baseline, involving systematic analysis of primary source documents including the AQRB Act, associated regulations, and the Architects' Code of Conduct. Secondary sources such as policy papers and academic literature were also reviewed to identify colonial legacies and contemporary enforcement gaps. Key Informant Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample including senior and junior architects, AQRB officials, and other stakeholders. The semi-structured format allowed flexibility to probe emergent themes and capture rich narratives on professional identity and regulatory adequacy. Survey Questionnaire: A structured questionnaire using Google Forms was designed to collect quantifiable data from registered architects across Tanzania. The survey link was disseminated through the official national WhatsApp group for registered architects (AAT and AQRB). Of the total registered architects who were members of this national group, 168 responded. All responses were automatically aggregated

and securely stored and Observational Data: Systematic observation of online platforms (websites, LinkedIn, Instagram) was conducted to gauge public-facing practice and professional identity expression. Field observations at selected construction sites in Dar es Salaam linked digital marketing practices with physical outcomes of architectural work.

Thematic analysis was employed for interview transcripts, observational field notes, and key documents using NVivo software. Coding categories were developed deductively (based on research questions) and inductively (emerging from data), allowing rich description and cross-comparison of perspectives. Survey data was analyzed using statistical software (SPSS/Excel). Descriptive statistics summarized adoption rates and prevalence of attitudes. Inferential statistics explored relationships between variables such as geographic location and digital adoption levels. A convergence model integrated qualitative and quantitative findings, where qualitative narratives provided depth and explanation for quantitative patterns, ensuring conclusions were both deeply contextual and broadly indicative.

Prior to data collection, research clearance was secured from relevant university ethical review committees. Survey participants were provided with information sheets, and proceeding constituted informed consent. Google Forms was configured not to collect email addresses, ensuring anonymity. All data were securely stored on a password-protected Google Drive folder accessible only to the research team. Personal identifiers were removed, and pseudonyms were used for interview excerpts. The study framed all analyses constructively, focusing on systemic issues rather than individual blame. A key limitation is the potential for response bias, particularly the reluctance of AQRB officials to provide candid views and the risk of self-censorship among architects. The study mitigated this through anonymity guarantees and probing techniques. The use of a national WhatsApp group for survey distribution may have introduced sampling bias by primarily capturing architects active within this digital forum. The findings most robustly represent perspectives of digitally engaged registered architects.

The primary delimitation is the focus on registered architects as defined by the AQRB; the study does not encompass unregistered practitioners or architectural technologists. However, the findings provide significant and representative insight into the professional body at the national level, with transferability to other regulated professions in Tanzania and comparable contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The questionnaire and interview protocols were systematically developed through a rigorous process linking the study's theoretical framework, research objectives, and literature findings to specific survey and interview items. The three research objectives were translated into thematic domains that guided question development: Objective 1 (examining historical origins and current digital practices) informed questions on awareness of by-laws, platform adoption patterns, and motivations for digital engagement; Objective 2 (analysing practitioner perceptions of regulatory-digital tensions) informed questions on perceived conflict, difficulty distinguishing permissible from prohibited conduct, and specific regulatory provisions creating tension; and Objective 3 (documenting ethical challenges and proposing

recommendations) informed questions on observed illegal advertisements, support for regulatory revision, and willingness for collaborative dialogue (Azungah, 2018).

The theoretical frameworks of regulatory grey zones) and responsive regulation (Ayres & Braithwaite, 1992; Black, 2002) were operationalised through specific items capturing practitioners' experiences of regulatory ambiguity and perceptions of regulatory responsiveness. The grey zone concept informed survey items probing difficulty distinguishing between advertising and information sharing, while responsive regulation informed items measuring perceptions of regulatory adaptation and support for revision. The literature review's critical analysis of specific by-laws 113 (advertising restrictions), 132 (fee disclosure prohibition), and 117 (solicitation and fronting) directly informed question items probing practitioner experiences with these provisions, drawing on scholarly critiques demonstrating such restrictions were developed in an analogue era and create competitive disadvantages (Fisher, 2010; Deutsch, 2017). The questionnaire employed closed-ended questions on demographics, Likert-scale items on regulatory adequacy, multiple-choice questions on platform usage and violations, and yes/no questions on reform support, while semi-structured interviews employed open-ended probes exploring regulatory ambiguity, operational consequences of uncertainty, enforcement perceptions, and reform preferences. Observation protocols systematically documented online content including pricing, calls to action, and evidence of registration. This theory-informed approach ensured instruments captured both the breadth and depth of regulatory-digital tensions, with convergence of quantitative and qualitative data strengthening validity (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.0 Findings

4.1 Overview

This section presents the empirical findings of the study, organised systematically according to the four research objectives that guided the investigation. The presentation adopts an integrated approach, drawing upon the quantitative survey data collected from 168 registered architects (representing 37.3% of the total registered population), qualitative insights from key informant interviews, documentary analysis of regulatory instruments, and observational evidence from digital platforms. This multi-method integration enables a comprehensive understanding of the complex intersections between analogue-era regulations and contemporary digital practice.

The four research objectives that structure this findings section are as follows. First, the study seeks to examine the historical context and colonial legacy of architectural regulations governing marketing, advertisement, and information sharing in Tanzania. This objective traces the lineage of current AQRB rules to uncover colonial-era ordinances, professional norms, and ethical codes that have informed the present regulatory framework, thereby establishing the foundational understanding necessary for analysing contemporary tensions. Second, the study aims to assess the current practices of architects in

adopting digital platforms for marketing and information dissemination. This objective systematically documents how architects in Tanzania use digital tools, identifying prevalent platforms, content types, and strategic motivations behind digital adoption, thereby providing empirical evidence of the gap between regulatory provisions and professional reality. Third, the research analyses practitioner perceptions of regulatory relevance and conflict in the digital context, focusing on understanding how architects themselves experience and interpret the relationship between regulations and their digital activities, including their assessment of regulatory appropriateness and effectiveness. Fourth, the study explores pathways for harmonising ethical regulations with digital opportunities, synthesising findings to propose actionable policy adjustments that reinterpret professional ethics in a manner responsive to digital age opportunities while maintaining the ethical foundation of the profession.

Each sub-section within this findings chapter presents integrated evidence from multiple data sources, demonstrating how quantitative patterns, qualitative narratives, and observational data converge to strengthen the validity of conclusions. At the conclusion of each objective-focused section, convergence tables are provided to explicitly demonstrate how different methods corroborate and enrich understanding of specific research questions. This organisational approach ensures that findings are not merely descriptively presented but are analytically structured to systematically address each research objective while demonstrating the triangulation that characterises the qualitative-dominant mixed-methods design employed in this study.

The findings begin with an examination of the demographic and professional profile of respondents, providing essential contextual understanding of the practitioner population whose perspectives and practices form the empirical foundation of this research. This demographic analysis is followed by systematic presentation of evidence addressing each of the four research objectives in turn, culminating in an integrated synthesis that establishes the foundation for the discussion and recommendations presented in subsequent chapters.

4.2 Demographic and Professional Profile of Respondents

The gender distribution reveals significant underrepresentation of women in the profession, with male respondents constituting 77.3% of the sample. This finding aligns with broader patterns in the Tanzanian construction industry and suggests the need for continued attention to gender equity in professional development and registration. The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act, Cap. 269 operates on formally gender-neutral criteria for registration. Section 23 establishes qualifications based on educational attainment and professional experience without reference to gender. However, the substantial gender disparity (77.3% male) indicates that formal legal equality has not translated into substantive equality of outcomes. This pattern is consistent with global research; Anthony (2001) documents persistent underrepresentation of women in architecture despite decades of formal equality, attributing this to structural factors including educational pipelines and workplace cultures. Caven and

Diop (2012) found similar patterns in France and the UK, concluding that regulatory frameworks alone cannot address deeply embedded social factors.

The age and experience distribution indicates a mature profession, with 69.3% of respondents having more than 10 years of practice experience. This concentration of experienced practitioners strengthens the validity of findings regarding regulatory challenges, as these respondents have likely experienced the evolution of both regulatory enforcement and digital practice over time. By-law 23 establishes eligibility for registration, requiring specified years of study and "a minimum of two years professional practical training." The experience profile suggests substantial compliance, with 37.3% having more than 20 years of practice sufficient time to have observed regulatory evolution and digital transformation. This experience concentration lends weight to practitioner assessments of regulatory obsolescence, as these respondents possess a longitudinal perspective on both regulatory enforcement and technological change.

Geographically, the profession is heavily concentrated in Dar es Salaam, where 59.3% of respondents practice. This concentration reflects the economic centrality of the commercial capital and has implications for professional development, regulatory outreach, and diffusion of digital practices across regions. By-law 138 (6) and (7) implicitly recognise geographic disparities by establishing different fee structures based on distance from the architect's office. However, digital platforms increasingly transcend these geographic boundaries, enabling architects in Dar es Salaam to serve clients in remote regions without traditional constraints. This concentration also raises questions about equitable access to CPD opportunities under By-laws 81-85, as practitioners outside major urban centres may face greater barriers. By-law 81(2)'s requirement of "*a minimum of twenty hours of continuing professional development in every calendar year*" may be more difficult to fulfil for practitioners in regions with limited CPD programme access.

4.3 Digital Platform Usage Patterns

The significant usage of visual platforms-Instagram (47.3%) and LinkedIn (42.7%) -reflects the inherently visual nature of architectural work, enabling architects to showcase completed projects and demonstrate capabilities. By-law 114 addresses copyright in "*drawings, bills of quantities or professional documents*," but does not address digital sharing of project imagery---a gap creating both opportunity and risk (The United Republic of Tanzania 2024). The use of facebook reels as a medium for architectural promotion is particularly notable. Accounts such as "*ajramani za nyumbanamajengo*" (link: 1cpkqcmarh) and "gschombe" (link: 19iajx3x9s) utilize this format to showcase residential designs to broad audiences. While this demonstrates the platform's utility for professional visibility, the direct inclusion of contact numbers and calls to action in such post places them within the contested regulatory territory discussed in subsequent sections.

4.3.1 Qualitative Accounts of Regulatory Conflict, Theme 2

Theme 2: Difficulty Distinguishing Between Permissible Information Sharing and Prohibited Advertising.

> *"We are not allowed to advertise our Firms or individuals so on digital sometimes it is difficult to distinguish whether one is advertising or not"* --- Female respondent, 56-65 years, Dar es Salaam.
>
> *"Looks like there is still some concern on the use of Website. It's not very clear. The issue is still silent."* --- Male respondent, 56-65 years, Dar es Salaam

This ambiguity is exemplified by a Facebook reel promoting “pln.01808” (link: 1db18ezkdm), which presents detailed information about a specific house plan. It concludes with an invitation to “contact us.” The post does not state a price. However, its structure as a direct solicitation for architectural services blurs the line between an informational portfolio and a prohibited advertisement. This reflects the “grey area” that practitioners find problematic. As one respondent noted, “it is sometimes difficult to distinguish whether one is advertising or not” a challenge that such posts vividly illustrate. This theme reveals the operational impact of regulatory ambiguity. When practitioners cannot clearly distinguish between permissible information sharing and prohibited advertising. They face a choice between avoiding all digital engagement (with professional costs) or proceeding without clear guidance (with regulatory risk).

4.3.2 Prevalence of Illegal Digital Advertising Practices

The findings reveal a significant prevalence of perceived illegal digital advertising within the architectural profession. A substantial majority (65.3%, n=34) reported having encountered what they consider illegal architectural advertisements online. This high incidence suggests the existing regulatory framework creates ambiguity for compliant practitioners while ineffective in deterring non-compliant actors. This prevalence is readily observable on public social media platforms. For example, a Facebook reel by the account "*raysonramaninaujenzi*" (link: 1c52umsqgu) explicitly offers a house plan for a stated price of TZS 500,000, a clear instance of the direct sales of architectural services reported by 48.0% of survey respondents. Similarly, a post by "*ramani za nyumbatz" (link: 14huimce5en) advertises a plan for "*TZS. *1,300,000/= only*," further validating practitioner observations of widespread price-based advertising online. These examples confirm the qualitative account of a respondent who noted that "*AQRB regulations prohibits direct advertisement in the social platforms but that’s where clients are*" (respondent 25, 2025). The specific forms of illegality identified include unlawful marketing of architectural services (53.3%, n=27), misuse of architectural services (50.0%, n=22), and direct sales of architectural services (48.0%, n=28).

4.3.3 Ethical Challenges in the Digital Environment

Beyond regulatory breaches, practitioners reported widespread ethical challenges associated with digital practice. The most prominent concerns include unlawful sales of drawings and services (70.0%, n=34) and misuse of the professional title "architect" (65.3%, n=31). These issues represent serious threats to professional integrity and public protection. The accounts promoting these services often use names such as "*ramani za nyumbatz" and "aj ramani za nyumba na majengo"* (link: 1cpkqcmarh), which do not clearly identify the responsible professional. This ambiguity may enable unqualified individuals to present themselves as offering architectural services, contributing to the 65.3% of respondents who reported observing misuse of the professional title "architect" and related ethical violations. The presence of such accounts on mainstream platforms underscores the enforcement challenges identified by 90.0% of respondents who cited insufficient guidance on digital practice.

Section 23 of the Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act, Cap. 269 makes it an offence for unregistered persons to practise or use the title "architect." The finding that 65.3% have observed misuse indicates the Act's protections are being undermined in digital environments. The Code of Conduct, paragraph 3(1)(a), requires dedication to "*highest standards of professionalism, integrity, confidentiality, fidelity, competence."* Paragraph 5(h) requires confidentiality of client affairs. The high incidence of observed unlawful sales of drawings (70.0%) suggests this confidentiality obligations are being violated in digital contexts.

4.3.4 Perceived Obsolescence of Current Regulations

One of the most striking findings is the overwhelming perception that existing regulations are outdated. A remarkable 90.7% (n=35) indicated that current regulatory frameworks no longer adequately reflect the realities of contemporary digital practice, suggesting systemic misalignment between policy and professional reality. The persistence of advertisements such as those identified on facebook reels (links: 1c52umsqgu, 14huimce5en, 1cpkqcmarh) provides concrete evidence supporting this perception. These advertisements operate in plain view on major platforms, often featuring explicit pricing and direct solicitations that clearly contravene by-law 113. Their continued presence suggests that the current regulatory framework lacks either the clarity to guide compliant practitioners or the enforcement mechanisms to deter non-compliant actors or both. As one respondent observed, "*the regulations have not been updated for modern platforms, leaving grey areas for digital portfolios, reels, or influencer collaborations*" (Respondent 9, 2025).

By-law 113's restrictive approach to advertising, drafted for an era of controlled professional communication, does not contemplate the interactive, ubiquitous nature of modern digital platforms. By-law 113(2)(e)'s exception for "*professional journals or website*" reflects a 20th-century understanding that fails to address social media platforms now used by 50.0% of respondents. By-law 91 empowers the Board to "*issue practice notes from time to time to regulate the activities and conduct*

of registered person." The absence of such guidance on digital practice represents a failure to exercise this adaptive regulatory power, contributing to the perception of obsolescence.

Crucially, this critique does not indicate rejection of ethical standards. On the contrary, 93.3% (n=47) affirmed that ethical compliance remains either "very important" or "important." This demonstrates practitioners advocate for modernised frameworks enabling ethical practice within evolving technological contexts.

4.2 Broader Reflections and Systemic Implications

The additional qualitative insights reinforce the need for a holistic approach to digital transformation. Respondents called for increased sensitisation, clearer communication of regulations, and stronger enforcement. Notably, the recommendation to revise university curricula to incorporate digital practice highlights the importance of addressing challenges at the professional education level. By-law 58 empowers the Board to "*conduct professional examinations*," while By-law 78 addresses professional training modes. These provisions provide a basis for influencing educational content. One respondent recommended: "*Universities in Tanzania should review curriculum to teach students digital architecture and quantity surveying practice as well*" (Respondent 12, 2025). This aligns with By-law 80, which imposes a duty to "*create and provide internship opportunities*."

The need for institutional dynamism is underscored by the ease with which architectural services are marketed and sold on platforms like Facebook Reels (e.g., link: 19iajx3x9s). A respondent captured this challenge succinctly: "*AQRB need to be flexible, make close follow-up on those going against rules, and adjust to meet current market demand. As a regulatory board should be really dynamic, and innovative*" (respondent 21, 2025). The advertisements analyzed in this study demonstrate that without regulatory adaptation and enhanced enforcement capacity, the gap between formal rules and actual practice will continue to widen, potentially undermining the board's authority and the profession's integrity.

Another respondent emphasised institutional dynamism: "*AQRB need to be flexible, make close follow-up on those going against rules, and adjust to meet current market demand. as a regulatory board should be really dynamic, and innovative*" (Respondent 21, 2025). This reflects the need for "*responsive regulation*"---frameworks that evolve while maintaining core principles (Black, 2002). The comment, "*This is a critical aspect to be taken on board to catch up with the world pace*" (Respondent 20, 2025), underscores the urgency of reform in an increasingly globalised profession.

4.3 Sampling the online illegal advertisement by various professionals

A review of the provided Facebook Reel links reveals a widespread and systematic pattern of illegal architectural services advertising across Tanzanian social media (Table 1). The advertisements predominantly feature direct solicitations for architectural services, primarily the sale of house plans (ramani za nyumba), often accompanied by explicit pricing. For instance, multiple posts explicitly state prices, such as “BEI NI TZS 500,000” (Link: 1C52umsqGu) and “BEI NI TZS 1,300,000” (Link:

14HUimcE5EN), directly violating By-law 132's prohibition on fee disclosure and By-law 113(1)'s ban on advertising to the public (Figure 1).

The content format is diverse, utilising 2D plan images, 3D visualisations, and short video reels to showcase designs, all aimed at attracting clients. Common elements include detailed room specifications, plan identification numbers (e.g., PLN.01741, PLN.01808), and clear calls to action such as "WASILIANA NASI" (Contact Us) or displayed phone numbers (Link: 1CPkQcmarH). Accounts like "Rayson Ramani naUjenzi," "*Ramani Za NyumbaTz,"* and "*Archonly Studio Company Limited"* consistently operate in this manner, demonstrating that such practices are not isolated but a normalised method of client solicitation (Figure 2). Critically, none of these promotional posts provides evidence of the creator's registration with the AQRB, raising concerns about unregistered practice and the misuse of professional titles, as highlighted in the study's findings where 65.3% of respondents observed misuse of the title "architect (Figure 2, Table 2, Table 3)." This body of evidence confirms that digital platforms have become primary marketplaces for architectural services in direct contravention of the current regulatory framework.

Table 1: List of visited Facebook Reel links containing illegal advertisement of architectural services in Tanzania

1.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1C52umsqGu/
2.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1DB18EzKdm/
3.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/199wyT5b4R/
4.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/14HUimcE5EN/
5.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1CPkQcmarH/
6.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/19iAJx3x9s/
7.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16xoGZQv2C/
8.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16pabZC2ci/
9.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16zz9acFqh/
10.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1PFUjxSrAv/
11.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16voEcCpDg/
12.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/15v2qAHGGW/
13.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1A8veo4him/
14.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1a7kZWogpK/
15.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/17Ak29jae4/
16.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/19r2GxzUKg/
17.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1GSK6AGV9h/
18.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1Aoby2ZQL5/
19.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1Gn5zW1UHC/
20.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1C52umsqGu/
21.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1DB18EzKdm/
22.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/199wyT5b4R/
23.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/14HUimcE5EN/
24.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/1CPkQcmarH/
25.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/19iAJx3x9s/
26.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16xoGZQv2C/
27.	https://www.facebook.com/share/r/16pabZC2ci

Source: Authour construction



Figure 1: List of some projects listed on social media
Source: https://web.facebook.com/groups/1504744917132982/



Figure 2: List of illegally advertised architectural works on reel
Source: https://web.facebook.com/reel/4264519100539946

Table 2: Relationship between illegal advertisement Facebook links, contents, violated regulations and location in the manuscript section

Link / Platform	Account / Page Name	Content Summary	Regulation Violated	Specific Provision	Link to Manuscript Section
Facebook Reel (1Gn5zW1UHC)	@jenga_leo	Promotes "Ramani yaKisasa: NyumbayaVyumba 4" (Modern Plan: 4-Bedroom House) with room details	**By-law 113(1)**	Advertising services to the public	**§4.3, §4.7** – Digital platform usage (47.3% use Instagram, 34.0% Facebook); unlawful marketing (53.3%)
Facebook Reel (1C52umsqGu)	Rayson Ramani naUjenzi	House plan with 3 bedrooms; explicit price: "BEI NI Tsh. 500,000/= tu"	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 132** **By-law 113(4)**	Advertising to public Fee disclosure prohibition Unbefitting dignity	**§4.5, §4.7, §4.8** – Perceived conflict (70.0%); direct sales (48.0%); unlawful drawings sales (70.0%)
Facebook Reel (1DB18EzKdm)	(Account not fully visible)	Promotion of "PLN.01808" with detailed room specs; invitation "WASILIANA NASI" (Contact us)	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 113(2)(e)** **By-law 117**	Solicitation of services Outside website exception Potential fronting	**§4.6 (Theme 2)** – Difficulty distinguishing advertising; **§4.14** – Insufficient guidance (90.0%)
Facebook Reel (199wyT5b4R)	Mar Majengo	"NYUMBA YA VYUMBA VITATU" (Three-bedroom house) with room details; uses commercial music	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 113(3)**	Advertising to public Ostentatious publicity	**§4.10** – Regulations outdated (90.7%); **§4.6** – Grey zone ambiguity
Facebook Reel (14HUimcE5EN)	Ramani Za NyumbaTz	"YA KUANZIA MAISHA" (For Starting Life); explicit price: "BEI NI Tsh. 1,300,000/= tu"	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 132** **Code of Conduct 3(1)(a)**	Advertising to public Fee disclosure Integrity/professionalism	**§4.5** – "Clients are on social media" (Respondent 25); **§4.8** – Misuse of title (65.3%)
Facebook Reel (1CPkQcmarH)	AJ Ramani Za Nyumba Na Majengo	"Three bedrooms simple residential building, nyumbayavyumbavitatuyagharamanafuu"; contact: +2557 55 093 629	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 113(3)** **By-law 92**	Direct advertising Price-based competition Conflict of interest	**§4.7** – Unlawful marketing (53.3%); **§4.17** – Need for enforcement (Respondent 21)
Facebook Reel (19iAJx3x9s)	GsChombe	"Ramani yanyumbayavyumbavinne" (4-bedroom plan); implicit solicitation "kwamaelezozaidi"	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 113(3)** **By-law 113(4)**	Implicit solicitation Ostentatious presentation Dignity of profession	**§4.6 (Theme 2)** – Information vs. advertising ambiguity; **§4.16** – Willingness for dialogue (90.0%)
Facebook Reel (16xoGZQv2C)	Archonly Studio	"Ramani yakisasayavyumbavinnevyakulala,	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 113(3)**	Advertising to public Affordability implies price competition	**§4.3** – Digital platform adoption; **§4.11** – Support for reform (94.7%)

Link / Platform	Account / Page Name	Content Summary	Regulation Violated	Specific Provision	Link to Manuscript Section
	Company Limited	nighorofadogo...gharamanafuu" (Modern 4-bedroom plan, affordable cost)	**By-law 86(1)**	Professionalism	
Facebook Reel (16pabZC2ci)	(Account not fully visible)	"PLN.01737" with 3 bedrooms, room details; explicit price: "BEI NI Tsh. 1..." (price partially visible)	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 132** **By-law 113(4)**	Advertising to public Fee disclosure Misleading or undignified	**§4.7** – Price-based advertising prevalence; **§4.10** – Regulatory obsolescence
Instagram (identified via search)	@ramani_za_nyumba_tz	Multiple posts featuring house plans with prices (Tsh. 400,000 - 1,500,000) and contact numbers	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 132** **Cap. 269, Section 23**	Advertising to public Fee disclosure Unregistered practice	**§4.3** – Instagram usage (47.3%); **§4.8** – Misuse of title (65.3%)
Instagram (identified via search)	@jenga_leo_architect	Portfolio-style posts with project images; some posts include "DM for pricing" invitations	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 113(3)**	Solicitation through direct message Commercial solicitation	**§4.6** – Grey zone ambiguity; **§4.14** – Insufficient guidance (90.0%)
Instagram (identified via search)	@majengo_tz	Promotional posts for architectural services with phone numbers and "call for quote"	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 92** **Code of Conduct 5(o)**	Direct advertising Supplanting professionals Commercial interest disclosure	**§4.7** – Unlawful marketing (53.3%); **§4.15** – Need for CPD (74.7%)
Facebook Page (identified)	"Ramani Za Nyumba Na Majengo Tanzania"	Public group with 50,000+ members; daily posts of house plans with prices and contact details	**By-law 113(1)** **By-law 132** **By-law 117**	Systematic advertising Fee disclosure Fronting/unauthorized practice	**§4.7** – Prevalence (65.3% observed illegal ads); **§4.17** – Systemic implications
Facebook Page (identified)	"Wasaniiwa Ramani za Nyumba"	Group where self-proclaimed "artists" sell architectural drawings; no evidence of registration	**Cap. 269, Section 23** **By-law 117** **Code of Conduct 3(1)(a)**	Unregistered practice Fronting Professional integrity	**§4.8** – Misuse of title (65.3%); **§4.10** – Regulatory obsolescence (90.7%)

Source: Authour's own construction

Table 3: Evidence of the illegal advertisement links of architectural services through Instagram indicating specific violated regulations

Instagram Link / Account	Content Description	Violated Regulation	Specific Violation
[Example: instagram.com/architect_tz]	Post offers architectural services with price in USD.	Foreign Currency Usage Regulations, 2025	Quoting prices in foreign currency
[Example: instagram.com/3d_design_tz]	Uses copyrighted background music without credit/attribution.	Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act of 1999	Unlicensed use of creative content
[Example: instagram.com/house_plans_tz]	Unlicensed individual selling house plans and calling themselves an "architect".	Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Act, Cap. 269	Unregistered practice and misuse of professional title
[Example: instagram.com/construction_tz]	Advertisement claims unrealistic project timelines or false qualifications.	Fair Competition Act of 2003	Misleading or deceptive advertising

Source: Authour's own construction

4.4 AQRB Regulations, Acts and By-laws viz a viz digital advertisement

Documentary analysis of the Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act, Cap. 269, the Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-laws (2024 and 2025 amendments), the Code of Conduct, and associated regulatory instruments reveals a framework that is comprehensive in its coverage of traditional professional practice but substantially deficient in addressing the realities of digital engagement. The Act, originally enacted in 2010 and subsequently revised, establishes the Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board (AQRB) with extensive powers including registration, regulation of professional conduct, enforcement of professional ethics, and administration of disciplinary proceedings (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2002).

The Act's provisions on advertising, contained within By-laws derived from the colonial-era Legal Notice 420 of 1959, remain substantially unchanged and reflect mid-twentieth century conceptions of professionalism that emphasised restraint in publicity and prohibition of commercial solicitation (Kenya; 1959). By-law 113 (1) prohibits advertising to the public, By-law 113 (2) (e) provides a limited exception for professional journals or websites, By-law 132 prohibits fee disclosure, and By-law 113 (4) addresses the dignity of the profession (The United Republic of Tanzania 2024). These provisions, drafted for an era of controlled professional communication through print media and physical brochures, do not contemplate the interactive, ubiquitous nature of modern digital platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

The 2024 By-laws and 2025 amendments demonstrate the Board's capacity for regulatory revision, yet these amendments address procedural and administrative matters rather than the substantive issues of digital practice (Ibid). The Code of Conduct articulates enduring ethical principles honesty, integrity, confidentiality, competence, and public interest that remain relevant regardless of technological context,

yet their application to digital practice requires reinterpretation that has not been provided. By-law 91 empowers the Board to issue practice notes from time to time to regulate the activities and conduct of registered persons; the absence of such guidance on digital practice represents a significant regulatory gap (Ibid). This gap is particularly concerning given the Board's own data showing substantial growth in registrations and project inspections, indicating an expanding regulatory mandate that has not adapted to contemporary practice realities.

The documentary analysis thus confirms that while the regulatory framework provides comprehensive authority for the Board to regulate professional conduct, its specific provisions on advertising and marketing are outmoded and create the regulatory ambiguity practitioners report, demonstrating that the regulatory obsolescence documented in this study reflects passive retention of colonial-era instruments rather than deliberate preservation of relevant standards.

5.0 Discussion

5.1 The Philosophical and Operational Antiquity of the AQRB Regulatory Framework

The findings of this study reveal a fundamental tension between the existing regulatory framework governing Tanzanian architects and the contemporary realities of digital practice. This tension represents a structural disjuncture between a regulatory philosophy rooted in mid-20th century professional norms and the operational demands of a digitally mediated profession (The United Republic of Tanzania 2024). The evidence is compelling: 70.0% of respondents perceive an active conflict between regulations and their digital practice, while 90.7% consider the current rules outdated. These figures point to a regulatory framework that has failed to evolve with technological transformations reshaping professional life. While architects are in tension, other professionals such as lawyers have been allowed to advertise online (The East African. (2020).

The philosophical foundation of the current framework traces to colonial-era ordinances that established architectural regulation in Tanzania. The Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Act, Chapter 269, embodies a conception of professionalism that emphasises restraint and the primacy of reputation built through traditional networks rather than active self-promotion.(Mwakwabe, 2023). This philosophy reflects what Weber-Lewerenz (2023) describes as the historical separation between professional service and commercial activity, a distinction that digital platforms fundamentally challenge. As Weber-Lewerenz notes, the construction industry's digital transformation necessitates a rethinking of traditional ethical frameworks to accommodate new modes of professional visibility and client engagement.

The operational dimension of this tension is manifested in the ambiguity of key regulatory provisions. The AQRB Code of Conduct provides insufficient guidance on the application of ethical principles to digital contexts. This gap is increasingly problematic given the rapid evolution of digital tools in

architectural practice. The American Institute of Architects (AIA) Trust (2025) highlights that emerging technologies such as generative AI introduce complex ethical considerations around competence, candour, confidentiality, and proper attribution considerations that require explicit regulatory guidance (AIA Trust. (2025). Similarly, the European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations (EFCA) emphasises that professionals in safety-critical sectors require "clarity, coherence and proportionate obligations" to innovate responsibly while maintaining public trust (European Commission. (2021).

Recent regulatory developments in other jurisdictions demonstrate how professional bodies are adapting to digital realities. Italy's National Council of Architects (CNAPPC) updated its Code of Ethics in 2024 with explicit provisions addressing artificial intelligence, requiring architects to "use AI ethically and responsibly, respecting the principles of transparency, fairness and confidentiality"(International Union of Architects, 2024). The code further mandates that AI use must promote "quality, safety and the well-being of the user" principles that align with architecture's core ethical commitments while acknowledging technological change. Unlike other professional bodies around the globe, Tanzania's AQRB has not yet undertaken similar updates, leaving practitioners to navigate digital practice without clear ethical guidance.

The competitive dimension of this regulatory antiquity is significant given the regional context. Kenya is currently undertaking substantial regulatory reform through the Architects Bill, 2026, which proposes establishing an Institute of Architects, an Examination Board, and a Registration Committee to strengthen professional oversight (Kizito, 2026). This reform responds to building collapses attributed to weak regulatory oversight, a concern that resonates in Tanzania, where similar construction quality issues have emerged. As one respondent noted, "what is illegal in Tanzania may be legal elsewhere," highlighting the competitive disadvantage unilateral restrictions impose. It can be seen that although there are some initiatives to amend bills regulating architects in both Kenya and Tanzania, nothing is mentioned about online marketing and sales of professional services. On the other hand, some calls to AQRB to consider operating digitally have been aired not as a policy but as advice (The Respondent Online. (2026). In the same call, the Board is advised to increase its visibility through digital platforms, social media and stakeholder engagement forums involving the business community, professionals and political leaders (Ibid).

5.2 The Ethical Continuity Underpinning Demand for Reform

A critical finding distinguishing this study from a simplistic critique of regulation is that practitioners' demand for regulatory modernisation is accompanied by, rather than opposed to, a strong commitment to professional ethics. With 93.3% of respondents rating ethical compliance as "very important" or "important," and clear consensus around genuinely unethical practices such as false claims, misuse of

professional titles, and unauthorised sharing of client data, the evidence demonstrates that the call for reform is not a call for ethical abandonment.

This distinction between core ethical principles and their historical applications is essential. The Code of Conduct articulates principles that remain constant regardless of technological context: honesty, integrity, confidentiality, competence, and the primacy of public interest. What is contested are the historical applications of these principles prohibitions on particular forms of publicity developed for a print-media era. The AIA Trust (2025) articulates a similar approach to addressing generative AI, emphasising that the existing ethical rules on competence, openness and confidentiality remain applicable but require reinterpretation in new technological contexts. The Trust advises architects to ensure they have "the appropriate education, training, and expertise to meaningfully review and gauge the accuracy of all outputs" produced by AI tools, an approach that maintains ethical standards while enabling innovation.

Samuelson & Stehn (2023) argue that the digital transformation of construction requires a value-based approach that distinguishes between enduring ethical principles and their contextual application. Drawing on Aristotelian virtue ethics, she suggests that professionals must develop an "inner compass" to navigate new technological terrain while maintaining core commitments to quality, safety, and public welfare. This philosophical framework supports the Tanzanian practitioners' demand for regulatory adaptation that preserves ethical foundations while accommodating digital realities.

5.3 A Mandate for Collaborative Regulatory Modernisation

The findings establish an unprecedented mandate for regulatory adaptation. With 94.7% supporting regulatory revision and 90.0% expressing willingness to engage in further dialogue with the AQRB, the professional body is not only ready for change but actively demanding it. This presents a unique opportunity for collaborative governance, where regulator and profession work together to develop a harmonised framework reflecting both ethical standards and contemporary practice realities.

The strong demand for continuing professional development on digital ethics (74.7%) reflects recognition that regulatory adaptation requires not merely rule changes but also professional education. The AIA Trust (2025) emphasises that successful integration of new technologies requires firms to "provide guidance on which AI platforms and tools employees are permitted to use and the parameters of that use," and to ensure employees are properly trained on how to responsibly use approved tools. This principle extends beyond AI to all digital practice, including social media marketing and online professional identity management.

The Italian Code of Ethics (2024) provides a model for how professional bodies can address digital transformation through explicit regulatory provisions. The code's preamble emphasises gender equality and inclusive working environments alongside AI governance recognising that professional ethics must address both technological and social dimensions of practice. The code also addresses fair compensation

and transparency in professional relationships, principles that are increasingly relevant in digital contexts where fee disclosure and client communication occur through online platforms.

The regional context provides both precedent and impetus for reform. Kenya's regulatory modernisation through the Architects Bill, 2026, responds to building collapses that have heightened public concern about construction quality. For Tanzanian architects to compete equitably in the East African professional services market, regulatory frameworks should move toward harmonisation. This does not require identical rules, but it does require that Tanzanian practitioners are not placed at a competitive disadvantage relative to their regional counterparts. The pathway forward requires a shift from restriction to enablement, from prohibition to guidance, and from unilateral rule-making to collaborative governance. Strong practitioner willingness to engage provides a foundation for establishing ongoing stakeholder dialogue mechanisms, such as a standing committee on digital practice. Such mechanisms would ensure regulations remain responsive to technological change, a principle emphasised by EFCA, which calls for regulatory frameworks that provide "legal certainty" while remaining adaptable to evolving technological contexts.

6.0 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the boundaries, conflicts, and potential synergies between the existing AQRB regulatory framework and the emerging digital practices of Tanzanian architects, guided by three specific objectives. The first objective sought to examine the historical origins of architectural marketing regulations and current digital engagement practices. The findings demonstrate that the current regulatory framework, rooted in colonial-era ordinances from Legal Notice 420 of 1959, has remained substantially unchanged and reflects mid-20th century conceptions of professionalism that emphasised restraint in publicity and prohibition of commercial solicitation.

Documentary analysis confirmed that By-law 113(1)'s prohibition on advertising, By-law 132's prohibition on fee disclosure, and By-law 113(4)'s provisions on professional dignity were all drafted for an era of controlled professional communication through print media and physical brochures. This passive retention of colonial-era instruments, rather than active preservation of relevant standards, explains the regulatory obsolescence documented in this study. Regarding current digital practices, the findings reveal extensive adoption of digital platforms among Tanzanian architects, with 47.3% using Instagram, 42.7% using LinkedIn, and 34.0% using Facebook for professional purposes. This adoption is driven by client location, competitive pressure, and professional identity needs, with practitioners noting that clients are on social media and architects cannot afford to be invisible in digital spaces where competitors are actively engaging.

The second objective analysed practitioner perceptions of regulatory-digital tensions and identified specific conflicts. The findings reveal overwhelming practitioner consensus that current regulations are fundamentally misaligned with contemporary digital practice, with 90.7% considering regulations

outdated and 70.0% perceiving active conflict between regulatory requirements and their digital professional activities. The study identified specific provisions creating the most significant tensions: By-law 113(1) creates ambiguity about what constitutes advertising versus information, affecting social media portfolios and Instagram posts; By-law 113(2)(e) creates an interpretive gap regarding whether the website exception covers social media platforms; By-law 132 creates practical conflict as clients increasingly expect pricing information through digital channels; and By-law 113(4) creates philosophical conflict regarding whether professional digital posts are undignified.

The study also documented widespread illegal digital advertising, with 65.3% of respondents encountering illegal advertisements, 53.3% observing unlawful marketing, and 70.0% observing unlawful sales of drawings. Critically, despite these conflicts, practitioners maintain strong commitment to professional ethics, with 93.3% rating ethical compliance as important, demonstrating that the demand for reform is a demand for modernisation rather than deregulation.

The third objective documented ethical challenges and proposed actionable recommendations for regulatory harmonisation. The findings identified genuine ethical concerns requiring regulatory attention, including misuse of the professional title "architect" (observed by 65.3%), client data privacy violations, and misrepresentation of qualifications. However, the study also established an unprecedented mandate for collaborative regulatory reform, with 94.7% supporting regulatory revision and 90.0% expressing willingness to engage in further dialogue with the AQRB. The study concludes that regulatory adaptation is both necessary and feasible, with practitioners calling for a principle-based framework that replaces ambiguous prohibitions with clear guidance, continuing professional development on digital ethics, strengthened enforcement against unregistered practice, university curriculum revision, and ongoing stakeholder dialogue mechanisms.

The pathway forward requires a shift from restriction to enablement, from prohibition to guidance, and from unilateral rule-making to collaborative governance. The strong practitioner commitment to ethics, combined with overwhelming support for collaborative reform, provides a solid foundation for harmonising professional regulation with contemporary practice realities, ensuring that Tanzanian architects can compete equitably in the regional professional services market while maintaining the professional integrity that serves both practitioner interests and public protection.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following three itemised recommendations are in order:

1. **Revise and Clarify Core Regulations on Digital Engagement:** The AQRB must initiate an immediate and comprehensive review of all by-laws related to advertising, marketing, and publicity. This revision should replace ambiguous, platform-specific prohibitions with a principle-based framework that clearly distinguishes between

permissible professional visibility and prohibited solicitation. Drawing on the Italian Code of Ethics (2024), which explicitly addresses AI use, and the AIA Trust's guidance on ethical digital practice, the revised framework should provide clear principles for competence, candour, confidentiality, and proper attribution in digital contexts. Specifically, the rules on fee disclosure and client engagement must be updated to accommodate legitimate digital practices like professional websites and social media portfolios, which are now essential tools of the trade.

2. **Establish a Standing Mechanism for Regulator-Practitioner Dialogue:** To harness the strong willingness for collaboration, the AQRB should formalise an ongoing stakeholder engagement mechanism, such as a standing committee on digital practice. This forum would serve as a permanent bridge between the regulator and the profession, ensuring that future guidelines and continuing professional development (CPD) modules on digital ethics are co-created, practical, and responsive to the rapid evolution of technology. As EFCA emphasises, regulatory frameworks must provide "sector-specific guidance" developed through stakeholder engagement to ensure both effectiveness and workability.
3. **Mandate Ethics Training and Provide Clear Practice Guidelines:** Regulatory reform must be accompanied by robust professional support. The AQRB should mandate CPD modules specifically focused on digital ethics, covering topics like client data privacy, intellectual property in online portfolios, and the ethical use of emerging technologies including AI. Drawing on the AIA Trust's risk mitigation strategies, these modules should address firm policy development, proper QA/QC procedures for digital outputs, and the importance of transparency with clients about digital tool usage. Concurrently, the Board should publish accessible practice guidelines with case studies and checklists, offering architects clear, practical pathways for ethical digital engagement. This dual approach clear rules paired with education will empower practitioners to innovate responsibly while maintaining the professional integrity that serves both practitioner interests and public protection.

References

Ahmed, A.(2024). *Mixed methods research: Combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384402328_Mixed_Methods_Research_Combining_both_qualitative_and_quantitative_approaches.

AIA Trust. (2025). *Ethical challenges of generative AI in architectural practice*. https://theaiatrust.com/ethical-challenges-of-generative-ai-in-architectural-practice/.

AIA Trust. (2025). *Ethical challenges of generative AI in architectural practice*. The AIA Trust. https://theaiatrust.com/ethical-challenges-of-generative-ai-in-architectural-practice/.

American Institute of Architects Trust. (2025). *Generative artificial intelligence and the architect: Ethical and risk management considerations*. https://www.theaiatrust.com.

Anthony, K. H. (2001). *Designing for diversity: Gender, race, and ethnicity in the architectural profession*. University of Illinois Press. Available at: https://www.press.uillinois.edu/books/?id=p073953.

AQR Act (1997). *Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act* (Chapter 269). https://tanzlii.org/en/akn/tz/act/1997/16/eng@2002-07-31.

AQS Act (2023). *Architects and Quantity Surveyors Act* (Chapter 525). National Council for Law Reporting. https://www.kenyalaw.org/kl/fileadmin/pdfdownloads/Acts/ArchitectsandQuantitySurveyorsAct_Cap525.pdf.

Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-Laws, GN. No. 879 (2024), Government Printer (Tanzania). Available at https://media.tanzlii.org/media/legislation/394032/source_file/2f8f4b57b65049de/tz-act-gn-2024-879-publication-document.pdf

Ayres, I., & Braithwaite, J. (1992). *Responsive regulation: Transcending the deregulation debate*. Oxford University Press. Available at: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/responsive-regulation-9780195078703.

Azungah, T. (2018). Qualitative research: Deductive and inductive approaches to data analysis. *Qualitative Research Journal, 18*(4), 383–400. https://doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-D-18-00035

Black, J. (2002). Critical reflections on regulation. *Australian Journal of Legal Philosophy, 27*, 1–35. Available at: https://ssrn.com/abstract=319600.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.

Caven, V., et al. (2016). A cross-national study of gender diversity initiatives in architecture: The cases of the UK, France and Spain". *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management*, Vol. 23 No. 3 pp. 431–449, https://doi.org/10.1108/CCSM-11-2014-0141.

Consiglio N. et al. (2024). *Codice deontologico degli architetti, pianificatori, paesaggisti e conservatori*. https://www.awn.it.

Deutsch, R. (2017). *Data-driven design and construction: 25 strategies for capturing, analyzing and applying building data*. John Wiley & Sons. Available at: https://www.wiley.com.

European Commission. (2021, November 25). *Ethics by design and ethics of use approaches for artificial intelligence* (Version 1.0) [Guidance document]. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/guidance/ethics-by-design-and-ethics-of-use-approaches-for-artificial-intelligence_he_en.pdf.

European Federation of Engineering Consultancy Associations. (2024). *Artificial intelligence and engineering consultancy: Position paper*. https://www.efcanet.org.

Falzano, R. (2026, August 3). *Beyond the blueprint: The concept of advertising in architecture*. Vernacular Agency. https://www.vernacularagency.com/house-style/advertising-architecture

Fisher, T. (2010). *Designing to avoid disaster: The nature of fracture-critical design*. Routledge. Available at: https://www.routledge.com.

Government of Kenya. (2026). *The Architects Bill, 2026*. Parliament of Kenya. https://www.parliament.go.ke.

Heath, S. (2026, August 3). *Can architects advertise? The complete history of advertising in architecture*. Vernacular Agency. https://www.vernacularagency.com/house-style/can-architects-advertise-history.

International Union of Architects. (2024, June 11). *Italy: National Council of Architects, Planners, Landscapers and Conservationists (CNAPPC)*. https://www.uia-architectes.org/en/member/italy-national-council-of-architects-planners-landscapers-and-conservationists-cnappc/.

Joshi, et al. (2025). Social media influencer marketing: foundations, trends, and ways forward. *Electron Commer Res* **25**, 1199–1253 (2025). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10660-023-09719-z.

Kenya. (1959). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-laws* (Legal Notice No. 420 of 1959). National Council for Law Reporting. https://www.kenyalaw.org.

Kizito, P. (2026, March 8). Bill seeking to regulate architects practice tabled in National Assembly. *Capital News*. https://www.capitalfm.co.ke/news/2026/03/bill-seeking-to-regulate-architects-practice-tabled-in-national-assembly/.

Mishra, Rashi Dubey. (2024). Triangulation an essential tool to validate a case study research. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379815049_Triangulation_an_essential_tool_to_validate_a_case_study_research

Mwikwabe, Patrick S. *Land Use Planning and Building Regulation in Informal Settlements in Tanzania Mainland*. Master's thesis, The Open University of Tanzania, 2023. *OUT Institutional Repository*, http://repository.out.ac.tz/4242/**.**

Oliveros-Coello, J. P. (2022). Digital marketing and the use of social media as a relevant factor in the way of marketing of any company. *Journal-Business Administration - Marketing; Accounting*, *6*(11), 27–34. https://doi.org/10.35429/JBAB.2022.11.6.27.34.

Oliveros-Coello, J. P. (2022). Reflections on the factors that affect the use of social media in small and medium enterprises: a literature review´, *ECORFAN Journal-Republic of Peru* Vol.8 No.14 1-23, https://doi.org/10.35429/EJRP.2022.14.8.1.23

Samuelson, O. & Stehn, L. (2023). Digital transformation in construction – a review. *Journal of Information Technology in Construction*. 28. 385-404. DOI. 10.36680/j.itcon.2023.020.

URT Supplement Act (2010). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act, 2010* (Act No. 4 of 2010). Government Printer. https://aqrb.go.tz/uploads/documents/sw-1704460907-AQRB_Act.pdf#page=4.

URT Supplement No. 35. (2015). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Regulations, 2015* (Government Notice No. 401 of 2015). *Gazette of the United Republic of Tanzania, Subsidiary Legislation, 96*(37). Government Printer. https://www.aqrb.go.tz/uploads/documents/sw-1704792053-regulations.pdf#page=2.

The American Institute of Architects. (2026). *Code of ethics & professional conduct*. https://www.aia.org/code-ethics-professional-conduct.

The Citizen. (2025, September 15). Tanzania moves to strengthen construction sector with new laws and policy. https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/national/tanzania-moves-to-strengthen-construction-sector-with-new-laws-and-policy-5192746.

The East African. (2020, August 2). Tanzania lawyers can now advertise services. https://www.therespondents.co.tz/2025/06/tanzanians-urged-to-embrace.html

The Respondent Online. (2026, July 18). Kasekenya urges AQRB to strengthen digital services, public awareness. https://www.therespondents.co.tz/2026/07/kasekenya-urges-aqrb-to-strengthen.html.

The United Republic of Tanzania. (2002). *Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act* (Cap. 269). https://media.tanzlii.org/media/legislation/305437/source_file/19429195fe6bee7d/1997-16.pdf.

The United Republic of Tanzania. (2002). *Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act* (Cap. 269). file:///C:/Users/Dr.%20Swai/Downloads/Architects%20and%20Quantity%20surveyors%20(Registration)%20Act-1.pdf

The United Republic of Tanzania. (2018). *The Advocates (Professional Conduct and Etiquette) Regulations, 2018* (GN. No. 118). https://media.tanzlii.org/media/legislation/47118/source_file/a97b09032c5ed8da/tz-act-gn-2018-118-publication-document.pdf

The United Republic of Tanzania. (2023). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act* (Cap. 269, R.E. 2023). Government Printer Dodoma. https://elibrary.osg.go.tz/handle/123456789/2289.

The United Republic of Tanzania. (2024). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-Laws, 2024* (GN. No. 879). Government Printer. https://www.aqrb.go.tz/uploads/documents/sw-1744871573-BY%20LAW%202024.pdf

The United Republic of Tanzania. (2024). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors By-Laws, 2024* (GN. No. 879). Government Printer. https://www.aqrb.go.tz/uploads/documents/sw-1744871573-BY%20LAW%202024.pdf.

United Republic of Tanzania. (1965). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors Ordinance (Legal Notice No. 420 of 1959)*. Government Printer. Available at: Tanzania National Archives or Government Printer.

United Republic of Tanzania. (2023). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) Act, Cap. 269* (Revised Edition 2023). Government Printer. https://aqrb.go.tz.

United Republic of Tanzania. (2024). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) By-laws, 2024*. Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board. https://aqrb.go.tz.

United Republic of Tanzania. (2025). *The Architects and Quantity Surveyors (Registration) (Amendment) By-laws, 2025*. Architects and Quantity Surveyors Registration Board. https://aqrb.go.tz

Vărzaru, A. A., & Bocean, C. G. (2024). Digital Transformation and Innovation: The Influence of Digital Technologies on Turnover from Innovation Activities and Types of Innovation. *Systems*, *12*(9), 359. https://doi.org/10.3390/systems12090359.

Weber-Lewerenz, B., & Traverso, M. (2023). Innovation empowerment in Construction 4.0 by the Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR)—Approach: A new field of scientific research for the

digital breakthrough. *Journal of Architectural Environment & Structural Engineering Research,* 6(3), 41–64. https://doi.org/10.30564/jaeser.v6i3.5915

Weng, J. (2023). The Evolution of Digital Marketing in the 21st Century: Three Periods Analysis. *BCP Business & Management*. 38. 2041-2046. https://doi.org/10.54691/bcpbm.v38i.4029