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A Critical Review of the Registration Process of Architects - Its Highs and Lows (Case Study: Uganda)

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ABSTRACT: The practice of architecture worldwide is one of the most regulated. To become an Architect, one must undergo a rigorous process, first at an architecture school and then in real-life practice. This paper critically examines the architect registration process in Uganda, highlighting its highs and lows, and recommends what must be done to improve the process. Using the mixed-methods approach consisting of surveys, thematic analysis, and document reviews, the study assesses the individual experiences of graduate architects who have undergone this process. To ensure the validity and reliability of research tools, the questionnaire was reviewed by five experts with in-depth knowledge of the architectural registration process. The study acknowledges that compulsory placement of graduates under a registered architect is useful as it exposes the graduates to practical skills, which include management of projects, office management, communication, supervision skills, and legal compliance, which cannot be easily provided in architecture schools. However, the registration procedure is considered very rigid and outdated due to its long registration timelines, lack of communication, and failure to accommodate the views of the new specialties in the course. In conclusion, it is acknowledged that reform is necessary in the registration process, which will include digitizing the documentation and feedback process, as well as introducing a modular assessment method. It also calls for flexible mentorship models that are tailored to meet professional requirements.

Keywords: *Architects, Registration process, Uganda.*

INTRODUCTION

The field of architecture holds an important role in creating global built environments (Zhou et al., 2025; Lawrence, 2020). Architects have the responsibility of setting up structures that not only meet aesthetic and practical demands but also abide by the necessary safety and regulatory frameworks (Okonta et al, 2024; Ofori et al, 2022). In many countries, the procedure of registration and regulation of architects is necessary to ensure that only skilled and capable professionals are assigned such crucial tasks (Zhou et al., 2025; Lawrence, 2020). The necessity for architects to register with their professional bodies is a cornerstone of ensuring ethical practice, maintaining professional standards, and safeguarding public welfare (Alharbi et al, 2015; Sunday et al., 2013). Besides, the urban planning landscape is undergoing evolution, placing high demands on modern architects (Alharbi et al, 2015). Such demands call for increased efficiency, embracing construction methods that reduce waste, invigorating built-up spaces, and employing worldwide design principles (Alharbi et al, 2015). Besides, effective public engagement through public dialogue, premeditated placemaking, and the incorporation of information and communication technologies (ICT) into the design process are now important things to consider.

Across the world, the standards for registration of architects are put in place to protect the profession's dependability, secure the well-being of the public, and instill confidence in the constructed world (Okonta et al, 2024; Ofori, 2022). However, Zhou et al. (2025) and Ofori (2022) stress that the registration standards of architects and implementation procedures can differ considerably across different countries, which can cause disparities in professional practice and affect the general value of architectural outputs. Jamieson et al. (2011) and Lawrence

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(2020) highlight a growing shift in architectural work from the traditional practice of architecting and supervising large projects to simply coordinating professionals and contractors. The two authors instead say that more architects have adopted the design-build approach, where one construction company takes full responsibility for the entire project. This, therefore, necessitates the regulation of the architectural profession, starting with registration.

All over the world, countries design registration standards for architects to maintain the integrity of the profession, uphold public safety, and nurture trust (Okonta et al., 2024). A case in point is in Australia, where the New South Wales Architects Registration Board demands that candidates must fulfill rigorous criteria if they are to become a registered architect. The requirements include holding a master's degree in architecture, having at least two years of experience in a practical studio, or completing approximately 3,300 hours of work experience across 15 selected performance standards (Wang 2024). It is also mandatory that the architect completes the professional examination set by the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA). In the United Kingdom (UK), the architectural profession has been under close protection and oversight by the government since the Architect (Registration) Act of 1931 was enacted (RIBA, 2020). This has made the profession a desirable and prominent career path, as seen by the competitive application procedure at the university, where each position on average attracts 5.6 applicants (RIBA 2020).

In Nigeria, the federal government attaches significant value to the process of registering architects. Oyedele (2018) and Sunday et al. (2013) assert that strict regulation of the architectural profession to maintain ethics and integrity is necessary, given the country's rich cultural tapestry and the swift expansion of its built environment. The architectural registration and practice in the country is governed by the Architects Registration Council of Nigeria (ARCON). As a result, Okonta et al (2024) exclaim that this has improved Nigeria's built-up environment, with many modern structures set up across the country. However, the architectural field in the country has had its fair share of challenges. For instance, Lagos experienced the collapse of 115 buildings in 10 years (2012-2022), raising concerns about the quality of architects produced and the effectiveness of the registration process in the country (Oyodele, 2018; Okonta et al., 2024). Oyedele (2018) adds that these issues have affected the marketability of practising architects in the country, especially in neighbouring countries.

In Uganda, the field of architecture has undergone historical changes, regulatory challenges, and the evolving needs of a rapidly developing nation (Myers, 2011). Uganda's cultural legacy, colonisation, and modernisation have also profoundly shaped the country's architectural profession. A case in point is that during the colonial times, the architectural styles of Europe found their way into the country, especially with the design of administrative buildings, churches, schools, and residential areas (Pieterse, 2010; Irumba, 2015). With Uganda attaining independence in 1962, the demand for national identity in architecture became profound, with more natives integrating local materials and designs in architecture. However, the development of the architectural profession suffered a setback in the 1970s and early 1980s due to political and economic instability (Myers, 2011). Nevertheless, over the last three decades, Uganda's fast urbanisation and economic growth have accelerated the demand for architectural services (Irumba, 2015). Globalisation has also had an impact on the profession, with the embracing of international design trends and technologies

In Uganda, the legal structure for architects is envisioned to protect the public by ensuring that practitioners display both ability and ethical conduct. The foundation of this controlling system is the Architects Registration Act (Cap. 269), which was enacted in 1996. This act created the Architects Registration Board (ARB), which was given the power to take charge of architect registration, define the standards for architectural practice, and nurture educational development in architectural sciences. Despite the presence of a regulatory framework, the architecture profession in the country has faced numerous challenges, particularly in the construction sector, where building collapses have been reported annually over the last 20 years, with some resulting in fatalities (Irumba, 2015). Irumba (2010) attributes these accidents to poor supervision, use of unqualified staff, and inadequate construction methods. Kakitahi et al. (2013) add that the industry is facing many challenges of redoing work due to poor quality output. Against this background, the study aims to review the registration process of architects in Uganda, examining its strengths and weaknesses, analyzing its impact on the quality of the architectural profession, and providing recommendations for improving the architect registration process.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper employed a mixed-methods approach using both qualitative and quantitative methods to assess the architectural registration process in Uganda effectively. According to Creswell (2011), due to the multidimensional nature of the study, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are needed to investigate the views and explanations of respondents effectively.

The study population included registered architects, graduate architects, officials from the Architects Registration Board (ARB), and other stakeholders in Uganda's building sector. A target sample size of 100 registered architects and 20 stakeholders was selected for the study. Both purposive and simple random sampling were used for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select key informants, such as ARB officials and experienced architects, who have a specific

understanding of the registration process. Simple random sampling was used to choose a symbolic sample of architects and stakeholders for the measurable survey, ensuring a balanced representation of the population. This cross-method approach enabled the collection of both qualitative perceptions and quantitative information (Crewell & Clark, 2011).

For data collection methods, a review of documents from the Architects Registration Board (ARB), including the legal requirements like the Architects Registration Act (Cap. 269), the minutes of their meetings, and annual reports, was conducted. This evaluation aimed to assess the board's operating performance and practical procedures, observing how registration procedures are implemented. Also, a review of the relative universal architectural registration principles was carried out to observe the best practices.

An online survey was disseminated to many architects and building industry participants to collect key information. The survey tool was designed to gather perceptions of the apparent competence, transparency, and availability of the architectural registration structure. The survey also comprised questions about the apparent effect of the registration process on the entire profession. An online questionnaire was used to gather primary information from architects and other stakeholders in the architectural profession. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended questions, looking for data on the registration process, problems encountered, and recommendations for improvement. The respondents included architects, officials from the Architects Registration Board (ARB), graduate architects, and other stakeholders in the building sector.

To ensure the validity and reliability of research tools, the questionnaire was reviewed by five experts with in-depth knowledge of the architectural registration process. They gauged the significance and precision of each question. The inner reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, a statistical measure of reliability. This examination established the tool's capability to produce reliable data. An experimental study was conducted before the central investigation to assess the functionality and precision of the survey.

For quantitative data, descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) were used to summarise and present survey data. Inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) were also used to examine the relationships between variables and to highlight important predictors. Thematic analysis was done to recognise and classify frequent themes and patterns within the qualitative data. Qualitative data was also analysed using content analysis to establish the sense within the statistics (McCorkindale, 2010).

Literature Review

The Need for Architects' Professional Registration.

Maintaining honesty and reliability in the architectural profession is crucial and extends beyond mere sector promotion. Shahruddin & Husain (2024) assert that the architectural profession is inherently connected to following ethical guidelines, legal requirements, and the need to protect public safety and the interests of the clients. The architectural profession is evolving, constantly influenced by technological changes, shifting societal expectations, and growing attention to environmental issues. This approach has demanded a major development of the abilities and awareness needed by specialists within the architectural sector (Myers, 2011). To sustain reasonable business growth, architects must now learn new and complicated tools and approaches such as building information modelling (BIM), geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing, and big data analytics (Myers, 2011). These skills are crucial for navigating the challenges of evolving market circumstances and meeting the changing expectations of customers. Recent studies, as seen in Zhou et al. (2015), propose that the official registration of architects within the construction field acts as both an indicator of qualified standing and a key element for career advancement. This accreditation indicates an all-inclusive proficiency set, combining theoretical knowledge with significant hands-on skill. Besides, trends recognised by Shahruddin & Husain (2024) show a growing requirement for architects who display inventive, cross-disciplinary abilities within construction companies. They have also identified a persistent disparity between the availability of experienced architects and the industry's growing demand. Official registration of architects, which typically includes know-how through thought-provoking examinations and assessments, sustains industry standards for methodical know-how, legal understanding, and moral conduct (Kokemuller, 2019). This documentation regularly hints at heightened career projections, commercial strength, and raised specialised standing, nurturing both industry appreciation and customer self-confidence. Accredited engineers and builders are compelled by an obligation to maintain the occupation's ethical values, making sure that their services continue within the latitude of their credentials (Bowen et al., 2008). This qualification indicates a wide-ranging mastery of architectural knowledge and hands-on application, requiring a strong intelligence of accountability in client relations. The industry's vibrant nature requires incessant specialised growth, necessitating architects to stay up-to-date with the changing principles and customer wants to provide first-class and applicable services (Zhou et al., 2015). Attaining a registered architect qualification documentation can expressively augment a qualified architect's career opportunities, as it proves their competence and proficiency (Wang et al., 2024). However, the real examination lies in warranting that these architects regularly produce high-quality services to their customers, instead of just trusting their accreditation as a surety. Upholding professional principles is fundamental in this environment. As experts, architects must act in the best interests of their customers.

Nonetheless, outward influences such as individual interests, reputation, or monetary advancement can occasionally affect this obligation. The enticement to prioritize self-centredness over specialized values can be particularly robust for registered architects, potentially leading to subpar services and harm to clients (Wang et al., 2024). Zhou et al. (2015) explain that the assessment of registered architects includes a professional ethics component, but certified architects may still meet ethical problems in their daily work. Despite their specialised accreditation, engineers may be lured to abuse their know-how and the confidence placed in them by customers to compromise professional values for personal gain. Wang et al. (2024) assert that this conduct not only disrupts ethical values but also undermines the credibility of the building industry. While rules and principles offer a structure for professional behaviour, they may not always be enough to stop architects from prioritizing self-interest over skilled beliefs. Therefore, the building industry, a major driver of economic development worldwide, is not protected from ethical trials. Challenges such as bid shopping, dishonest statements, and unreliable contractors can dent the integrity of the industry (Kokemuller, 2019). These problems often stem from professional conduct motivated by commercial interests.

Registered architects, in particular, may face enticements that can compromise their professional morals (Sunday et al., 2013; Zhiou et al., 2025). The pursuit of high profits can compel some architects to compromise their design and construction standards or conceal critical information in agreements. Such conduct not only undermines specialized morals but also harms clients' interests and tarnishes the industry's image. Architects must balance between chasing monetary advantage and safeguarding professional morals. Ensuring their services meet or exceed industry standards is critical. Depending entirely on credentials to secure benefits is inadequate; observance of professional principles is vital for the long-term growth of the occupation and the healthy development of the industry. Eventually, the credentials of registered architects can produce major economic earnings, but only by prioritizing professional morals can the industry achieve sustainable growth and maintain its integrity.

Regulatory Frameworks for Architectural Practice

Safeguard the well-being, sustainability, and artistic excellence of built environments, which centres on the actual ascendency of architectural practice. However, the explicit instruments for this domination deviate significantly internationally, reflecting varied traditional, social, and financial backgrounds (Kubba, 2018). Aware of this difference, the International Union of Architects (IUA) has put in place guiding ideologies for monitoring architectural practice. These values underline the significance of official registration, certification, and ongoing specialized progression (IUA, 2019). Besides, the UIA acknowledges the need for flexible and responsive supervisory agendas to accommodate the unique national and provincial conditions under which they operate.

Scrutinising the supervisory structures governing the architectural profession universally exposes both shared aims and differences (IUA, 2019). While the implications of official registration and certification, the imperative of continuing specialised development, and the emphasis on ethical performance are regularly highlighted, differences exist. Specifically, the level of governmental control (whether national, regional, or local), the role of regulatory bodies in promoting growth and morals, and the specific principles for registering and certifying—together with educational credentials, hands-on skills, and examination requirements—show noteworthy changes. (IUA, 2019).

Within the United Kingdom, the Architects Registration Board (ARB) functions as the supervisory organisation for architectural practice, handling the register of qualified architects and putting in place yardsticks for specialised conduct (ARB, 2020). Supplementing this, the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) promotes continuous continuing proficient development and advocates for ethical principles, while the Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT) epitomises the interests of architectural engineers. Across the European Union, the regulation of architectural practice falls under the purview of individual member states, with registration and certification being normally instructed. The Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) enables the appreciation of specialised credentials and backs the promotion of specialised growth across the EU (ACE, 2020).

In Australia, the regulation of architectural practice is decentralised to specific state and provincial establishments, with registration and certification being a dominant condition. The Australian Institute of Architects (AIA) supports the profession through the promotion of professional development and ethical behaviour, while the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia (AACA) provides a national framework for authorisation and registration (AIA, 2020). Equally, in Japan, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism (MLIT) supervises architectural practice, putting in place the standards for professional performance and assigning registration and licensing (JIA, 2020). The Japan Institute of Architects (JIA) backs specialised progression and moral practice, while the Architectural Institute of Japan (AIJ) functions as a representative organisation for architectural scientists and instructors (JIA, 2020).

Kubba (2018) recognises a key hindrance arising from dissimilar registering rules: the lack of mutual recognition among countries. Subsequently, engineers having registration in one country may be stopped from practising in another, notwithstanding having equivalent credentials and know-how. Kubba (2018) warns that this deficit in coordination limits the uninhibited exchange of professional architectural services, thereby hindering the worldwide integration of the field.

Differences in instructional fundamentals, training procedures, and empirical burdens constitute an added problem. For instance, in the United States, licensure requires a degree in architecture, passing the Architect Registration Examination (ARE), and accumulating identified professional know-how (AIA, 2020). Equally, the United Kingdom demands accomplishment of Part 1 and Part 2 architectural training, passing the Part 3 examination, and the realisation of selected professional know-how for registration (ARB, 2020). The varied nature of specialised certifying principles hinders building engineers from receiving global training. Results from the International Union of Architects (UIA) indicate that many nations insist on demanding certifying requirements, which can discourage architects skilled from outside their territories from working (UIA, 2019). For instance, some regulatory organisations require architects trained in other countries to first study and obtain additional certificates, yet the documents they have and their experience are similar to those of local architects.

This absence of standardisation in certifying processes also affects architectural practice internationally. Research by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) proves that the lack of shared recognition contracts between countries can hinder architects' capacity to partake in assignments across international borders (AIA, 2020). Accordingly, this hampers the flow of new design concepts and best practices among engineers from numerous social backgrounds. Additionally, the differences in certifying principles can cause a mix-up among clients. Research carried out by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) shows that customers may be unaccustomed to the different licensing demands for architects in different countries (RIBA, 2020). This information gap can cause uncertainty and disbelief concerning the credentials and know-how of architectural practitioners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The section presents the study's findings from the questionnaires and interviews. The findings are based on the objectives of the study, which are: to assess the efficiency of the current architect registration process in Uganda; to analyse the impact of the registration process on the quality of the architectural profession, and to provide recommendations for improving the architect registration process in Uganda.

Registration Status of the Respondents

Of the 102 study participants, 50% were registered architects, 40.2% were graduates with more than two years of practice, 7.8% of the respondents were graduates with less than two years of practice, while 2.94% did not belong to any of the three categories (Fig. 1). This makes the study representative of all the different categories of respondents, hence giving credibility to the study. According to Babbie (2020), inclusivity of key demographic or professional categories in the sample contributes to external validity, which affects the degree to which findings can be generalized beyond the study. Creswell (2014) emphasises the importance of sampling strategies that ensure representativeness to enhance the validity and credibility of findings in both quantitative and mixed-method studies.

Efficiency of the Current Architect Registration Process in Uganda

The study evaluated the efficiency of Uganda's current architect

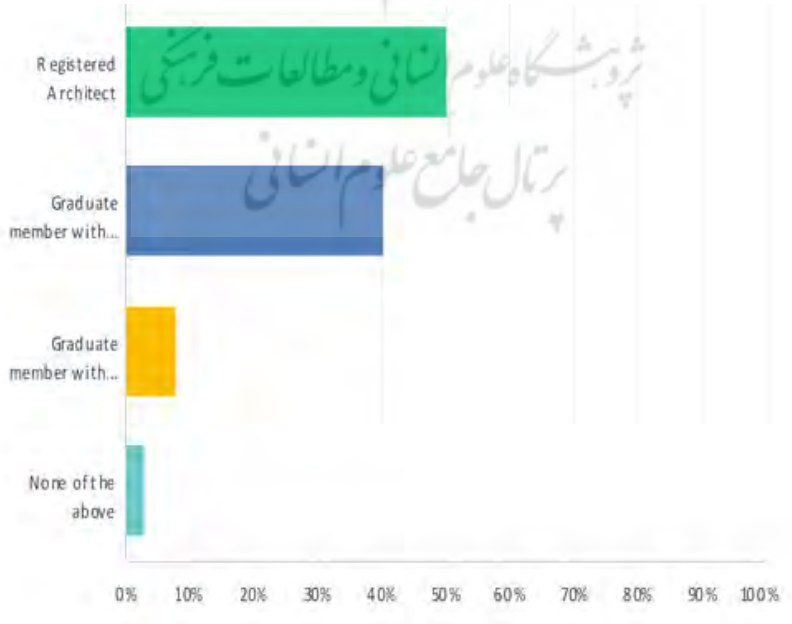

Fig.1: Registration status of respondents

registration process by examining the timing of respondents' registration examinations. The majority of the respondents (47.6%) sat the registration examination in the 2010s, followed by 26.4% who sat the examination in the 2000s. A total of 21% of the participants took the examination in the 2020s, compared to only 5% in the 1990s. This means all the age groups of the architects are represented in the study. Bryman (2016) asserts that having respondents across different periods helps to capture a temporal cross-section of a professional population, especially when assessing systems or career progression over time (Fig. 2).

Effectiveness of the Registration Process

From the findings, the majority (37.08%) of the respondents rated the registration process as average. This was followed by 35.96% of the respondents who rated the registration process above average. 16.61% rated it below average, only 6.74% gave it far above average, and another 6.74% gave it far below average. From the open-ended questions, some respondents questioned the relevance of the registration exercise, with others saying that some architects are gifted with skills that are not necessarily examinable using the current format. Others said the registration process is slow. One of the respondents had this to say: "I sat my exams in 2022, and started the process of acquiring registration in early February. I have not received my registration, and no communication has been made to explain the cause of the delay." Another said, "There is barely communication from the institution. Everything is out of schedule, and results are released at the last moment, significantly after the communicated date, with no room for appeal. You have to take whatever marks they give you. No feedback from the tutors as to why you failed, but come back next year."

Other respondents noted that the low number of registered architects is due to the rigid registration process, despite the construction industry's need for qualified and registered professionals to undertake larger projects. They wondered why the number of graduates who intend to be registered should be limited. One respondent had this to say: "Do the older architects feel threatened by the young graduates? I believe the number of certified and registered architects should be more than it currently is. If the aim is to form a club of professionals interested in passing exams and beyond that, do the bare minimum, well done, but if it's to unite a creative professional lot with diverse skills and capabilities suitable for our diverse clientele/ projects, the process is highly colonial, inflexible."

This insight agrees with findings by Ogunsemi & Jagboro (2006) in Nigeria, who established that inadequacies in the registration process often demotivated many graduates from seeking to be licensed, hence keeping many professionals from the construction industry (Fig. 3).

Whether the Registration Process Can be Recommended to a Graduate Architect

The majority of the respondents (43.75%) said they were very likely to recommend a graduate architect to go through the process, while 40.63% said they were likely. However, 12.50% and 3.13% said they were unlikely and very unlikely, respectively (Fig. 4).

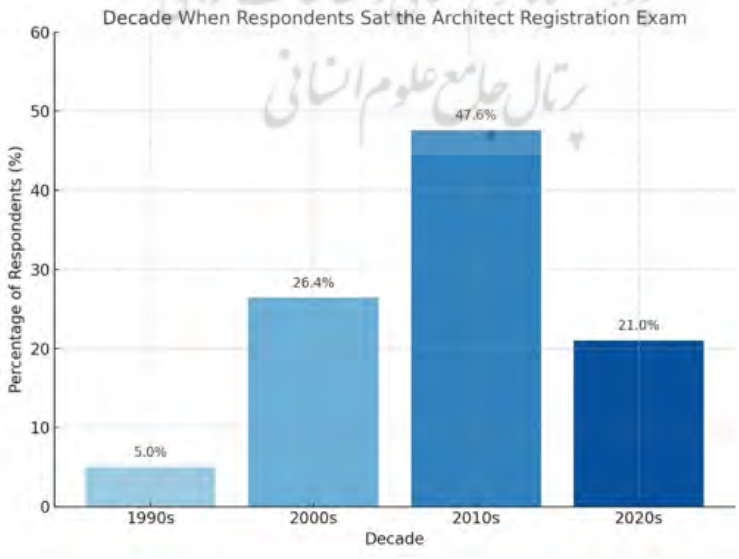

Fig. 2: When respondents sat the registration exam

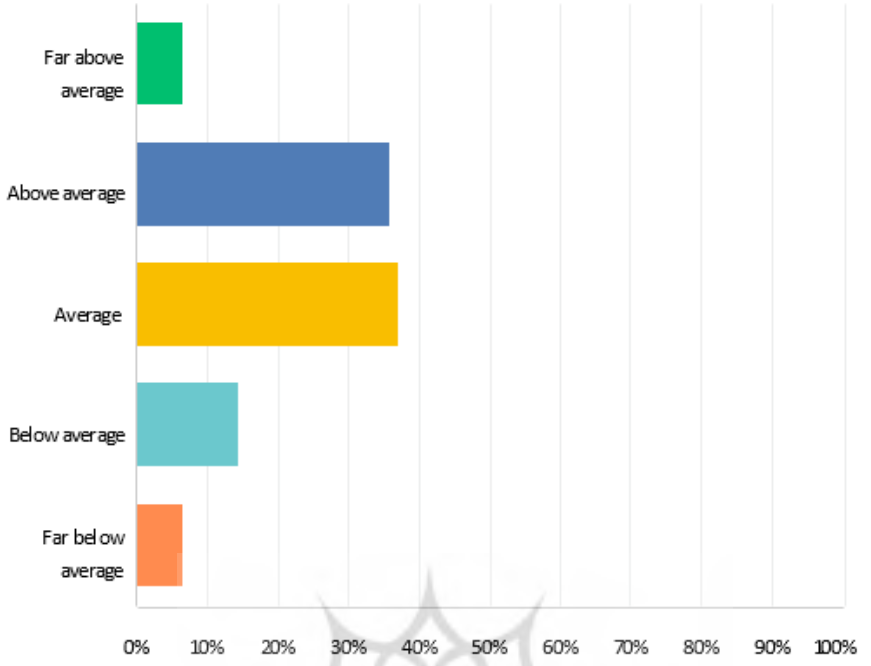

Fig.3: Effectiveness of the registration process

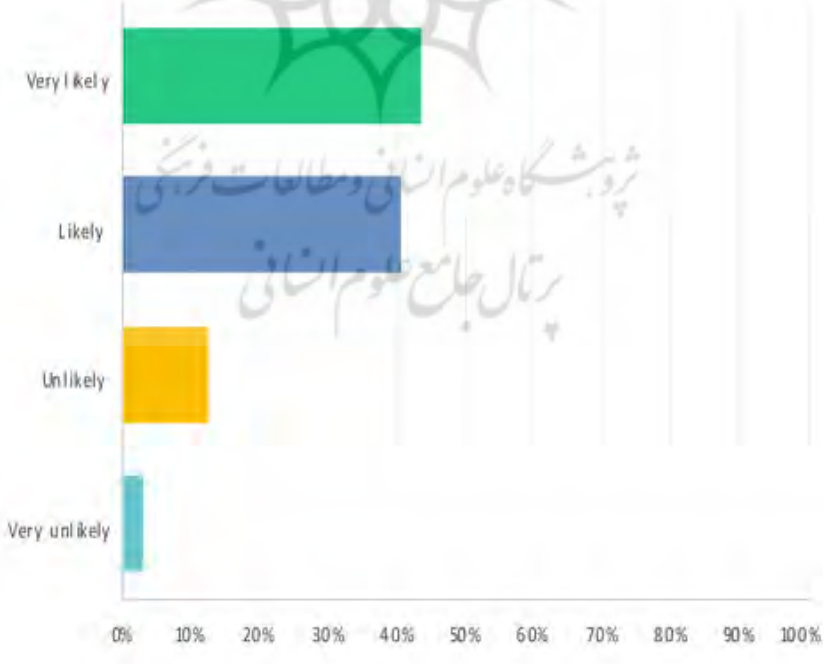

Fig.4: Likelihood of recommendation of the registration process

Impact of the Registration Process on the Quality of the Architectural Profession

The study sought to assess the impact of the registration process on the quality of the architectural profession. The study began by examining the extent to which two mandatory years of practice under a registered architect are helpful. The majority (44.3%) of the respondents said the two mandatory years of practice under a registered architect were very helpful; 38.14% said the two years were helpful; 12.37% said somewhat helpful, and 5.15% said not so helpful. This is in line with Schon's (1983) theory of reflective practice, which emphasises that professionals acquire skills from practice and mentorship. It also echoes what Eraut (2000) says about the importance of informal learning in professional growth.

From the open-ended questionnaire, the respondents said that during the period, they were able to acquire contract management and employee handling techniques/ office administration, design skills, and statutory issues. Others said they learnt building regulations, office practice and management, leadership skills, project management, handling and managing client relationships. They also said they acquired communication skills, cost evaluation, political management, financial management, and project management. One respondent had this to say: "I gained site experience through supervision, meetings, inspections, and preparation of progress reports. I learned about the benefits of communication procedures with the various parties of the project, including the client, consultants, and the contractor. We graduate from university without knowing how to price our skills. Architecture school does not prepare one for life in the field. So, in the mandatory two years, I learned the soft skills of practicing architecture. We are in the service industry and need to speak to people." Other respondents said during this period, they reinforced their skills in design and understanding of construction (how buildings come together), got a full understanding of the architect's role within the broader economy and society, and, most importantly, the liability that comes with being an architect (Fig. 5).

Recommendations for Improving the Architect Registration Process in Uganda

The study sought views on how to improve the architect registration process in Uganda. The study began by asking whether the architects' registration process should be changed (Fig. 6) . The majority (35.05%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the architects' registration process should be changed, while 31.96% agreed. However, 27.84% disagreed and want the process to remain, while 5.15% strongly disagreed. These findings echo what Foucault (1977) said: that the regulation of the architectural registration process sometimes descends into some control and power, working to establish hierarchies. Similarly, Freidson (2001) adds that professional registration bodies sometimes change into clubs that emphasize guarding the interests of the current members instead of promoting the field. When the registration process limits the number of registered architects, then Uganda blocks innovation, given that its construction sector is expanding very fast and needs more skill sets. As stressed by Salama

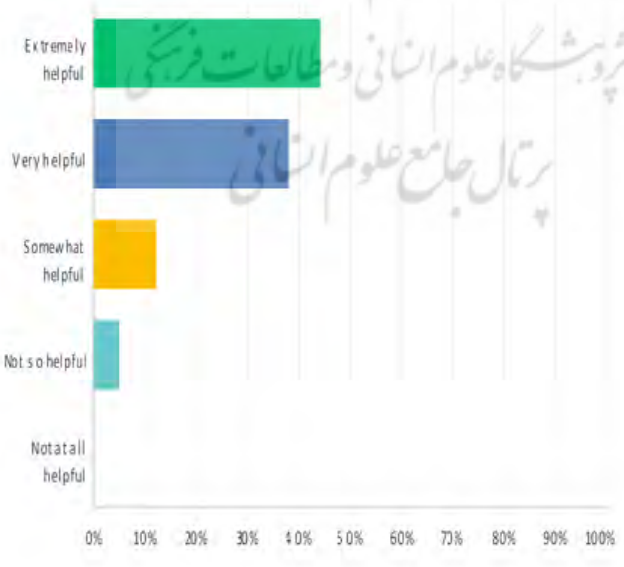

Fig. 5: Whether mandatory years of practice under a registered architect are helpful

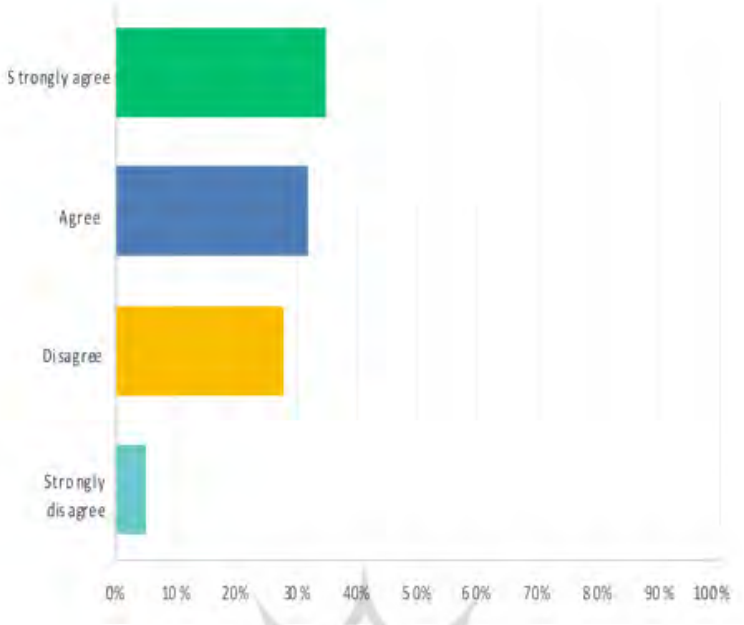

Fig. 6: Whether the architect's registration process should be changed

(2015), current architectural practice should be more adaptive and inclusive of the latest issues, such as sustainability, technologies, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

From the questionnaire, there was a general observation of the need to reform the registration process. Others suggested that the questions should be based either on the training provided by the Board or on the individual's practical experience in the field. Others decried the delays in the registration process, arguing that a statutorily approved process by the National Council for Higher Education is necessary. Respondents also called for more inclusion in the process. "It should cater to the different educational and experiential backgrounds of the graduate architects. It should also cater to the basic competences for the general practice, regulatory, pedagogical, or other involvement in the profession. Professional growth is a lifelong process, and in this information age and with the advent of Artificial Intelligence, information and knowledge can easily be accessed as and when needed. Besides, a considerably high percentage of building development in the country requires only basic professional, technical, project management, regulatory, and legal competencies. As one advances in their professional practice and career, more knowledge can be acquired, for example, through CPDs, and of course, the ubiquitous internet."

Others also said the mandatory two years of practice should be scrapped since experience is now gathered from several spheres. They said people should be examined when they feel ready and/or when recommended. "The process does not recognise experience from any mentor before the letter of confirmation as a graduate member. I suggest that it can be evaluated because they are already with a mentor. The training duration I suggest is two or three years, not more, as every year universities are producing graduates, the services are needed, but the number of service providers is limited."

Other respondents also indicated that there is no need for two sets of written exams and an oral exam. They said a report of the work done and an oral exam are enough. They claimed that this tedious process is frustrating and is the biggest reason for low architect numbers in the country. "And once someone fails, there is no feedback given. So one can keep failing years in and out without knowing what the examiners want."

Others suggested that instead of written exams, the authorities should emphasize logbooks and reports, and tailor oral exams based on each individual's report and what they have learned. One respondent had this to say: "I believe different firms get different types of projects, so we cannot expect a person who has worked on residential buildings to have the same experience as one who has worked on government projects and vice versa. The written exams are biased; they are based on what the examiner knows or thinks, and yet experiences are different from each site and individual."

Others also suggested changing the payment model to include

more payment options, which could encourage more students to register as graduates rather than paying Shs500,000 upfront, especially since employment after campus is no longer guaranteed. They also called for prompt communication and timely feedback after examinations. They said it was unfair that one should find out that their reports were missing key elements that would have enabled them to pass pre-qualification. Communications always come in at the last minute, and when you submit your application to become a graduate member, it takes at least 6 months or even a year to get a response. This kills morale. There's no appeal process for the candidates who fail pre-qualification. - The mentors need to be monitored too." Respondents also said the oral examination process should accommodate the interests of candidates heading in different architectural directions, and their approval should be tied to those directions. "If one candidate is heading into building construction and the other into lighting and acoustic design and management, if they graduated from architecture school, they are both capable of design, and should have some knowledge of project management, but I don't expect them to have the same training and exams. The process should be able to accommodate both, but keep one from masquerading as a practitioner of a different category. ARB may be focused on the building-related practitioner, but the USA should not segregate." Others recommended that students need to know much more about it before they graduate. It should begin in university, clearly indicating that the degree course is merely the first part of the process, with placements in offices or on projects assigned to students interested in registration. They suggested that the Uganda Society of Architects and ARB should publish a more detailed guidebook with clearer explanations and recommended readings, and conduct follow-up training seminars throughout the internship period.

Others suggested including alternative paths in the registration process, arguing that providing opportunities for concept architects, research associates, and landscape architects could yield very positive results. This can be coupled with the provision of avenues for training in complementary schools of thought to the conventional path, such as heritage architecture, green architecture, and high-tech architecture. It was suggested that there should be provision for shared/distributed mentorship. One should be allowed to have as many mentors as possible, regardless of employment status, to benefit from the rich pool of experience available. "I think getting limited to one mentor because of employment is a big disservice to the grand scheme of things. For example, a graduate should be allowed to choose whether to take employment-based training (in which having a single mentor works) or mentorship-based training (in which having multiple mentors without employment works)."

Respondents also suggested that a closer follow-up of candidates before registration is necessary. They said this will help identify weak areas that a candidate could improve by switching to a busier office setting for a couple of months. However, they said this means architects have to buy into the idea of co-mentoring students. It was also suggested that students should be informed of the registration process while they are in school. The submission of required documentation can be made digital; reports can be submitted via Google Forms or a similar solution. The information in the pre-exam training seminars should be shared earlier.

The Architects Registration Board and Uganda Society of Architects should develop a mechanism to enable university graduates to become graduate architects automatically upon completing their studies. This, they said, will encourage more members to join the society and begin the registration process. This agrees with findings by Ochsner et al. (2014), who advocated that assessments should be competency-based instead of relying on examination-driven systems. The respondents also called for shared mentorship and submission of digital documents, which are already being implemented in several developed countries such as Australia and the UK. According to Wiley & Berry (2018), licensing systems should be flexible to cater to various interest groups, especially in the developing world.

CONCLUSION

While the registration of architects is acknowledged by many stakeholders as important, especially in terms of enhancing mentorship, the process is criticised as not being efficient and not promoting inclusiveness, hence stifling professionalism in the sector. Most respondents agree that the compulsory placement of graduates under a registered architect is greatly useful. It exposes the graduates to practical skills, including project management, office management, communication, supervision, and legal compliance, which are not easily provided in architecture schools. The registration examinations, both oral and written, are viewed as inflexible, obsolete, and sometimes indiscriminate. The failure to provide feedback after someone has failed, the lack of measures of appeal, and the supposed bias of the examiners affect objectivity and transparency. The architect registration system primarily focuses on traditional architectural training, lacking support for emerging specialties such as digital architecture and modern design models. This constricted perspective limits professional growth and compliance.

The Uganda Society of Architects and Architects Registration Board should substitute or support old-fashioned exams with modular approaches that identify varied learning routes and specialities within building. They need to develop a digital method for submitting credentials, tracking progress, and receiving suitable responses. This would promote transparency, decrease postponements, and increase record management. The Uganda Society of Architects and Architects Registration Board should develop various pathways to registration, including research, sustainability-focused practice, design technology, and tangible or heritage architecture. This

would align the procedure with global trends and needs. The registration bodies should allow graduates to work with several mentors from diverse practice spaces. They should promote co-mentorship and establish transparent procedures for mentor duties and evaluations.

They should also familiarise students with the registration procedures early by incorporating organised placements, practical sessions, and seminars into the university syllabus. They also put in place a transparent roadmap for post-graduate progression. The registration bodies should also offer flexible payment options, such as segments or sponsorships, to alleviate the financial burden on new graduates. This could boost the number of candidates and inspire timely engagement. They should also establish transparent guidelines, commitments to feedback, and an appeals procedure within the Architects Registration Board. This would inspire equality, develop trust, and increase professional honesty. The Uganda Society of Architects and Architects Registration Board should establish comprehensive, accessible procedures and organize regular workshops, webinars, and interactive sessions to ensure that graduate architects are well-prepared and up-to-date.

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