



Analysing Students' Participation Behaviour in Professional Associations in Tanzania: The Case of Undergraduate Real Estate Students at Ardhi University

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Abstract

Organisations grow organically to maturity, but if concerted efforts are not initiated to preserve the status quo, there is a danger of decline. Professional associations are required to prepare and implement succession plans for their longevity and sustainability. It has been observed that the participation of students in professional associations in Africa, particularly Tanzania, is declining. This study analysed the extent of undergraduate students' awareness, interest and participation in Real Estate Professional Associations (REPAs) in Tanzania. A quantitative approach was deployed in this study, adopting a Likert scale as a data collection method. The data collection technique yielded a response rate of 98% of the 266 respondents. The study has observed that only 1% of the undergraduate students at Ardhi University participate in the REPAs. The study analysed the relationship between students' awareness, interest and participation in REPAs using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results indicated that there is no direct relationship between the intention and participation of the students in the organisations. It also revealed that there is a mismatch between students' expectations and the services provided by the associations. Students expect the REPAs to provide direct connections to internships and graduate recruitment opportunities, which is not the case. Furthermore, the study established a lack of engagement and direct communication between REPAs and students, which limits students' motivation. The study concluded that there is a need for increased engagement and collaboration activities between REPAs, higher learning institutions offering real estate programmes and students through outreach programs and sponsorships for students to participate in annual events of REPAs. Furthermore, REPAs should coordinate with their

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corporate members to select the best-performing students for mentorship and internship programmes immediately after graduation.

Keywords: *planned behaviour theory, Real Estate Professional Associations, participation, mentorships, undergraduate*

1. Introduction

Over the past 20 years, the number of students enrolled in real estate courses in Tanzania has expanded substantially, but this is not reflected in their participation in the Association of Real Estate Professionals in Tanzania (AREPTA), which is the sole real estate professional association in the country. Evidence from Ardh University Facts and Figures shows that the courses in Land Management and Valuation (LMV), Real Estate Finance and Investment (REFI) and Property and Facilities Management (PFM) together have 852 students compared to between 60 and 120 in the early and mid-2000s. There is a limited number of active students in the AREPTA. The current situation is different from that of the late 1990s and early to mid-2000s when the Tanzania Institution of Valuers and Estate Agents (TIVEA), the predecessor of AREPTA, was in operation. Data from various sources have shown that around 38% of the members in the early years of TIVEA were students who actively volunteered and held roles in the association, and some became leaders later. It has also been observed currently that the official number of members ($n=244$)¹ is divided into three categories: fellows ($n=56$), associates ($n=156$) and students ($n=38$). The distribution indicates that the current number of student members is 16%. This raises the question of what the reasons are for the non-participation of students in the real estate professional associations (REPAs) in Tanzania.

Although academic institutions play a leading role in equipping new practitioners with the necessary knowledge and skills for their professional practice, Real Estate Professional Associations (REPAs) have emerged as a valuable alternative for developing professionalism among these individuals. For example, the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) is dedicated to maintaining professional standards and regulations within the built environment and offering qualifications through training. In Africa, the African Real Estate Society (AfRES) has an important role in promoting the real estate profession and facilitating knowledge exchange across the continent. The society organises conferences and workshops, providing platforms for professionals to network, share expertise and stay updated on the latest developments in African real estate. AfRES also publishes research papers in conference proceedings and journals to contribute to the body of knowledge in the field (AfRES, 2020). Locally, Tanzania has the Association of Real Estate Professionals in Tanzania (AREPTA). AREPTA encompasses various disciplines within the sector, including valuation, land administration, real estate finance and investment, and property and facilities management (AREPTA, 2020). AfRES and AREPTA are two prominent REPAs in Tanzania that undergraduate real estate students can join and participate as members through student chapters to gain the benefits of socialisation. Kicherova et al. (2015) and Yakushko et al. (2012) emphasise that engagement in professional associations enhances students' capacity to provide exceptional services in their given professions as it increases their industrial awareness and professional identity through socialisation with other practitioners in their countries and beyond.

¹ This data is available at www.arepta.or.tz. However, the website data seems to include information lastly updated in 2019.

Researchers such as Michael et al. (2017), Warren and Wilkinson (2008), Simon and Grossman (2017), and Holm et al. (2020) have identified the benefits of student participation in associations, including professional growth and networking. In Michael et al. (2017), students acknowledged enhanced networking opportunities, access to industry resources and exposure to real-world experiences as key benefits. Warren and Wilkinson (2008) shared that students perceived REPAs as valuable platforms for knowledge exchange, professional recognition and career advancement. In the same vein, Simon and Grossman (2017) and Holm et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of mentorship and guidance from experienced professionals within the associations as a source of invaluable support in career development and skill enhancement. These advantages, which were observed in other professions, are likely to be equally applicable to students in real estate as they navigate their educational and professional journeys.

The decline and limited participation of students in REPAs have also been observed by Wilkinson and Reed (2010) and Akinsomi et al. (2020); wherein the surge in real estate programs and students' enrolment were expected to translate into increased associations' memberships as students would want to enjoy the benefits of professional socialisation. Without the effective participation of students, the sustainability of these associations is at stake. Warren and Wilkinson (2008: 8) revealed that "not knowing how to get involved", "not being invited", and "lack of institutional support" were the top challenges that hindered students from participating in activities of their respective professional associations. Seaman (2020: 57) pointed out that "lack of time, lack of financial resources and fear of failure" were other hurdles towards participation. Seaman (2020: 68) concluded that participants preferred to wait until completing their programmes as they were concerned about the "potential embarrassment caused by academic underperformance" while belonging to an association. The structure of the professional associations and students' perceived career focus have also been identified as having a negative impact on participation. Michael et al. (2017) pointed out that the perceived disconnect between the association's focus and the participants' career goals also challenged the students' participation.

As such, this research was conducted in Tanzania to elucidate evidence on real estate students' participation in REPAs. It recognises that students' motivations for participating in professional associations vary across time and geographical contexts, as observed by Wilkinson and Reed (2010), thereby limiting the applicability of findings from one setting to another. In their comparative study conducted across four different countries, Wilkinson and Reed (2010) revealed that students' perspectives on professional associations differ due to several factors, including their country of residence. It was observed, for example, that the number of students in the annual meetings organised with AREPTA was declining. This again raised the same question of why the students are not participating in REPAs in Tanzania. Therefore, the objective of this research was to analyse undergraduate students' behaviour in participating in REPAs in Tanzania, drawing inferences from the findings from the Land Management and Valuation and Business Studies departments at Ardhi University as a case study.

2. Literature review

Participation in a social organisation like REPAs can best be explained by the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), developed by Ajzen to understand and predict human behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). It posits that actors are rational and make decisions in a specific pattern. The theory is founded on the reasoning that behaviours are influenced by intentions, which are determined by attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The theory claims that behavioural intention is the most important motivating factor that influences

behaviour. This position has been explained by Asare (2015: 47) that “the stronger the intention to engage in a given behaviour, the more likely it is to perform the behaviour”. Intentions are essential in initiating, supporting and even terminating actionable behaviour. It is conceived that intentions are generated largely by the awareness of the actor of specific behaviour and its benefits. The more aware the actor is, the more intent to act will become.

Attitude towards behaviour is the extent to which an actor holds against or for the behaviour; it could be positive or negative depending on individual assessment. Asare (2015) related attitude to belief and outcome assessments. Another component of the framework is subjective norm, which is a cohesive social pressure to either perform or not perform the behaviour. This involves the support or expectations of others for the actor’s actions or actions over a specific behaviour. Perceived behaviour is another important aspect of the theory as it focuses on the actor’s perception of the capabilities of performing the behaviour. It defines how easy or difficult it is to engage in a behaviour (Asare, 2015).

The research focused on understanding the participation behaviour of undergraduate students in REPAs in Tanzania based on TPB. The conceptual framework (Figure 1) suggests that students are likely to develop intention and participate in REPAs if they have favourable attitudes, positive subjective norms and the can-do behaviour resulting from perceived behaviour and influence on control belief. The participation pattern is assessed based on four components as depicted in Figure 1.

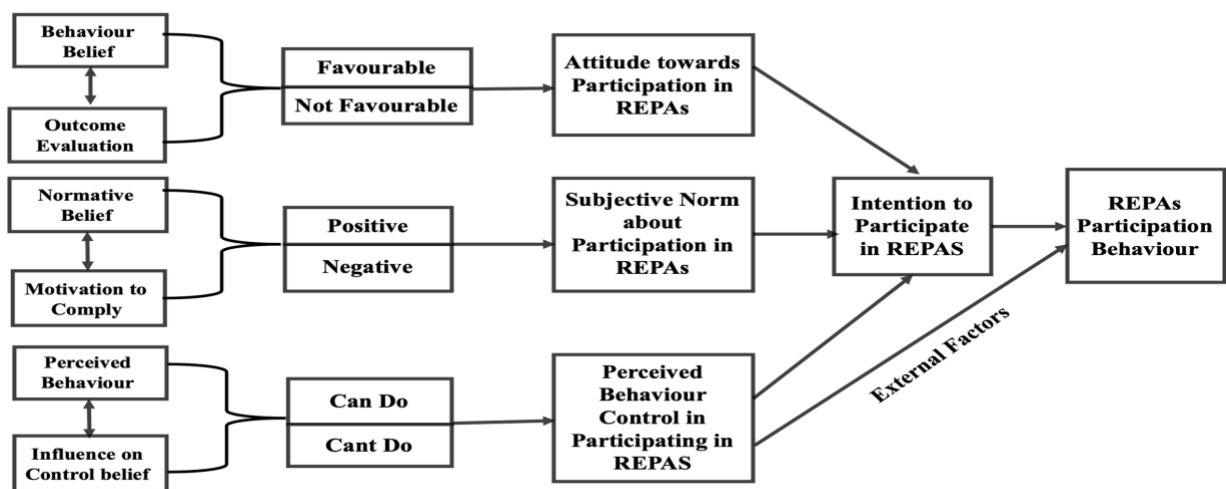


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Adapted from Asare (2015, p.44)

The first component is the students’ attitudes towards participation in REPAs, which are influenced by behaviour, belief and outcome evaluation. Students’ behaviour, beliefs and outcome evaluation are, in a way, influenced by the level of awareness about the existence and benefits of REPAs. The more aware the student is, the easier it is to develop intention and participate. The degree of awareness may vary depending on the number of years the student has spent at university. It is anticipated that first and second-year students may have little exposure compared to those in the third and fourth year of study. The research, therefore, assessed students’ awareness about the existence, purposes, activities, and resources offered by REPAs in understanding their attitudes towards participation.

The second component is a social factor based on subjective norms resulting from normative beliefs and motivation to comply (participate) in students' decisions to participate in REPAs. This includes influence from peers, faculty members and the association. These factors recognise the impact these groups of individuals have in shaping a student's attitude that leads to participation. These individuals can provide information, encouragement, or support for involvement in REPAs, thereby influencing students' decisions. An integrated effort from these stakeholders is expected to have a positive impact on students' participation but a silo approach negatively impacts participation.

The third component of the conceptual framework is perceived behaviour control. This component explores the benefits students may perceive to be attached to their involvement in REPAs, such as networking opportunities, professional development, access to industry resources and enhanced career prospects. It also acknowledges the barriers students may perceive, such as time constraints, financial costs, lack of awareness and conflicting priorities.

The fourth component, intention to participate, represents students' willingness and intention to engage in REPAs activities. The intention of students to participate in the REPAs, therefore, is the result of a positive evaluation of three components forming the core of TPB theory, which are attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behaviour control. It is postulated in the TPB that students will be willing to participate in the activities or organisations if all three components are beneficial or evaluated positively. Intentions play a crucial role as they bridge the gap between the input causes and actual participation. Finally, the last component is participation in REPAs. This component refers to the actual involvement of undergraduate students in REPAs. It encompasses various forms of engagement, including membership, attending meetings, joining committees, participating in events, or taking leadership roles within the association. For this study, participation was assessed through membership (Wilkinson and Reed, 2010; Seaman, 2020). Focusing on membership was seen as relevant and manageable, as it is the foundational form of participation that establishes a direct connection between the student and the association.

It was examined that research on students' behaviour towards participating in professional associations has been conducted in different disciplines, such as health (Asare, 2015), business and management (Wilkinson and Reed, 2010; Seaman, 2020). However, studies in real estate are still scant. Existing studies have focused mainly on graduate students rather than the foundation level of professionalism, which is undergraduate (see, for example, Akinsomi et al., 2020). These two situations have created a gap that has to be filled. This study, therefore, is conducted to add to the body of knowledge that assesses real estate undergraduate students' behaviour in participating in REPAs in Africa, with a focus on Tanzania.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study area

The study was conducted at Ardhi University (ARU), which is in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It is the pioneering institution in the country offering programmes on real estate-related disciplines. Until 2024, when the course in Land Management and Valuation was introduced at the Institute of Rural Development Planning (IRDP) in Dodoma, ARU was the sole dominant provider of the programme in the country since 1973. The other two programmes on real estate finance and investment and property and facilities management were only offered at ARU in 2007. The current number of students in the three real estate bachelor's degree programmes offered at the university is approximately 98% of the overall enrolment in the country, at 852

against 19 students at IRDP in the academic year 2024/2025. The university's prominent role in real estate education made it an appropriate setting to investigate undergraduate student participation with REPAs. Three programmes were considered for the study: Bachelor of Land Management and Valuation (BSc. LMV), Bachelor of Real Estate Finance and Investment (BSc. REFI), and Bachelor of Property and Facilities Management (BSc. PFM). Students in these programmes are eligible to join the student chapter in AREPTA. They can also join other regional and international REPAs such as AfRES in Africa and RICS and IFMA for those in BSc PFM.

3.2 Data sources and analysis

The study employed a cross-sectional survey, allowing the collection of data from the participants at a specific point in time. This occurred between the months of March and May 2024, corresponding to the second semester of study at the University. The timing ensured the availability of respondents to the research. To ensure a representative sample, researchers used stratified simple random sampling, where the population of 852 students were divided into distinct groups (strata) based on the year and course of study, and then random samples were drawn from each stratum using Slovin's formula and proportional representation based on the number of students. The sampling technique enabled the selection of 266 undergraduate students. Out of the (n=266) students, (n=260) responded to the questionnaire as shown in Table 1, making the response rate 98%. The composition of the participants by gender was (n=138) for male and (n=122) female students. The remaining 6 students, who comprised 2% of the population, did not return the questionnaires.

Table 1: Respondents based on the courses and years of study

Year of Study	BSc LMV	BSc PFM	BSc REFI	Total
1 st	40	16	14	70
2 nd	48	10	12	70
3 rd	36	9	15	60
4 th	38	9	13	60
Total	162	44	54	260

Source: Field survey, 2024

The questionnaire was administered to respondents face-to-face. It was divided into two parts - the first part collected demographic information such as the year, course of study and the gender of the respondents. The second part gathered information on the study's variables - awareness, attitude, perceived benefits, barriers and participation. The study, thus, collected both nominal and interval data based on the Likert scale. The assignment of values was important to ensure that data from the Likert scale, which sometimes is regarded as ordinal, is converted into a quantifiable scale, fitting the nature of the study and the research objectives.

The data collected were analysed using a variety of statistical methods. To summarise the demographic characteristics of the participants and the Likert scale responses, means and standard deviations were calculated, and ranking analysis was performed. In addition, cross-tabulation analysis and chi-square tests were employed to assess the study's validity and to determine the statistical significance of the observed results.

4. Results and discussion

The section summarises the results and discusses the outcomes in line with the results from other studies on students' behaviour towards REPAs in Tanzania. It covers students' attitudes towards REPAs: subjective norms and students' motivation, students' perceived behaviour control in participation in REPAs and students' participation levels in REPAs.

4.1 Students' attitude towards REPAs

The study assessed the students' attitude towards REPAs, specifically by analysing their level of awareness, the relationship between year of study and awareness and their formed attitude.

4.1.1 Students' awareness of REPAs

In assessing students' awareness of REPAs, respondents were asked to rate their level of awareness on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 represented "not aware" and 5 represented "very aware". It was found that on average, students reported a moderate (somewhat aware) level of awareness with REPAs, with a mean of 2.7 out of 5 points. This implied that respondents had a moderate understanding and knowledge of the REPAs existence. It reveals that they have been exposed to some information about the associations (both local and international), but have an inadequate understanding of their purposes, roles and benefits and generally it can be inferred that their overall understanding remains limited.

4.1.2 Relationship between the year of study and awareness

The study sought to analyse whether there was a relationship between the year of study and students' awareness of REPAs. It was construed that the more the number of years the student has spent at the university, the more aware of REPAs they could become. To examine whether there was a relationship between undergraduate students' year of study and their awareness of REPAs, a cross-tabulation analysis of these two variables was conducted and the results are shown in Table 2. The table shows that year one students were 'not aware' at 18.6%, and had a 'very limited awareness' with REPAs at 55.7% which together formed 74.3% of the respondents in this stratum. The remaining 26% is divided between 'somehow aware' at 24.2% and 'aware' at only 1.5%. Respondents from year two attested to being more aware, with over 71.5% scoring 'somehow aware' and 'aware', while 28.5% recorded that they had 'very limited awareness'. This trend was also observed in the third year, where 66.7% of the respondents recorded 'somehow aware' and 'aware', while 33.3% recorded 'very limited awareness' of the REPAs. Respondents from the fourth year of the study reported higher awareness, as 51.6% reported that they were 'aware or very aware' of REPAs, while 26.7% were 'somehow aware', and the remaining 21.7% 'had very limited awareness. The analysis reveals that students in the lower levels have low awareness compared to those in the higher levels, where more students reported being "somehow aware" or "aware" of these associations.

Table 2: Year of study and awareness of REPAs

		How familiar would you say you are with Real Estate Professional Associations?					Total
		Not aware	Very limited awareness	Somehow aware	Aware	Very aware	
Year of Study	1 st year	13	39	17	1	0	70
	2 nd year	0	20	49	1	0	70
	3 rd year	0	20	34	6	0	60
	4 th year	0	13	16	29	2	60
Total		13	92	116	37	2	260

Source: Field survey, 2024

A chi-square test was conducted to evaluate the significance of the relationship. The results in Table 3 revealed a significant association between the year of study and awareness of REPAs. Table 3 shows the p-value of 0.000 (less than the typical 0.05 significance level). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The results suggest that there is a strong, statistically significant relationship between the students' academic year of study and their level of awareness of REPAs. Also, from Table 3, it was observed that as students progress through their studies, they reported being more familiar with REPAs; thus, this relationship is positive. Understanding students' awareness is useful as the prime determinant which influences their decision to participate in the associations. The results of the relationship between years of study and awareness have identified lower levels of study as specific target groups within the student population, which require more efforts in raising awareness.

Table 3: Chi-square test results

Test statistic	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson chi-square	143.102	12	.000
Likelihood ratio	132.435	12	.000
Linear-by-linear association	72.389	1	.000
N of valid cases	260		

Source: Field survey, 2024

4.1.3 Relationship between awareness and participation

The study investigated the relationship between students' awareness of REPAs and their intention to participate in these organisations. Understanding this relationship was important as it provided additional information that helped the researchers contextualise the results and gain useful insights into them. Chi-square tests were done to evaluate the relationship. For a proper analysis, students who reported a lack of awareness and "very limited awareness" were grouped into "Not Aware", while those who reported having "moderate awareness (somehow aware), aware and very aware" were grouped into "Aware". These two groups were then related and compared to their responses on whether they plan to become members or renew their membership. The results of this test are shown in Table 4.

The Pearson chi-square test in Table 4 shows a p-value of 0.988, which is not statistically significant at the typical 0.05 significance level. Based on this information, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis. In this case, there is no significant relationship between a student's

awareness of REPAs and their intention to participate in these associations. The result does not provide enough evidence to conclude that awareness of the associations is a significant factor in creating an intention to participate; thus, other factors may be needed in the picture to influence this intention to participate among the student population.

Table 4: Chi-square test results

Test statistic	Value	Degree of freedom	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact sig. (2-sided)	Exact sig. (1-sided)
Pearson chi-square	.323 ^a	4	.988		
Likelihood ratio	.323	4	.970		
Linear-by-linear association	.001	1	.970		
N of valid cases	260				

Source: Field survey, 2024

4.1.4 Students' attitudes towards REPAs

To assess students' attitudes towards REPAs, respondents were asked to rate their perception of the importance of REPAs to the profession to them as individuals and the likelihood of becoming a member or renewing their membership. These questions were measured on a 5-point Likert scale, with the value of 1 representing "Not at all important" and the value of 5 representing "Extremely important". The results revealed that students exhibited a positive attitude towards REPAs as indicated by a higher mean level (agreement) of 4.09 and lower standard deviation at 0.68 compared to responses to the second and third questions. For example, in the second and third questions, the means are at 3.29 and 3.3,6, which are lower than the one recorded for the first entry. Similarly, the standard deviations are in the region of 0.86 and 0.83, respectively. This demonstrates that students view associations as being more important for the profession, as a whole than to the individual. The results revealed that students recognised the broader importance and value of REPAs, but did not recognise their contributions to personal development through active participation.

4.2 Subjective norms and students' motivation

To understand the sources of knowledge and motivation about REPAs, respondents were asked to select one of the six sources listed in the questionnaire. The choice with the highest frequency was regarded as the main source of knowledge and motivation to participate in REPAs. The identification of common channels through which students receive knowledge and motivation about REPAs creates an opportunity to plan awareness campaigns and ensure that relevant information is being effectively disseminated. It is important to note that (n=13) respondents had answered that they were not aware of any REPAs and were therefore not eligible to answer this question. The total number of respondents in this category was (n=247).

Table 5: Source of knowledge

Source of knowledge	Faculty members	Peers and friends	Industrial training	Social media	University events	Direct contact w/ REPAs Rep	Total
Frequency	146	43	24	20	12	2	247
Percentage (%)	59.1	17.4	9.7	8.1	4.9	0.8	100

Source: Field data, 2024

Table 5 presents the distribution of responses regarding the source of knowledge about REPAs. The result reveals that students are relying on their faculty members (59.1%) and peers and friends (17.4%) to learn about these associations rather than having the opportunity to engage directly with REPAs representatives (0.8%). Other factors such as industrial training (9.7%), social media (8.1%) and university events (4.9%) were in the third to fifth positions, respectively. When also considered that 5% of the first-year students indicated they had never heard of REPAs; it is clear that there was a gap between the REPAs and the students. This indicates that professional associations should visit the university periodically to create an impression and raise awareness. A more proactive approach by REPAs to recruit and engage with students, especially in their first year, could help address this gap and promote greater awareness and participation from the beginning of students' academic journeys.

4.3 Students perceived behaviour control in participation in REPAs

The study also assessed students' perceived behaviour covering issues on benefits and barriers to joining REPAs. To address this objective, respondents were asked to rank six potential benefits and barriers to joining these associations. The average ranking for each factor was later calculated to determine its relative importance. The results are presented in Table 6 for benefits and Table 7 for barriers. Six benefits of joining REPAs were provided for ranking, and results are shown in Table 6. The results showed that the top-ranked benefit, with an average weight of 4.79, is access to career information and recruitment opportunities. This indicates students see the associations as a valuable resource for getting information that will kick-start their professional journey through internships and graduate jobs. This creates the intention to participate if these opportunities are introduced as awareness campaigns. These findings share a similar ranking pattern to the earlier studies by Warren and Wilkinson (2008), Wilkinson and Reed (2010) and Holm et al. (2020). REPAs should then pay attention to these interests if they are to recruit and retain student members in their associations.

Table 6: Perceived benefits ranking

Perceived barriers	Average weight	Rank
Access to career information, such as internships and graduate recruitment opportunities	4.79	1
Professional development through participating in training programs and workshops offered by the associations	4.48	2
Opportunities to network with professionals in your field and meet mentors	4.42	3
Pursue professional certificates and accreditation offered by the associations	2.73	4
Opportunities to volunteer and gain leadership experience by serving on student committees within the associations	2.39	5
Academic and research engagement by contributing to the association's research initiatives and publications	2.16	6

Source: Field survey, 2024

The second and third most important benefits show students recognise that the associations can support their career growth and development beyond just job placement, with weights of 4.48 and 4.42. The average weight for these two is quite close, indicating that students see these two

benefits as being similarly valuable and desirable. On the other hand, the significant drop-off in average weights for lower-ranked benefits suggests students view them as non-essential compared to the career-focused offerings. It is of interest to note that students ranked the factor to pursue professional certificates and accreditation offered by the associations at number 4, with an average weight of 2.73. This reflects the main interest of the students, which focuses on the recruitment opportunities instead of the short-lived connection. This is an anomaly, as these credentials can open doors of opportunity for them. Similarly, the last two items, which are linked to opportunities to volunteer and gain leadership experience by serving on student committees within the associations, and academic and research engagement by contributing to the associations' research initiatives and publications, are equally important. The results, nevertheless, revealed that students considered them to be of minimum importance and ranked them at the 5th and 6th positions, respectively. This result suggests that REPAs both locally and regionally may need to focus more on raising awareness and encouraging student involvement. The associations should not assume that these leadership and research engagement opportunities will naturally appeal to many students, especially those at the bachelor's level. It has been noted in Ankisomi et al. (2020) that AfRES, through its Futures Leaders of the African Real Estate Society is focusing on early career academics, researchers and professionals who are graduate or doctoral students and not lower-level students. In this situation, it is difficult to interest students at the masters and bachelor levels who are the majority.

The study also ranked six barriers to joining REPAs. Results are shown in Table 7. The results indicate that the key barriers to student participation are inadequate promotion and recruitment efforts by the associations, with an average weight of 4.83 and lack of awareness about the associations, with an average weight of 4.12 and ranked first and second, respectively. Students have also regarded the REPAs as irrelevant or non-beneficial to them. This barrier is ranked number three with an average weight of 3.54. The students also have a general agreement that they are not receiving enough support/encouragement/ from faculty and the university in the process of participating in the REPAs. This has an average weight score of 3.27 and is ranked number 4. The students regarded financial constraints and time constraints as the fifth and last items in the ranking processes at 2.8 and 2.41 average weights, respectively.

Table 7: Perceived barriers ranking

Perceived barriers	Average weight	Rank
Inadequate promotion and recruitment efforts by the associations	4.83	1
Lack of awareness about the associations.	4.12	2
Perceived lack of relevance or benefits.	3.54	3
Lack of encouragement/support from faculty/ university	3.27	4
Financial constraints (e.g., Membership fees, travel costs, etc.)	2.8	5
Time constraints (e.g., Due to academic workload)	2.41	6

Source: Field survey, 2024

The clear separation between the top two barriers shows students differentiate the most significant obstacles from the lesser ones. In contrast, the closer average weights for the perceived lack of relevance/benefits (3.54) and lack of encouragement/support from faculty/university (3.27) suggest students view these as having a similar level of impact. This is similar to the last two barriers, which are related to students' time of engagement and participation. These findings also indicate that university and faculty members are not

adequately encouraging students to participate in these associations. Although students primarily learn about REPAs through their lecturers, there does not appear to be a concerted effort to motivate them to join. A moderate insistence that future real estate professionals should take part in these associations' activities while they are still students could go a long way. On the other hand, factors such as lack of finances and lack of time were ranked as the least significant barriers, which differs from conclusions drawn by researchers like Seaman (2020). This may be due to the relatively affordable membership costs for students in Tanzania. However, it is important to consider that because many students who responded to the questionnaire have never been members of any REPA, they may not have proper information about the actual costs involved beyond membership fees. This could be masking the true financial barriers that students may face if they were to actively engage in activities like seminars and workshops, which may require scholarships and sponsorship from various organisations.

4.4 Students' participation levels in REPAs

Participants were required to respond to whether they were current members of any REPA or not. A follow-up question was provided for the ones who answered 'Yes' to belong to an association, while those who responded 'No' were asked if they had been members of any REPA before or never. The results revealed that only three respondents, which represented 1% of the participants (n=260), had responded 'yes' to being members of any association. It was also observed that seven students, which is 3% of the total, have not renewed their membership after expiry, and 250 participants, which is equivalent to 96% (n=260) of the total. The result is not favourable to the future of real estate associations in Tanzania because Ardhi University is the primary institution for real estate education in the country. This paints a bleak picture of student engagement with REPAs across the country. It also indicates a significant gap in the collaborative efforts between academic institutions and REPAs in supporting the professional development and socialisation of the next generation of real estate professionals. The duty to professionally develop and socialise students should not lie only with academic institutions. REPAs should also be actively involved in this responsibility.

The results further show that active students had membership in AREPTA, a Tanzanian REPA. Students find it more convenient to be part of REPAs they can easily access and participate physically. The finding aligns with that of Wilkinson and Reed (2010), who reported a preference among students for local REPAs over international ones. Nonetheless, it is important to recognise that with the advancements in information and communication technology, there is now an opportunity for students to engage with international and regional REPAs through virtual means such as online meetings. Considering that students exhibited favourable attitudes towards REPAs, efforts to improve recruitment and outreach for both local and international associations may yield more desirable results in terms of student participation when engaged in these activities.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

The study analysed undergraduate students' behaviour towards participating in REPAs in Tanzania. Theoretically, the study has assessed and demonstrated that the components and theoretical basis of the TPB can be applied in various geographical locations and contexts. The findings have shown the influence of attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control on students' intentions and participation in REPAs. Addressing these components is essential for enhancing students' engagement and participation in the REPAs in the world. In

the Tanzanian context, students are generally aware of the existence of these associations, but their actual level of participation and engagement is limited, as discussed due to a range of facilitating and hindering factors, such as the lack of motivation from stakeholders. The study also revealed that there is a mismatch between students' expectations and the services provided by the associations. Students are expecting the REPAs to provide direct connections to internship and graduate recruitment opportunities, which is not the case. The study recommends increased engagement and collaboration activities, such as online tailor-made training and continuous forums between REPAs and students. This can also be initiated and organised between the REPAs and the institutions offering real estate education in Tanzania. The REPAs should also initiate direct student sponsorships to facilitate participation in annual events. Furthermore, REPAs should coordinate with their corporate members to select the best-performing students for mentorship and internship programmes immediately after graduation. The REPAs should consider sponsoring students' membership based on certain merits, such as academic performance or active participation in student leadership in the faculties, to help push them into participation, eventually promoting greater student participation and contribution to the development, longevity, and sustainability of the real estate profession in Tanzania.

This study is not without limitations. For example, it was conducted at Ardhi University, which is just one of the institutions offering real estate education in Tanzania. It is therefore understood that the behaviour might have been affected by mentorship and the organisation's culture within the university, which were not assessed. There is a need to conduct similar studies in other institutions in Tanzania and in other African countries to observe the outcomes and trends.

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