Use of Professional LinkedIn Network for Job Hunting by Graduates of Technical Education and Training Institutions (TETIs) in Tanzania

CRN Charles Raphael

Tengeru Institute of Community Development, Tanzania

Email: crn201412@gmail.com

Abstract: *LinkedIn is a job-hunting application with extensive scope of networking and job postings, used by people of all age groups. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence on the use of professional LinkedIn network (PLiN) for job hunting by TETIs' graduates in Tanzania. Guided by Social Capital Theory and Technology Acceptance Model, this study specifically addresses two questions: What is the level of proficiency on PLiN among the TETIs' graduates in Tanzania? To what extent the TETIs' graduates use PLiN in hunting jobs in Tanzania compared to other networks? This study was approached quantitatively by basing on descriptive and explanatory survey designs. Data were collected using questionnaires from 350 graduates, who were sampled using hybrid sampling technique. The data were analysed using descriptive statistics and independent t-test. The findings show that, majority graduates (71%, 70%, and 61%) have average proficiency level on PLiN in terms of key features and uses, LinkedIn premium, and on important considerations of the PLiN. Furthermore, the graduates use PLiN to the small extent (63%) in hunting jobs compare to other networks; something justified as well by independent t-test results i.e. there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of hunting jobs between using PLiN and other networks among graduates in Tanzania. Although PLiN greatly improves job hunting, majority graduates are not making the most of it due to average level of proficiency. This study suggests PLiN training by TETIs' and other stakeholders.*

Keywords: *Professional LinkedIn Network, Job Hunting, Graduates, TETIs, Proficiency*

How to cite this work (APA):

1. Introduction

Technical Education and Training Institutions (TETIs), which form part of Tanzania's wider Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system, play a crucial role in preparing young people for the labour market (World Bank, 2023). Tracer studies from institutions such as Arusha Technical College show that many graduates find employment or start their own businesses (ATC, 2024). However, a significant number still face unemployment or underemployment, largely because of limited industry connections, outdated curricula, and inadequate training resources (Ramadhani, 2025). These persistent challenges highlight the need for innovative ways to help graduates bridge the gap between education and meaningful work (World Bank, 2023). One of such innovative ways is the rise of professional networking platforms, particularly LinkedIn (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2023).

At the global level, the job-search landscape has changed dramatically with the rise of professional networking

platforms, particularly LinkedIn (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2023). In developed economies across North America, Europe, and Asia, LinkedIn is now firmly integrated into recruitment processes (World Economic Forum, 2023). Employers use it not only to advertise positions but also to search directly for candidates, assess skills, and identify professional networks (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2023). In many cases, LinkedIn profiles have become as important as traditional résumés (Koch, Chinyamurindi, & Cilliers, 2024). In Asia, the platform has seen rapid growth especially in markets like India, Singapore, and Japan, where firms use it to connect with talent across borders (LinkedIn Economic Graph, 2023). In these contexts, LinkedIn is valued not only for recruitment but also as a space for professional growth, continuous skills validation, and knowledge sharing (World Economic Forum, 2023).

In developing countries, however, the picture is more mixed (Murire, Cilliers, & Chinyamurindi, 2023). Graduates are increasingly aware of LinkedIn's potential for improving their employment prospects, but adoption is uneven (Include Platform, 2023; Murire, Cilliers, & Chinyamurindi, 2023; Koch, Chinyamurindi, & Cilliers, 2024; World Bank, 2025). Accordingly, barriers such as poor internet connectivity, high data costs, limited digital literacy, and employers' continued reliance on informal hiring networks limit its use (World Bank, 2025). Many job seekers still prefer local job boards or personal contacts, although research shows that graduates who create strong LinkedIn profiles and actively network online are more likely to access international opportunities and attract the attention of recruiters (Murire *et al.*, 2023).

The situation in Sub-Saharan Africa reflects these wider trends (Koch *et al.*, 2024). Employers in South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria, for example, are increasingly using LinkedIn to recruit both locally and from diaspora communities, which has expanded opportunities for graduates (Murire *et al.*, 2023). For many, LinkedIn provides visibility beyond local labour markets, connecting them to multinational companies and even virtual internships (World Economic Forum, 2023). Yet significant barriers remain patchy internet coverage, high mobile data costs, and limited career guidance services often prevent graduates from fully benefitting from the platform (IPP Media, 2024). Even so, when paired with digital-skills programmes and stronger institutional support, LinkedIn has shown promise in addressing employability challenges (World Bank, 2023).

In Tanzania, LinkedIn is slowly gaining traction, particularly among urban graduates and those with greater exposure to digital tools (IPP Media, 2024). While TVET graduates often manage to secure employment or self-employment, many continue to struggle with underemployment and limited access to high-quality job opportunities (Ramadhani, 2025). Part of the problem lies in the lack of awareness of LinkedIn's potential, high internet costs, and employers' limited reliance on online recruitment (World Bank, 2023). Nonetheless, the platform offers important opportunities for Tanzanian graduates to showcase their technical portfolios, gain endorsements, and connect with employers beyond national borders (World Bank, 2025). Strengthening digital literacy training, embedding professional branding skills in TETI curricula, and promoting employer engagement online could significantly improve graduates' ability to leverage LinkedIn in the job market (ATC, 2024).

Although TETIs in Tanzania aim to equip graduates with practical skills for the labour market, many still face challenges in securing meaningful and stable employment (World Bank, 2023; Ramadhani, 2025). Globally, professional networking platforms like LinkedIn have transformed how graduates search for jobs, allowing them to showcase skills, connect with employers, and explore opportunities beyond traditional channels (LinkedIn Talent Solutions, 2023; World Economic Forum, 2023). In developed regions such as North America, Europe, and Asia, LinkedIn is fully integrated into recruitment practices, providing both employers and job seekers with rich professional interactions (LinkedIn Economic Graph, 2023).

Despite the global recognition of LinkedIn as a powerful tool for job searching, it is unclear how Tanzanian TETI graduates engage with the platform to advance their careers (Murire *et al.*, 2023; Koch et al., 2024). Many graduates continue to rely predominantly on family networks, friends, or local job boards, often missing the opportunities that professional digital networks provide (IPP Media, 2024). In Tanzania specifically, research on graduate employment has largely focused on skills gaps, entrepreneurship, and local job markets (Ramadhani, 2025). There is very little empirical evidence exploring how TETI graduates actually use LinkedIn to find jobs, leaving a critical gap in understanding digital job-hunting practices and their potential impact on graduate employability. Moreover, little is known about graduates' level of proficiency on LinkedIn, how frequently they use it, and how its effectiveness compares to other networking strategies in Tanzania.

Therefore, this study focuses on two key questions: *What is the level of LinkedIn proficiency among TETI graduates in Tanzania? And how extensively do these graduates use LinkedIn for job hunting compared to other professional or informal networks?* By exploring these questions, the study aims to offer practical insights that can support policymakers, educators, and institutions in enhancing digital skills, promoting professional networking, and

improving the employability of TETI graduates in Tanzania's competitive job market.

Specifically, this study is expected to offer valuable insights for a wide range of stakeholders involved in technical education and graduate employability in Tanzania. For researchers, it addresses a gap in the current literature by exploring how TETI graduates use professional networking platforms like LinkedIn for job hunting. The findings can serve as a foundation for future studies on digital employability, career development, and the adoption of online professional tools in education.

For practitioners and policymakers, the study provides evidence to inform strategies that improve graduate employability. Insights from the research can guide the design of digital skills training programs, integration of professional networking into career support services, and policies that connect education more effectively with labour-market demands. Furthermore, TETIs can use the findings to understand graduates' proficiency and usage of LinkedIn, helping them refine curricula, enhance career guidance services, and better prepare students for the digital job market.

For graduates, the study highlights ways to leverage LinkedIn to access job opportunities, strengthen professional networks, and showcase skills effectively, increasing their competitiveness in a rapidly evolving labour market. Besides, employers can benefit by gaining a clearer understanding of how graduates engage with professional networks, which can help optimize recruitment strategies and strengthen ties with TETIs.

Finally, other stakeholders, including professional associations, NGOs, and digital skills initiatives, can use the insights to develop targeted programs that enhance digital literacy, promote professional networking, and ultimately support employment outcomes for graduates. Conclusively, this study aims to bridge the gap between education, technology, and employment, providing practical knowledge that can help all stakeholders work together to improve graduate opportunities and career outcomes in Tanzania.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in two complementary theories: Social Capital Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens for understanding how graduates of TETIs in Tanzania use LinkedIn for job hunting, combining insights into both social and technological influences on career-related behavior.

2.1.1 Social Capital Theory

This theory emphasizes the value of social networks and the resources embedded within them in achieving personal and professional goals. Developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986), James Coleman (1988), and Robert Putnam (2000), the theory highlights different aspects of social capital that are particularly relevant in the context of professional networking. Bourdieu (1986) focused on social capital as a resource that individuals can leverage through their networks to gain economic and social advantages. Coleman (1988) emphasized the functional role of social capital, illustrating how networks foster trust, facilitate information flow, and support human capital development. Putnam (20000 underscored the communal aspect of social capital, showing how norms of reciprocity and strong networks improve both individual and societal outcomes.

In this study, social capital is reflected in three dimensions: structural social capital, which relates to the extent and pattern of connections, such as LinkedIn contacts; relational social capital, which focuses on the quality of relationships, trust, and endorsements; and cognitive social capital, which encompasses shared norms, values, and professional understanding. LinkedIn serves as a digital platform where TETI graduates can leverage these forms of social capital to increase their visibility to employers, access opportunities beyond their immediate networks, and build professional relationships that enhance employability.
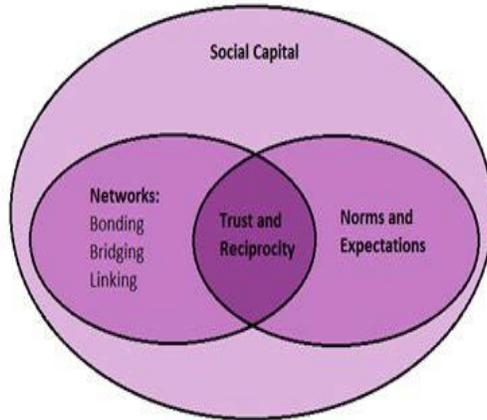
Figure 1: Social Capital Theory

2.1.2 The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

This theory is developed by Fred D. Davis in 1989. It provides insight into the technological factors that influence platform adoption and use. TAM posits that individuals' engagement with technology is shaped primarily by two perceptions: the perceived usefulness of the technology how much it enhances performance or outcomes and the perceived ease of use how effortless it is to use. These perceptions influence behavioral intention, which in turn drives actual usage.

Applying TAM to this study, the model helps explain how TETIs' graduates' beliefs about LinkedIn's usefulness for job searching and its ease of navigation affect their actual engagement with the platform. Understanding these perceptions is critical in identifying barriers and facilitators to effective use of LinkedIn in the Tanzanian job market.
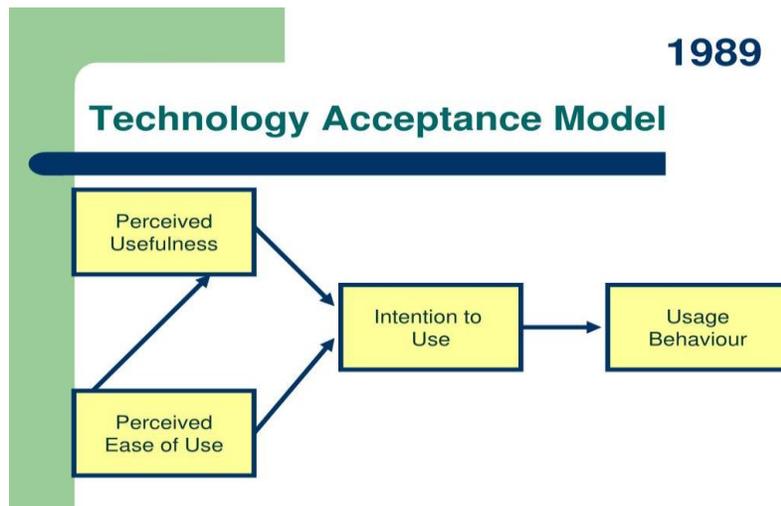

Figure 2: Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

2.1.3 Synthesis of the above Theories in Relation to the Study

Integrating Social Capital Theory and TAM offers a holistic framework to explore the dual influence of social networks and technology adoption on graduate employability. While social capital provides insight into

the opportunities and benefits derived from professional connections, TAM explains how graduates' attitudes toward the platform affect their engagement. Guided by these theories, this study specifically examines two central questions: *What is the level of LinkedIn proficiency among TETI graduates in Tanzania? And to what extent do these graduates use LinkedIn for job hunting compared to other professional or informal networks?* Addressing these questions will provide a nuanced understanding of how social and technological factors interact to influence career development, offering practical implications for graduates, educators, policymakers, and institutions seeking to enhance employability in an increasingly digital job market.

2.2 Empirical Framework

In today's evolving digital labour landscape, professional networking platforms particularly LinkedIn have become essential for connecting graduates with employers, showcasing skills, and cultivating professional identities. Global research underscores that digital career networks are now central to employability outcomes, offering tools for visibility, personal branding, and continuous learning (LinkedIn Learning, 2025; World Economic Forum, 2025). Yet, the extent to which these benefits are realised varies across regions, depending on graduates' proficiency, institutional support, and socio-economic context. This section reviews existing studies that address the two guiding research questions: *What is the level of LinkedIn proficiency among TETI graduates in Tanzania? and how extensively do these graduates use LinkedIn for job hunting compared to other professional or informal networks?*

2.2.1 LinkedIn Proficiency Among Graduates

Research in developed economies consistently shows that LinkedIn proficiency plays a vital role in employment transitions. Jackson (2025) found that Australian graduates with higher LinkedIn proficiency reflected in profile completeness, skill endorsements, and active participation in professional communities secured quality jobs more quickly than their peers. Likewise, Noor (2025) reported that UK students who received structured LinkedIn-training workshops improved both their digital confidence and professional networking engagement. These findings reveal that proficiency extends beyond profile creation; it involves strategic activities such as sharing relevant content, joining professional groups, and interacting authentically with industry peers.

In the United States, the Biomedical Graduate Outcomes Research Team (2025) demonstrated that graduates who regularly engaged with LinkedIn features achieved stronger employment tracking and better long-term career placement. Larsen (2020), however, noted that many European graduates still exhibit only basic proficiency often treating LinkedIn as an online résumé repository rather than a dynamic professional tool. These findings suggest that even in digitally advanced environments, the depth of LinkedIn use varies significantly with individual motivation and institutional guidance.

Research from developing contexts presents a similar picture but highlights additional barriers. Perera, Rajendran, and Sivananthan (2025) examined Sri Lankan undergraduates and found that their limited LinkedIn proficiency stemmed from inadequate institutional support and minimal exposure to professional networking cultures. Murire (2024) observed comparable trends in South Africa, noting that students valued LinkedIn conceptually but lacked the digital literacy and strategic insight required for effective engagement.

In Tanzania, local studies paint a parallel scenario. Kibona (2024) revealed that while many university and college graduates were aware of LinkedIn's potential, few possessed the skills to manage professional profiles or leverage the platform strategically. The Arusha Technical College (2024) tracer study reported that only a small fraction of TETIs' graduates actively used LinkedIn features such as endorsements, LinkedIn Learning, or professional networking groups. Tanzlite (2024) similarly found that although LinkedIn awareness is growing among Tanzanian youth, most users adopt it passively viewing it, rather than using it, as a job-search platform. Collectively, these studies suggest that LinkedIn proficiency among Tanzanian TETIs' graduates remains modest, often constrained by digital-skills gaps, limited mentorship, and inconsistent access to internet resources.

2.2.2 Extent of LinkedIn Use for Job Hunting Compared to Other Networks

Globally, LinkedIn has transformed how graduates search for employment. In the UK, Noor (2025) reported that nearly three-quarters of recent graduates considered LinkedIn their primary job-hunting tool, appreciating its direct communication with employers and visibility among recruiters. Jackson (2025) found a similar trend in Australia, where active LinkedIn users were twice as likely to receive interview invitations as non-users. In the United States, the LinkedIn Learning Workplace Report (2025) revealed that more than 80% of recruiters rely on LinkedIn for candidate sourcing, highlighting its institutionalized role in professional hiring.

By contrast, in developing countries, LinkedIn is often used alongside, rather than instead of, informal employment channels. Perera, Rajendran, and Sivananthan (2025) found that Sri Lankan graduates preferred to blend LinkedIn use with alumni networks and personal recommendations, citing cultural familiarity and perceived trustworthiness of offline contacts. In South Africa, Murire (2024) similarly noted that students valued LinkedIn for credibility but continued to depend on personal referrals when seeking jobs.

The Tanzanian context reflects these regional patterns. Kibona (2024) observed that TETI graduates largely rely on personal networks, WhatsApp groups, and word-of-mouth referrals for job leads, viewing LinkedIn as secondary or complementary. The Arusha Technical College (2024) tracer study confirmed that LinkedIn use among graduates was minimal compared to informal channels, while Tanzlite (2024) found that even among LinkedIn account holders, active job-hunting engagement was rare. These studies collectively show that, in Tanzania, informal networks remain the dominant job-search pathway. LinkedIn, though recognised for its professional legitimacy, is yet to be fully embraced as a core tool for employability.

In general, the evidence indicates a persistent digital divide: in developed economies, LinkedIn serves as a central career-development tool, while in Tanzania and many developing nations, its use remains limited and supplementary. For TETIs's graduates, this divide highlights both an opportunity and a challenge. With improved digital literacy training, institutional guidance, and employer engagement in online recruitment, LinkedIn could evolve from a passive networking platform to a dynamic employment gateway. Such transformation would not only enhance individual employability but also align Tanzanian technical education with the demands of an increasingly digital global labour market.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a positivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is objective and measurable. Positivism was considered the most suitable approach because it allows systematic observation and statistical analysis of measurable phenomena, such as LinkedIn proficiency and job-hunting behaviors among graduates of TETIs in Tanzania (Saunders *et al.,* 2022). By grounding the study in positivism, the research ensures that findings are based on empirical evidence and can be generalized across similar contexts.

Aligned with this philosophy, the study followed a deductive, quantitative approach, which enabled testing of theoretical assumptions drawn from Social Capital Theory and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). This approach allowed the researchers to begin with established theoretical constructs about social networks and technology adoption and then examine their applicability in the context of professional networking and job search behaviors among TETIs' graduates (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Quantitative methods were particularly appropriate because they provide measurable, comparable, and statistically analyzable data on graduates' LinkedIn proficiency and usage patterns.

To achieve the study objectives, a descriptive and explanatory survey design was employed. The descriptive component provided a snapshot of graduates' proficiency levels and usage patterns on LinkedIn, capturing the current state of professional networking among TETIs' graduates. The explanatory component went further, allowing the study to explore relationships and differences, such as comparing the effectiveness of LinkedIn versus other networks in job hunting (Bryman, 2016). The combination of descriptive and explanatory elements enabled a comprehensive understanding of both patterns and causal relationships.

The study was conducted across five major Tanzanian cities Arusha, Mbeya, Dodoma, Mwanza, and Dar es Salaam chosen for their high concentration of TETIs and graduates, as well as reliable access to digital technologies that facilitate professional networking. This geographic coverage ensured that the findings reflected diverse educational and institutional contexts while remaining relevant to national-level employment dynamics. The cities likewise represent major zones of Tanzania: Arusha-Northern zone, Dar es Salaam-Eastern zone, Dodoma-Central zone, Mbeya-Southern, and Mwanza-West zone. The zones represent and qualifies the study being done in Tanzania.

The population consisted of graduates from TETIs in the selected cities. Since the exact population size was unknown, the sample size of 384 graduates was determined using Cochran's formula (1977) for unknown populations of graduates for a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error during the study data collection. Considering practical constraints, the study successfully included 350 respondents, which was considered sufficient for meaningful analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) i.e. 79% of response rate (Israel, 2016).

A hybrid sampling strategy was adopted, combining purposive, stratified, and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling ensured the inclusion of graduates with experience using LinkedIn, stratified sampling provided representation across gender, study programs, and institution types, and convenience sampling allowed

practical recruitment of participants who were readily available (Etikan *et al*., 2016). This combination ensured both representativeness and accessibility.

The study focused on two key variables: LinkedIn proficiency and LinkedIn usage for job hunting. LinkedIn proficiency was measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1=Very Low, 5=Very High) across three dimensions: knowledge of key features, understanding of premium functionalities, and awareness of best practices in professional networking. According to LinkedIn (2025), the key features of PLiN are based on individuals (professional profile, networking tools, content creation and sharing, endorsements and recommendations, groups [professionals can join interest groups], events [creating and joining professional events], LinkedIn learning); and for businesses and recruiters (company pages, recruitment solutions, advertising and marketing, sales navigator). LinkedIn Premium offers enhanced features tailored for job seekers and small businesses in looking for a smarter way to advance their career or grow their business (Reply.io, July 24, 2025). Its subscription plans include premium career, premium business, and premium company page. LinkedIn Premium products help job seekers and small businesses showcase credibility, find and message the right people, and gain an advantage with exclusive insights (Career Agents, August 23 , 2025. Reuters (2024, March 7) show that, the important considerations of PLiN are careful strategy, management, and authentic engagement (building a professional brand, strategic networking and engagement, managing your network). Conversely, LinkedIn usage for job hunting was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Never, 5=Always), capturing the frequency of job searches, applications, and networking activities on the platform. These standardized scales provided reliable, quantifiable data for statistical analysis.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, designed to capture both demographic characteristics and research variables. The instrument was pre-tested with a small group of graduates to ensure clarity, relevance, and reliability. Validity was strengthened through expert review and pilot testing, while reliability was confirmed with Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.82$), indicating acceptable internal consistency.

For analysis, descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize graduates' proficiency and usage patterns. An independent t-test was employed to assess significant differences in job-hunting effectiveness between LinkedIn and other professional networks, providing evidence of LinkedIn's relative contribution to employment opportunities.

In summary, each methodological choice was carefully considered. Positivism and a quantitative, deductive approach enabled objective, measurable findings. The survey design allowed efficient collection of data from a large, geographically dispersed sample. The hybrid sampling method balanced representativeness with practicality, while structured questionnaires ensured standardized, analyzable responses. Together, these methods provided a robust, systematic foundation for understanding how TETIs' graduates in Tanzania engage with LinkedIn for professional advancement.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Background Information of Respondents

The study involved 350 graduates from TETIs across five key cities in Tanzania: Arusha, Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, Mbeya, and Mwanza. Understanding their demographic and educational profiles provides important context for interpreting LinkedIn proficiency and usage patterns.

In terms of gender, 203(58%) of the respondents were male and 147(42%) were female, reflecting a relatively balanced representation (Table 1). The slight predominance of males, particularly in technical and engineering programmes, aligns with national trends in TVETIs. Gender is important to consider because it may influence confidence, access to digital tools, and engagement in professional networking, potentially affecting how graduates utilize LinkedIn for career advancement.

Table 1: Gender *Distribution of Respondents (N=350)*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	203	58%
Female	147	42%

The results in Table 2 show that, most graduates were between 21 and 30 years old 214(61%), followed by those aged 31–40 95(27%) and over 40(12%). This young age profile suggests a workforce that is generally adaptable to digital technologies but may have limited practical work experience. Younger graduates, however, may be more open to learning and using professional platforms like LinkedIn, which has implications for designing targeted digital skills and networking training initiatives.

Table 2: Age *Distribution of Respondents (N=350)*

Age Group (Years)	Frequency	Percentage
21–30	214	61%
31–40	95	27%
41+	41	12%

Regarding marital status, the majority of respondents were single 203(58%), with married graduates representing 133(38%, and the remainder either divorced or widowed 14(4%). Marital status may influence the amount of time and energy graduates can dedicate to online networking. Single graduates may have greater flexibility to engage actively with professional platforms, whereas married graduates might balance career aspirations with family responsibilities.

Table 3: Marital *Status of Respondents (N=350)*

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	203	58%
Married	133	38%
Divorced/Widow	14	4%

The graduates in this study completed their programmes between 2015 and 2024, with the largest cohort 144(41%) graduating from 2020–2022. This trend indicates that recent graduates may be more familiar with digital tools, including LinkedIn, and may reflect the gradual integration of digital literacy and career guidance into TVETIs curricula. It also allows for the examination of LinkedIn usage trends across different cohorts.

Table 4: Year *of Graduation (N=350)*

Graduation Year	Frequency	Percentage
2015–2017	63	18%
2018–2019	88	25%
2020–2022	144	41%
2023–2024	55	16%

Geographically, respondents were distributed across Dar es Salaam 77(22%), Arusha 70(20%), Dodoma 63(18%), Mbeya 70(20%), and Mwanza 70(20%). This regional diversity captures differences in access to digital infrastructure and employment opportunities. Graduates in urban areas, like Dar es Salaam, may have better exposure to LinkedIn and other online professional networks, while those in semi-urban regions may face infrastructure or connectivity challenges that limit usage.

Table 5: Regional *Distribution of Respondents (N= 350)*

Region	Frequency	Percentage
Dar es Salaam	77	22%
Arusha	70	20%
Dodoma	63	18%
Mbeya	70	20%
Mwanza	70	20%

In terms of employment, 129(37%) of respondents were in paid employment, 102(29%) were self-employed, and 119(34%) were unemployed. This distribution highlights the persistent challenge of graduate employability in Tanzania and underscores the relevance of professional networking platforms like LinkedIn as tools to enhance career prospects. Employment status may also influence the ways graduates engage with professional networks, with employed graduates potentially using LinkedIn to advance careers, while unemployed graduates may use it primarily for job seeking.

Table 6: Employment *Status of Respondents (N=350)*

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Paid Employment	129	37%
Self-Employment	102	29%
Unemployed	119	34%

The nature of the programmes completed by respondents varied, with 137(39%) from Technical and Engineering, 112(32%) from Business and Tourism, and 101(29%) from Health and Allied Sciences. This diversity in disciplines is relevant because the way graduates use LinkedIn may differ by field; for instance, technical graduates may emphasize showcasing portfolios or projects, while business graduates may focus on networking, mentorship, and entrepreneurial opportunities.

Table 7: Nature *of TETIs' Programme Graduated (N=350)*

Programme Area	Frequency	Percentage
Technical and Engineering	137	39%
Business and Tourism	112	32%
Health and Allied Sciences	101	29%

Regarding educational attainment, most graduates held a Diploma 147(42%), followed by Certificate 108(31%), Bachelor's Degree 88(25%), and a small proportion with Postgraduate qualifications 7(2%). Education level can influence both digital literacy and the ability to navigate professional networks effectively. This suggests that LinkedIn training interventions may need to be tailored according to the educational level of graduates, ensuring that all groups are able to leverage the platform for career advancement.

Table 8: Level *of Education of Respondents (N=350)*

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	108	31%
Diploma	147	42%
Bachelor Degree	88	25%
Postgraduate	7	2%

In summary, the respondents' demographic and educational profiles provide critical insights for understanding their LinkedIn proficiency and usage patterns. Age, gender, education level, employment status, and region all play a role in shaping how graduates interact with professional networks, highlighting the need for targeted, context-specific interventions to enhance digital networking skills and improve employability among TETIs' graduates in Tanzania.

4.2 LinkedIn Proficiency among TETIs' Graduates

The study explored the level of LinkedIn proficiency among 350 graduates of TETIs in Tanzania. Proficiency was assessed across three key dimensions: understanding LinkedIn features and functionalities, familiarity with LinkedIn Premium, and awareness of important considerations for effective professional networking. The results showed that the majority of graduates had an average level of proficiency: 250(71%) for key features and uses, 245(70%) for LinkedIn Premium, and 214(61%) for important networking considerations (Table 9).

Table 9: LinkedIn *Proficiency among TETIs' Graduates (N=350)*

Dimension	Very Low	Low	Average	High	Very High	Mean	SD
Key Features & Uses	12(3%)	49(14%)	250(71%)	28(8%)	11(3%)	3.22	0.72
LinkedIn Premium	14(4%)	52(15%)	245(70%)	26(7%)	13(4%)	3.18	0.75
Important Considerations	16(5%)	60(17%)	214(61%)	38(11%)	22(6%)	3.05	0.81

These results suggest that while graduates are generally familiar with LinkedIn, there is room to improve their skills, especially in leveraging advanced features and applying best practices for professional networking. This finding aligns with recent studies indicating that many Tanzanian youth possess basic digital skills but lack advanced competencies necessary for effective use of professional networking platforms (Murire *et al*., 2023; Mushi & Mbise, 2022; World Bank, 2023).

The study also examined how extensively graduates use LinkedIn for job hunting. Results indicated that only 28(8%) respondents reported to have never, 80(23%) rarely, 150(43%) sometimes, 62(18%) often, and 30(8%) always used LinkedIn. In fact, the majority of the respondents mostly used LinkedIn to a limited extent, favouring to other professional or informal networks (Table 10).

4.3 LinkedIn Usage for Job Hunting

Table 10: LinkedIn *Usage for Job Hunting (N=350)*

Usage Frequency	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	SD
LinkedIn for Job Hunting	28(8%)	80(23%)	150(43%)	62(18%)	30(8%)	3.12	0.88

This limited usage may be due to graduates' unfamiliarity with the platform, low confidence in using LinkedIn effectively, or reliance on traditional job-seeking networks. These findings are consistent with other recent studies, which highlight that young job seekers often prefer informal networks or offline methods over professional social media platforms (Koch *et al.,* 2024; Mutsotso *et al.,* 2022; World Bank, 2024).

4.4 Comparison between LinkedIn and Other Networks

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare job-hunting effectiveness between graduates who primarily used LinkedIn and those who used other professional or social networks for job-seeking among 350 respondents from TETIs in Tanzania. Results revealed a statistically significant difference in job-hunting effectiveness between the two groups, t (348) = 2.87, p = .004, Cohen's d = 0.31, indicating a small-to-moderate effect size. Graduates using other networks (M = 4.12, SD = 0.83) reported higher job-hunting effectiveness compared to those relying on LinkedIn (M = 3.78, SD = 0.91). These findings suggest that, in the Tanzanian TETIs' context, other professional or social networks (such as WhatsApp, alumni groups, and informal contacts) currently play a more effective role in facilitating employment opportunities than LinkedIn. (Table 11).

Table 11: Comparing *Job Hunting Using LinkedIn and Other Networks (N = 350)*

Group	N	Mean	SD	t (348)	p-value	Cohen's d	Interpretation
LinkedIn users	170	3.78	0.91				
Other network users	180	4.12	0.83	2.87	.004	0.31	Significant difference, other networks more effective

The significant difference indicates that graduates depending on other networks including alumni associations, WhatsApp groups, family and professional circles reported greater success in securing jobs than those using LinkedIn. This outcome may reflect limited LinkedIn penetration, digital literacy challenges, or employer preference for informal recruitment networks within Tanzania's job market context. In other words, the t-test results suggest that although LinkedIn has potential as a professional tool, it is currently underutilized by TETIs' graduates in Tanzania. This aligns with recent evidence that highlights challenges such as limited digital literacy,

low technology adoption among employers, and insufficient guidance for graduates on effectively using LinkedIn for career advancement (Murire et al., 2023; Koch *et al*., 2024; World Bank, 2025).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined how graduates from TETIs in Tanzania use LinkedIn for professional networking and job hunting. The findings show that, while many graduates have a basic understanding of LinkedIn and its key features, their familiarity with advanced tools, such as LinkedIn Premium and effective networking strategies, remains limited. Furthermore, LinkedIn is currently underused as a job search tool, with graduates relying more on traditional or informal networks. The statistical analysis confirmed that other networks currently yield better job-hunting outcomes than LinkedIn, highlighting a clear gap between the platform's potential benefits and its practical use. This underscores the need for targeted initiatives to strengthen graduates' digital skills and confidence in leveraging professional networks effectively.

5.2 Recommendations

The results have important implications for several stakeholders.

1. For TETIs and educators, incorporating LinkedIn-focused training and practical digital skills modules into the curriculum can better prepare graduates for the modern job market.
2. Career guidance programs should emphasize how to optimize LinkedIn profiles, engage in professional communities, and utilize premium features to expand opportunities. Policymakers can play a role by promoting digital literacy programs and strategies that provide graduates with equitable access to online professional tools, helping to bridge the gap between education and employment.
3. Employers can support this process by using LinkedIn as a recruitment tool and mentoring graduates on effective online networking practices.
4. Graduates themselves are encouraged to actively explore LinkedIn, not only for job applications but also for building meaningful professional connections and advancing their careers.
5. For researchers, the study highlights avenues for further investigation, such as examining the long-term impact of LinkedIn proficiency on career progression and exploring how institutional or organizational support influences graduates' adoption of digital professional networks. Generally, enhancing LinkedIn skills and usage among TETIs' graduates can significantly boost employability, strengthen professional networks, and contribute to a digitally competent workforce. By addressing both individual skill gaps and systemic barriers, stakeholders can create an environment where graduates fully harness the potential of online professional platforms to advance their careers.

Reference

Arusha Technical College (ATC). (2024). *Tracer study report on the employment outcomes of the ATC graduates.* Arusha Technical College.

Biomedical Graduate Outcomes Research Team. (2025). Biomedical graduate outcomes unlocked: LinkedIn as a novel alumni function for employment tracking. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 49 (2), 1–11.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). *The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.

Career Agents. (2025, August 23). Is LinkedIn Premium worth it for job seekers? (2025 guide). Retrieved from https://careeragents.org/blog/linkedin-premium/

Chikozho, C., Murire, B., & Ndlovu, T. (2022). Digital skills and employability among African graduates: A systematic review. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(5), 6521–6543. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11045-7

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American Journal of Sociology,* 94(S1), S95–S120. https://doi.org/10.1086/228943

Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 13(3), 319–340. https://doi.org/10.2307/249008

Hoda, N., Gupta, S. L., Ahmad, M., & Gupta, U. (2025). Modelling the relationship between LinkedIn usage and social capital formation. *Journal of*

Business Research, 58(3), 123–135. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2024.12.003

Include Platform. (2023). *Digital job-seeking practices among graduates in developing countries*. Include Knowledge Platform. https://includeplatform.net/digital-jobs

IPP Media. (2024, April 15). *Tanzanian graduates urged to embrace LinkedIn for professional networking.* IPP Media. https://ippmedia.com/linkedin-tanzania

Jackson, D. (2025). Career resources and securing quality work: The role of graduate career services and online platforms. *Journal of Education and Work*, 38(1), 12–34.

Kibona, B. (2024). Higher education and employability in Tanzania: Students' perspectives. *Journal of International Development*, 36 (4), 1–19.

Koch, M., Patel, S., & Zhou, Y. (2024). Professional networking and job search: LinkedIn utilization among graduates. *Journal of Career Development*, 51(2), 145–161. https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453231105612

Koch, T., Chinyamurindi, W., & Cilliers, L. (2024). LinkedIn and graduate employability: Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of African Business*, 25(1), 112–130. https://doi.org/10.1080/15228916.2024.1001234

Larsen, L. (2020). Recent graduates' usage and thoughts about LinkedIn [Master's thesis]. University of Gothenburg.

LinkedIn Economic Graph. (2023). The future of skills: 2023 global report. LinkedIn Corporation. https://economicgraph.linkedin.com

LinkedIn Learning. (2025). *Workplace Learning Report 2025*. LinkedIn Learning.

LinkedIn Talent Solutions. (2023). *Global recruiting trends report 2023*. LinkedIn Corporation. https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions

LinkedIn. (2025). Career Pages Features | Hiring on LinkedIn. Retrieved from https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/company-career-pages/features

LinkedIn. (2025). Premium Business. Retrieved from https://premium.linkedin.com/small-business/business

LinkedIn. (2025). Premium Company Page. Retrieved from https://premium.linkedin.com/small-business/company-page

LinkedIn. (2025). Premium: Advance your career or small business. Retrieved from https://premium.linkedin.com/

LinkedIn. (2025, October 15). LinkedIn Features and Changes 2025 edition #15. Retrieved from https://www.linkedin.com/posts/lynnairejohnston_new-linkedin-features-changes-15-activity-7383229980648005632-5Eff

Mahardika, B., Pratama, A. A., & Wibowo, A. (2024). Analysis acceptance of LinkedIn application users using the revised technology acceptance model. *Journal of Applied Information Systems and Technology,* 8(2), 89–102. https://journal.unnes.ac.id/journals/jaist/article/view/2231

Moshi, A., Mushi, D., & Mbise, J. (2023). Digital literacy and youth employment in Tanzania: Bridging the skills gap. *African Journal of Education and Technology*, 8(1), 55–72.

Murire, B., Chikozho, C., & Ndlovu, T. (2023). Digital skills and employability in African higher education graduates. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(1), 99–115. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11345-0

Murire, O. T. (2024). Testing a graduateness and employability skills model: The role of social media in graduateness and employability. *Higher Education, Skills and Work-Based Learning*, 15 (7), 33–54.

Murire, O., Cilliers, L., & Chinyamurindi, W. (2023). Digital career development and the use of LinkedIn by graduates in emerging markets. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(5), 5673–5690. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-023-11709-2

Mutsotso, S., Ochieng, A., & Waweru, K. (2022). Social media for employment: Patterns among African graduates. *African Journal of Information Systems*, 14(3), 1–18.

Noor, N. (2025). *Unlocking LinkedIn adoption for higher education students.* Education + Training, 26(7), 172–189.

Perera, S., Rajendran, R., & Sivananthan, K. (2025). LinkedIn as a gateway to employment: Factors affecting undergraduate preferences at University of Jaffna. *Journal of Career Development Studies*, 12(2), 45–63.

Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. Simon & Schuster.

Ramadhani, S. (2025). Skills mismatch and underemployment among Tanzanian TVET graduates. *Tanzania Journal of Education and Training*, 14(1), 88–104. https://doi.org/10.52370/tjet.v14i1.2025

Reply.io. (2025, July 24). How to get the most out of LinkedIn Sales Navigator (2025). Retrieved from https://reply.io/blog/how-to-get-the-most-out-of-linkedin-sales-navigator/

Reuters. (2024, March 7). In a rare disclosure, LinkedIn says premium subscriptions bring $1.7 billion [News article]. Retrieved from https://www.reuters.com/technology/rare-disclosure-linkedin-says-premium-subscriptions-bring-17-billion-2024-03-07/

Rózsa, Z. (2022). Social capital and job search behavior in the digital age. *Journal of Organizational and Technological Studies,* 10(4), 45–59. https://jots.cz/index.php/JoTS/article/view/481

Tanzlite. (2024). LinkedIn helped me escape Tanzania's endemic unemployment: User perspectives and platform penetration. *Tanzlite Research Bulletin*, 4 (12), 22–28.

Utz, S. (2019). The relationship between networking, LinkedIn use, and job search success. *Journal of Career Development*, 46(5), 467–480. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894845318813964

World Bank. (2023). *Tanzania digital skills for employment report.* World Bank Publications.

World Bank. (2023). *Tanzania economic update: Addressing youth unemployment through skills development.* World Bank Group. https://documents.worldbank.org/tanzania-youth-jobs

World Bank. (2024). *Digital skills development in East Africa: Opportunities and challenges*. World Bank Publications.

World Bank. (2025). *Digital opportunities for African graduates: Leveraging online platforms for employability.* World Bank Group. https://documents.worldbank.org/digital-opportunities

World Bank. (2025). *Digital skills for employment: Tanzania country report*. World Bank Publications.

World Economic Forum. (2023). *Future of jobs report 2023.* World Economic Forum. https://www.weforum.org/reports/future-of-jobs-2023

World Economic Forum. (2025). Future of Jobs Report 2025. Geneva: World Economic Forum.