



The Employability Landscape of Female TVET Graduates in Tanzania: A Case of Arusha Technical College

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Abstract This study investigates the employment outcomes, training relevance, and satisfaction levels among graduates of Arusha Technical College (ATC), Tanzania, with a specific focus on the employability of female graduates. Utilizing a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 586 graduates (88% response rate) from the 2022/2023 academic year across various technical and engineering disciplines. Findings reveal significant gender disparities: six months post-graduation, male graduates exhibited higher rates of formal (31.4%) and self-employment (13.6%) compared to females (15.4% formal, 9.6% self-employment). A substantial proportion of female graduates (42.3%) pursued further academic studies, suggesting a strategic response to enhance employability. The study highlights the critical role of practical training, online job platforms, and personal networks in securing employment, predominantly in the public sector. Challenges include limited access to startup capital for self-employed graduates and pedagogical issues within TVET programs. Recommendations emphasize gender-responsive curriculum reform, enhanced industry linkages, targeted entrepreneurial support for women, and improved graduate services to foster more equitable labor market integration for female TVET graduates in Tanzania.

Keywords: TVET, employability, female graduates, gender disparities, Tanzania, tracer study, Technical education, Vocational training, Labor market integration, Graduate outcomes, Workforce development, Skills mismatch, Youth employment, Gender equality, Higher education, Career pathways, Entrepreneurship, Informal sector, Industry linkages, Human capital development, Skills development, Employment transition, Education-to-work transition, Sub-Saharan Africa.

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1. Introduction

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) plays a crucial role in national development, particularly in developing economies, by equipping individuals with practical skills essential for labor market integration and economic growth (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). In Tanzania, the Arusha Technical College (ATC), established in 1978, stands as a key institution accredited by the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) to train technicians,

engineers, and artisans (Arusha Technical College, 2024). ATC's commitment to quality education and sustainable development is underscored by its annual graduate tracer studies, conducted since 2018 under the East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project (EASTRIP) (Arusha Technical College, 2024). These studies serve as vital tools for evaluating program effectiveness, assessing labor market outcomes, and ensuring curriculum alignment with industry needs (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

While TVET aims to provide equitable opportunities for all, gender disparities in educational and employment outcomes remain a significant concern globally, particularly in technical fields (Mushi & Urassa, 2020). In Tanzania, despite efforts to promote gender equality in education, female participation in TVET often lags behind that of males, and their transition into the workforce can present unique challenges (Arusha Technical College, 2024; Mushi & Urassa, 2020). Understanding these gender-specific dynamics is crucial for developing targeted interventions that enhance the employability of female TVET graduates.

This paper draws upon the findings of a recent tracer study conducted at Arusha Technical College for the 2022/2023 academic year. The primary aim of the original tracer study was to evaluate the overall employability status of graduates from TVET programs offered at the College (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Specifically, it sought to assess employment rates six months post-graduation, evaluate the relevance of training programs to the labor market, and gauge overall graduate satisfaction levels (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Building on this foundation, the present paper critically analyzes the employment outcomes, with a particular focus on identifying and discussing the patterns and implications for female graduates. By highlighting the gendered aspects of employability, this study contributes to the broader discourse on gender equity in TVET and informs policy and institutional practices aimed at fostering more inclusive labor market pathways for women in technical professions in Tanzania.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Despite the critical role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in equipping graduates with practical skills for labor market participation, female graduates in Tanzania continue to face significant barriers in achieving equitable employment outcomes. Studies have shown that while TVET programs aim to provide equal opportunities for all students, female participation remains consistently lower than that of males, particularly in technical and engineering disciplines (Mushi & Urassa, 2020).

Preliminary tracer studies at institutions like Arusha Technical College indicate that male graduates are more likely to secure formal and self-employment within six months post-graduation, while female graduates disproportionately pursue further academic studies as a strategy to improve employability. This trend suggests underlying challenges such as limited employer confidence in female technical graduates, sociocultural constraints, lack of access to professional networks, and inadequate entrepreneurial support.

Furthermore, pedagogical and institutional factors such as overemphasis on theoretical instruction, insufficient practical training resources, and inconsistent teaching quality—may exacerbate these disparities. These combined factors create a complex employability landscape for female TVET graduates, with implications for gender equity, labor market efficiency, and economic development.

Despite these challenges, there is limited empirical evidence in Tanzania on the specific employment outcomes, training relevance, and satisfaction levels of female TVET graduates. This knowledge gap undermines efforts to design targeted interventions, policies, and institutional practices that can enhance female graduates' employability and ensure more inclusive labor market participation.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the employability landscape of female TVET graduates at Arusha Technical College, examining gender-specific employment outcomes, training relevance, and strategies to improve labor market integration.

1.2 Objective of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To assess the employment outcomes of female TVET graduates from Arusha Technical College six months after graduation.
2. To evaluate the relevance of training programs in preparing graduates to meet current labor market demands.
3. To examine the satisfaction levels of graduates regarding their training experiences and subsequent employment.
4. To identify gender-specific challenges that influence the employability of female TVET graduates.
5. To propose strategies and recommendations aimed at enhancing the employability and labor market integration of female graduates in Tanzania.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Employability

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has increasingly been recognized as a crucial mechanism for improving workforce readiness and supporting national economic development. TVET equips learners with

practical skills, technical competencies, and professional attitudes necessary for effective participation in the labor market (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2020). In developing economies, vocational training plays an essential role in addressing youth unemployment and closing the gap between education systems and labor market demands (McGrath, 2012).

Several scholars argue that effective TVET systems contribute significantly to productivity and economic competitiveness by producing technically skilled workers (Maclean & Wilson, 2009; King & Palmer, 2010). Countries that invest in vocational training often experience improved employment outcomes among graduates, particularly in technical and industrial sectors (ILO, 2021; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). In Tanzania, TVET institutions play a key role in preparing technicians and middle-level professionals who support national development in sectors such as engineering, construction, tourism, and renewable energy (United Republic of Tanzania, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of TVET programs in ensuring graduate employability depends on several factors, including curriculum relevance, practical training facilities, and collaboration with industry (AfDB, 2018; Allais, 2012). Studies conducted across Sub-Saharan Africa reveal that graduates sometimes experience difficulties transitioning into employment due to weak industry linkages and insufficient practical exposure during training (Oketch, 2007; Atchoarena & Delluc, 2002).

Tracer studies have therefore become an important mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of training programs. According to Millington (2001), tracer studies provide valuable feedback on graduate employment outcomes, training relevance, and the alignment between educational programs and labor market demands. These studies allow institutions to identify skill gaps and inform curriculum improvement strategies (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

2.2 Gender Disparities in Technical Education

Despite global efforts to promote gender equality in education, women remain underrepresented in technical and vocational training programs, particularly in engineering and industrial fields (UNESCO, 2020). Gender disparities in TVET participation are often influenced by sociocultural norms that shape educational choices and career aspirations (Mushi & Urassa, 2020).

Research indicates that many societies perceive technical professions as male-dominated, which discourages female

participation in engineering and technical disciplines (Oketch, 2007). As a result, women are often concentrated in non-technical vocational fields such as hospitality, administration, and social services (UNESCO, 2020). This pattern of occupational segregation limits women's opportunities to enter high-demand technical sectors.

Gender inequality in TVET participation also reflects broader structural challenges in education systems. According to King and Palmer (2010), limited mentorship opportunities, gender stereotypes, and lack of female role models in technical fields discourage women from pursuing vocational careers. Furthermore, research conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa shows that female students often face institutional and societal barriers that affect both their enrollment and career progression (Allais, 2012).

These disparities extend beyond education into the labor market. Studies suggest that women with technical qualifications may still encounter discrimination during recruitment and employment processes (ILO, 2018). Such barriers often reduce employment opportunities for female graduates and contribute to persistent gender gaps in technical professions.

2.3 Employability of TVET Graduates in Tanzania

The Tanzanian government has made significant efforts to strengthen the TVET sector as part of national development strategies aimed at building a skilled workforce capable of supporting industrialization and economic transformation (United Republic of Tanzania, 2020). Institutions regulated by the National Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NACTVET) play a critical role in providing technical training and professional skills development (NACTVET, 2022).

Despite these efforts, several studies highlight challenges affecting the employability of TVET graduates in Tanzania. Mushi and Urassa (2020) note that many employers perceive gaps between the skills acquired during training and the competencies required in the workplace. These gaps are often associated with inadequate training facilities, limited industrial exposure, and outdated curricula.

The labor market structure in Tanzania also influences graduate employment outcomes. According to the African Development Bank (2020), the formal employment sector remains relatively small, while a large proportion of the workforce operates in informal economic activities. Consequently, many TVET graduates seek alternative

employment pathways such as self-employment or entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2019).

Tracer studies conducted in various African countries demonstrate that networking, internship experience, and access to labor market information significantly influence graduate employment opportunities (Boateng & Ofori-Sarpong, 2002). Graduates who actively utilize digital platforms and professional networks are more likely to secure employment opportunities in a shorter period of time.

2.4 Female Employability and Labor Market Barriers

Female graduates in technical fields often encounter additional challenges that limit their participation in the labor market. Research indicates that women face systemic barriers such as gender bias in hiring practices, limited professional networks, and fewer opportunities for industrial training (ILO, 2021).

Access to financial resources also presents a significant challenge for female entrepreneurs. Studies show that women often face difficulties obtaining startup capital due to lack of collateral, financial literacy gaps, and restrictive lending policies (ILO, 2018). These challenges make it difficult for female graduates to establish and sustain entrepreneurial ventures despite possessing technical skills.

Furthermore, workplace environments in traditionally male-dominated sectors such as engineering and construction may discourage female participation due to persistent gender stereotypes and limited support structures (Allais, 2012). As a result, many female graduates pursue alternative career pathways, including further academic studies or employment in non-technical sectors.

Research suggests that pursuing additional qualifications may serve as a strategy for female graduates to improve their competitiveness in the labor market (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). However, this trend may also reflect structural inequalities that limit women's immediate access to employment opportunities after graduation.

2.5 The Role of Industry Linkages and Practical Training

Strong collaboration between educational institutions and industry stakeholders is widely recognized as a critical factor in improving graduate employability. Industry partnerships facilitate internship placements, apprenticeships, and work-based learning opportunities

that allow students to gain practical experience before entering the labor market (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019).

Practical training components such as workshops, laboratory sessions, and industrial attachments enable students to develop technical competencies that are highly valued by employers (Maclean & Wilson, 2009). These experiences also provide opportunities for networking with potential employers and building professional relationships that may lead to employment after graduation.

However, many TVET institutions in developing countries face challenges in maintaining effective partnerships with industry. Limited funding, outdated equipment, and insufficient coordination between training institutions and employers can reduce the effectiveness of practical training programs (AfDB, 2018).

Strengthening these partnerships is particularly important for female students, who may benefit from structured mentorship programs and targeted initiatives that promote women's participation in technical careers (King & Palmer, 2010).

2.6 Research Gap

Although existing literature highlights the role of TVET in promoting employability, limited research has specifically examined gendered employment outcomes among TVET graduates in Tanzania. Many studies focus on general graduate employment trends without sufficiently analyzing the unique barriers faced by female graduates in technical fields.

Furthermore, most tracer studies provide institutional statistics without critically examining the structural factors contributing to gender disparities in employment outcomes. This gap underscores the need for research that explores the intersection of gender, technical education, and labor market integration.

This study therefore contributes to the existing body of knowledge by examining the employability landscape of female TVET graduates from Arusha Technical College. By analyzing gender differences in employment outcomes, training relevance, and career pathways, the study provides insights that can inform gender-responsive policies and institutional strategies aimed at promoting inclusive technical education and equitable labor market opportunities in Tanzania.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This tracer study employed a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate for gathering comprehensive information about existing phenomena, such as the employment status, competencies, and educational experiences of graduates (Creswell, 2014). In the context of tracer studies, a descriptive survey allows institutions to systematically describe employment outcomes, training relevance, and graduate satisfaction levels, facilitating the collection of uniform data from a large population at a relatively low cost and within a reasonable timeframe (Millington, 2001; Arusha Technical College, 2024). The insights derived from this design are instrumental in informing improvements in training, assessment, and curriculum review processes (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study comprised all 666 graduates from Arusha Technical College and its Kikuletwa Renewable Energy Training and Research Centre (KRETRC) who completed their studies in the academic year 2022/2023 (Arusha Technical College, 2024). These graduates spanned 19 academic programs across NTA levels 4-8, reflecting the institution's multidisciplinary profile (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

A census sampling technique was utilized, aiming to include all 666 graduates to ensure comprehensive feedback for institutional quality assurance and curriculum development (Arusha Technical College, 2024). The gender distribution within the target population was 79.9% (532) males and 20.1% (134) females, as per the College's graduation records (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Ultimately, data were successfully collected from 586 graduates, yielding an 88% response rate. This response rate significantly exceeded the minimum statistical threshold of approximately 250 graduates calculated using Yamane's Formula at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, thus ensuring the statistical significance of the findings (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

3.3 Data Collection Instruments and Procedures

Data collection was conducted over a three-month period, from January to March 2025 (Arusha Technical College, 2024). A mixed-mode approach, combining online and

manual methods, was employed to maximize the response rate and ensure representativeness across academic disciplines (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

The primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire, developed using Google Forms, which included both closed-ended and open-ended questions (Arusha Technical College, 2024). This online questionnaire was disseminated through multiple institutional platforms, including the official College email address, alumni social media groups (WhatsApp, Facebook), and the official College website (Arusha Technical College, 2024). To complement the online approach and mitigate potential non-response bias, particularly for graduates with limited internet access, printed questionnaires were distributed through designated tracer study coordinators within each academic department (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

To ensure data quality and consistency, the research team implemented several measures: a pilot test with 30 graduates was conducted to validate the instrument; departmental tracer study coordinators received a brief orientation on guiding respondents; and real-time monitoring of response trends was performed via the online platform dashboard (Arusha Technical College, 2024). These procedures collectively contributed to the high response rate and the reliability of the collected data (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, aligning with internationally recognized best practices in tracer study methodology (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Closed-ended responses were exported from Google Forms to Microsoft Excel, cleaned, coded, and then analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27 (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistical methods, including frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendency, cross-tabulations, and the generation of charts and graphs for visual interpretation (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

Open-ended responses, which captured graduate suggestions, perceived skill gaps, and overall satisfaction, were subjected to thematic content analysis (Arusha Technical College, 2024). This qualitative approach involved iterative reading of responses to identify recurring themes, manual coding, and grouping into relevant categories, providing comprehensive insights into the graduates' experiences (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered strictly to ethical considerations, consistent with international research ethics protocols and best practices observed at Arusha Technical College (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection guided the research process (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Prior to participation, all graduates received a clear explanation of the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights as respondents. An informed consent form, embedded in both online and printed questionnaires, explicitly stated that participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without consequences (Arusha Technical College, 2024). To ensure anonymity, no names or student identification numbers were requested, and all personally identifiable data were excluded from analysis and reporting. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, with data accessible only to the core tracer study team (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

3.6 Limitations of the Study

Despite its valuable insights, the study encountered certain limitations. The 6-month post-graduation timeframe for assessing employment outcomes is relatively short, particularly in developing economies like Tanzania, where TVET graduates often require more time to secure stable or relevant employment (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2013; Arusha Technical College, 2024). Additionally, challenges were faced due to outdated contact information for some graduates, although this was mitigated by leveraging institutional databases and alumni networks for referral-based updates (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Limited access through some alumni social media networks also posed a challenge, addressed by diversifying communication strategies (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Finally, time and personnel constraints limited the extent of data triangulation, follow-up efforts, and in-depth qualitative validation, necessitating a prioritization of automated data collection tools (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Despite these limitations, the study provides meaningful baseline data for institutional planning, curriculum review, and graduate support services (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic and Academic Profile of Respondents

The study's participants comprised 586 graduates from the 2022/2023 academic year. A significant gender disparity was observed, with 72.9% (427) male respondents and

27.1% (159) female respondents (Arusha Technical College, 2024). This distribution reflects a persistent national trend of lower female participation in TVET education in Tanzania (Arusha Technical College, 2024). The majority of respondents (94.8%) were under 35 years of age, aligning with Tanzania's youthful labor force demographics (United Republic of Tanzania, 2021; Arusha Technical College, 2024). Most graduates (73.4%) entered ATC directly from secondary education, and 70.8% were admitted with a Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) (Arusha Technical College, 2024). The predominant qualification level among graduates was an Ordinary Diploma (NTA Level 6) at 74.0%, with 22.9% holding a Bachelor's Degree (NTA Level 8) (Arusha Technical College, 2024). A high completion rate of 82.3% within the usual study duration was noted, with academic challenges (48.3%) and financial difficulties (17.2%) being the primary reasons for delayed completion (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

4.2 Graduate Employment Status Six Months Post-Graduation

Overall, six months after graduation, 27.1% of graduates were formally employed, 12.5% were self-employed, and 28.6% pursued further academic studies (Arusha Technical College, 2024). A substantial 31.8% were not employed but actively seeking work (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

4.2.1 Employment Rates by Gender

A critical finding of the study is the notable gender disparity in employment outcomes (Table 1). Male graduates demonstrated higher rates of both formal employment and self-employment compared to their female counterparts (Arusha Technical College, 2024):

- **Formal Employment:** 31.4% of male graduates secured formal employment, compared to 15.4% of female graduates (Arusha Technical College, 2024).
- **Self-Employment:** 13.6% of male graduates were self-employed, while 9.6% of female graduates pursued self-employment (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

Conversely, a significantly higher proportion of female graduates (42.3%) opted for further academic studies, compared to 23.6% of male graduates (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Unemployment rates were relatively similar, with 31.4% of males and 32.7% of females actively seeking work (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

Table 1: Graduate Employment Rates Six Months after Graduation by Gender

Gender	Employed	Self Employed	Further Academic Studies	Not employed, Seeking employment
Male	31.4%	13.6%	23.6%	31.4%
Female	15.4%	9.6%	42.3%	32.7%

4.3 Job Search Dynamics and Employment Characteristics

The majority of employed graduates (57.6%) secured jobs within 0-6 months, with 25.4% finding employment within 7-12 months, and 16.9% taking over a year (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Online platforms and internet job portals (51.7%) were the most dominant sources of employment information, followed by print media advertisements (19.0%) and personal connections (19.0%) (Arusha Technical College, 2024). A proactive job search was evident, with 29.8% contacting 2-4 employers and 28.1% contacting one employer before securing a job (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

The public sector emerged as the primary employer, absorbing 72.9% of employed graduates, while 25.4% found employment in the private sector (Arusha Technical College, 2024). The education sector (27.1%), tourism and hospitality (22.9%), and finance services (22.9%) were the leading industries for graduate employment (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Most employed graduates (83.1%) secured permanent or full-time contracts, indicating job stability (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Among self-employed graduates, 61.1% were solo entrepreneurs, while 38.9% had established enterprises that employed others (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

4.4 Training Relevance and Graduate Satisfaction

Graduates highly valued practical, experiential training components, such as workshops and industry-based learning opportunities (Arusha Technical College, 2024). However, several concerns were identified, including an excessive emphasis on theoretical instruction, inadequate practical resources, inconsistent teaching quality, and intense workload pressures (Arusha Technical College, 2024). These findings suggest a gap between the perceived quality of practical training and the actual resources and pedagogical approaches available.

4.5 Discussion

The findings of this tracer study underscore a complex employability landscape for TVET graduates in Tanzania, with pronounced gender disparities. The lower participation of females in TVET programs at ATC (27.1%) is consistent with national and international trends, highlighting a foundational challenge in promoting gender inclusiveness in technical education. This initial disparity in enrollment likely contributes to the subsequent gaps in employment outcomes.

The significantly lower rates of formal and self-employment for female graduates (15.4% and 9.6% respectively) compared to their male counterparts (31.4% and 13.6%) within six months post-graduation are particularly concerning (Arusha Technical College, 2024). This aligns with scholarly works that attribute such persistent gender inequalities in TVET outcomes to a combination of sociocultural norms, limited employer confidence in female technical graduates, and fewer opportunities for women in male-dominated sectors (Mushi & Urassa, 2020; Arusha Technical College, 2024). The high proportion of female graduates (42.3%) pursuing further academic studies suggests a strategic response to these barriers, indicating that women may feel the need for additional qualifications to enhance their competitiveness in a challenging labor market (Arusha Technical College, 2024; ILO, 2021). This highlights a potential "qualification escalation" for female graduates, where higher education is sought not necessarily for career advancement but as a compensatory mechanism for perceived employability deficits in TVET.

The reliance on online platforms and personal networks for job searching (Arusha Technical College, 2024) underscores the importance of digital literacy and networking skills. For female graduates, who may face societal constraints on mobility or traditional networking, robust digital literacy training and facilitated access to professional networks could be particularly empowering. The dominance of public sector employment (72.9%) and specific industries like education, tourism, and finance (Arusha Technical College, 2024) suggests that TVET graduates, including females, are primarily absorbed into service-oriented roles rather than core technical or

industrial sectors. This could indicate a mismatch between the technical skills acquired and the demands of a less diversified private sector, or limited industrial capacity (AfDB, 2018; Arusha Technical College, 2024). For female graduates, this concentration in certain sectors might further limit their options if these fields are not aligned with their technical specializations or career aspirations.

The challenges faced by self-employed graduates, particularly limited access to startup capital and financial instability (Arusha Technical College, 2024), are amplified for women who often face greater systemic barriers to accessing finance and entrepreneurial support. This is a critical area for intervention to foster female entrepreneurship and self-reliance.

Furthermore, the identified pedagogical issues within ATC, such as an overemphasis on theoretical instruction, inadequate practical resources, and inconsistent teaching quality (Arusha Technical College, 2024), are systemic problems that affect all graduates. However, these limitations could disproportionately impact female students if they are already navigating a less supportive environment or facing societal expectations that limit their practical exposure and confidence in technical fields. The call for improved practical training and industry relevance (Arusha Technical College, 2024) resonates with broader literature on TVET effectiveness in developing countries.

The study's findings align with existing research on TVET in Tanzania and Sub-Saharan Africa, which frequently points to challenges such as insufficient professional teachers, shortage of teaching and learning materials, and poor infrastructure as impediments to effective education and employability. While the tracer study did not explicitly detail these institutional challenges, the graduates' concerns about practical resources and teaching quality implicitly reflect these systemic issues. The emphasis on continuous professional development for teachers in inclusive education and the need for a holistic approach to in-service training are crucial for addressing pedagogical gaps and ensuring that educators are equipped to prepare all students, including females, for diverse labor market outcomes.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

This tracer study provides valuable insights into the employability of TVET graduates from Arusha Technical College, highlighting significant gender disparities in employment outcomes. While ATC successfully prepares a majority of its graduates for entry into the workforce,

female graduates face distinct challenges in securing formal and self-employment, often resorting to further academic pursuits to enhance their marketability. The study underscores the critical need for TVET institutions in Tanzania to move beyond general employability strategies and implement gender-responsive approaches that address the unique barriers faced by women in technical fields.

5.2 Recommendations

To enhance the employability of female graduates from Arusha Technical College and similar TVET institutions in Tanzania, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Implement Gender-Responsive Curriculum and Pedagogical Reforms:

Action: Systematically review and reform TVET curricula to ensure a stronger emphasis on practical, experiential, and industry-relevant content, with deliberate strategies to encourage and support female students' active participation in hands-on technical training. This includes ensuring adequate and accessible practical resources for all.

Rationale: Addressing the identified overemphasis on theoretical instruction and inadequate practical resources will directly improve the market readiness of all graduates, particularly female graduates who may benefit from enhanced practical confidence and skills to overcome gendered perceptions in technical roles.

2. Strengthening Industry Linkages with a Gender Equity Focus:

Action: Develop and expand structured internship programs and partnerships with diverse industries, actively promoting and facilitating placements for female students. This could involve establishing quotas or incentives for companies to recruit female interns and graduates, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

Rationale: Direct industry exposure and networking opportunities are crucial for securing employment (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Targeted efforts are needed to ensure female graduates gain equitable access to these vital pathways, addressing the observed disparities in employment rates (Arusha Technical College, 2024).

3. Reinforce Entrepreneurial Support for Female Graduates:

Action: Design and implement specialized entrepreneurial training and incubation programs tailored to the needs of aspiring female entrepreneurs. Crucially, facilitate their access to startup capital through partnerships with financial institutions, microfinance organizations, and government initiatives that prioritize women-led businesses.

Rationale: While self-employment is a significant pathway, limited access to capital is a major barrier (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Addressing this financial constraint is vital for empowering female graduates to successfully establish and scale their enterprises.

4. Enhance Digital Literacy and Targeted Career Services:

Action: Integrate comprehensive digital literacy training into TVET programs, focusing on effective use of online job portals and professional networking platforms. Provide specialized career counseling and job search strategies that address gender-specific challenges in the labor market.

Rationale: Given the prominence of online platforms in job searching (Arusha Technical College, 2024), enhancing digital skills and providing tailored guidance can significantly improve female graduates' ability to navigate and succeed in the modern job market.

5. Promote Gender Inclusiveness Across the TVET Pipeline:

Action: Implement stronger policy measures and community sensitization campaigns to address the persistent gender disparity in TVET enrollment (Arusha Technical College, 2024). Foster a supportive institutional culture that encourages female participation in all technical disciplines and promotes female leadership within the college and the broader education sector.

Rationale: Addressing the root causes of gender disparity at the enrollment stage is fundamental for increasing the pipeline of female technical graduates and fostering a more equitable and inclusive TVET ecosystem.

By systematically implementing these recommendations, Arusha Technical College can play a pivotal role in not only improving the overall employability of its graduates but also in actively contributing to gender equality and inclusive economic development in Tanzania.

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