

## **Front Cover Page: Submission for Examination**



**Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal**

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**DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

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**August 2025**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work described in this thesis is my original work and has not previously been submitted in its entirety or in part for a degree at any other university. I further declare that this work does not infringe or violate the rights of others, as all the sources cited or quoted are indicated and acknowledged by means of a comprehensive list of references.

Thenjiwe Slindile Mdletshe

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the employment opportunities available to Black South African millennials through social networking platforms (SNSs). The study was motivated by the existing gap in literature regarding studies focusing on Black South African millennials, their SNS use behaviours, as well as contextual challenges.

The study aim was to explore employment opportunities for Black South African Millennials through LinkedIn. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Six hundred and nine (n = 609) students from Durban University of Technology, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Mangosuthu University of Technology participated in the survey. Eleven interviews were also conducted with personnel from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and two separate recruitment agencies. The participants for both samples were recruited using purposive sampling and the data that was gathered from them was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), including Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

The findings revealed that SNSs especially LinkedIn provide a convenient and effective way for Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities. This study provide valuable insights to equip Black South African millennials to effectively leverage SNSs to secure employment opportunities. It also provides recruiters with knowledge to enhance the appeal of their recruitment strategies for this population group.

This study contributes towards combating youth unemployment in South Africa by offering strategies for securing employment that are effective even on the global market.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average Variance Extracted
CR	Composite Reliability
SET	Social Exchange Theory
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
FIML	Full Information Maximum Likelihood
SNS	Social Networking Sites
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
MAR	Missing at Random
MUT	Mangosuthu University of Technology
DUT	Durban University of Technology
UKZN	University of Kwazulu-Natal

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## CHAPTER ONE

### ORIENTATION AND OVERVIEW

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, social marketing and recruitment marketing have seen significant growth and development in the use of e-recruitment, with an increasing emphasis on social media. Additionally, the use of social marketing strategies in employment recruitment through an increased focus on target audiences, developing compelling messages, company and candidate branding, as well as encouraging behaviour change among job seekers (Jacobson 2020; Keppeler & Papenfuß 2021; Kucherov & Zhiltsova 2021) have become imperative in recruitment processes that include social media use to reach potential employees. Focus on social marketing thus draws attention to the various methods that are being used by recruiters not just for competitive advantage, but to draw the attention of job seekers (Kandoth & Shakhar 2022). One of those methods in the current fourth industrial era (4IR) where technology is dominating every sphere of business, including selection and recruitment, is the use of social networking sites (SNSs), such as Facebook and LinkedIn (Lievens & Chapman 2019; Benedict *et al.* 2019). As a result, there has been a growing interest in understanding and addressing the various challenges and opportunities that exist with the use of social networking sites for recruitment purposes.

Though focusing on recruitment using social media, the study provides imperative information that can help improve the attainment of employment opportunities among millennials and subsequent generations that significantly use digital media. According to Lee and Kotler (2019) and Shawky *et al.* (2019) social marketing has shown the ability to make impact in the promotion of change in unwanted behaviour and encouragement of positive behaviour for a specific purpose. In this study, the behaviour of focus is the use of social media by millennials to take advantage of recruitment opportunities. This is in line with the acknowledgement that the use of social media and other digital tools is a growing trend among social marketers aiming to foster engagement from target audiences (Shawky *et al.* 2019). That target audience in this research is comprised of Black South African millennials.

This study aims to explore the employment opportunities of millennials who are the target audience through social networking platforms. The study also focuses on the barriers that millennials contend with when seeking employment through these platforms with critical focus on their behaviour, which is a major construct in social marketing and other socio-economic issues. Specifically, the study on which this research report is based was conducted for the purpose of highlighting the experiences of Black South African millennials. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature and the collection and analysis of empirical data, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of millennials' use of social networking sites for the purposes of seeking employment and to identify key insights and recommendations for practitioners and policymakers in the field. This chapter provides an overview of the study. Aspects such as the background of the study, problem statement, research aim, and objectives are discussed. This chapter also provides a justification for undertaking this study. More so, the research methodology followed is briefly discussed, the scope of study is highlighted, and the chapter concludes with the structure of the study.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Over the past two decades, the world has witnessed a technology reshape; hence, online media and social networks have drastically changed the way people network, communicate and find information (Aichner *et al.* 2021; Twenge *et al.* 2019). Businesses have integrated social networks into their structures, thus redefining how employment vacancies are posted and who sees the vacancies displayed (Kandoth & Shakhar 2022; Lievens & Chapman 2019; Benedict *et al.* 2019). A single resumé is no longer enough to serve as the only point of reference when looking for employment; thus, employers now also view potential employee's social media activities.

SNSs have become an increasingly popular tool for recruitment in recent years (Lievens and Chapman, 2019; Benedict *et al.* 2019). This trend is driven by the fact that social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter offer easy access to a large pool of potential candidates who can be targeted with specific job advertisements. Tanwar and Kumar (2019), together with Rahman (2022) concur that recruiters have adopted social networking platforms in the process of making connections more efficient and cost-free. Recruiters can use social networking sites to search for potential candidates based on a range of criteria, such as location, education, work

experience, and job title. They can also post job openings directly on their organisation's social media pages or groups and encourage employees to share the postings with their own networks. However, the use of social networking sites for recruitment also has some potential drawbacks (Lievens & Chapman, 2019; Benedict *et al.* 2019). For example, it can be time-consuming to sift through large numbers of resumés and profiles to find suitable candidates. There is also a risk of bias and discrimination in the recruitment process, as recruiters may unconsciously favour candidates who share similar backgrounds or interests (Acquisti & Fong 2020).

South African businesses have not stayed behind with this this progress (Ruparel *et al.*, 2020). As economically beneficial as it is, Black Millennials have not fully embraced this evolution or way of finding gainful employment consistent with the qualification/s a person holds. This study will strive to integrate and address the issues of unemployment facing Black Millennials due to the failure of recognising the potential that sites such as LinkedIn hold. Disparities in the available literature can be noted in terms of how Millennials are demographically defined (Ebeling *et al.* 2020; Febriyanto 2020). For that reason, different researchers use slightly different demographics to interpret or solve different problems. This study follows the recommendations of Ebeling *et al.* (2020) who state that the millennial generation was born between 1980 and 2000, thus putting them between the ages of 24 and 44. This research drew its information from postgraduate students in their final year of study and millennials who have finished studying and are actively looking for employment. The study was based KwaZulu-Natal as its geographical location and followed a mixed-methods approach in unpacking the research at hand.

### **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Modern job marketing strategies include the use of social media and in particular dominant social networking platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter (Cubrich *et al.* 2021; Davies *et al.* 2020). According to Hossain *et al.* (2020) the easy accessibility of these platforms and their affordability are contributing immensely to their use employment marketing. In a study that was conducted by Allal-Chérif *et al.* (2021) it was determined through their empirical findings that organisations use such platforms to market themselves and advertise employment opportunities, to increase engagement with the audience. Most importantly, the study identifies LinkedIn as one of the most dominant social networking platforms that both organisations and candidates are using

to market themselves. Marin and Nila (2021) support the main assertions of Allal-Chérif *et al.* (2021) regarding the critical role that SNSs play in reaching job seekers. Critical issues raised in both studies is that they highlight the organisational advantages in the use of SNSs which are also a reflection on the main principles of social marketing. For instance, through SNSs, organisations can use market segmentation to specifically target specific groups such as millennials who are the focus of this study. Additionally, the heavy reliance on social media use among specific generations such as millennials allows organisations to reach even passive job seekers, thus encouraging employment-seeking behaviour change (Allal-Chérif *et al.* 2021; Marin & Nilla 2021). There are many other studies, including Johnson and Leo (2020), as well as Ruparel *et al.* (2023) that not only support the efficiency of SNSs in reaching target audiences for recruitment.

The main gap that us in the reviewed studies (Allal-Chérif *et al.* 2021; Cubrich *et al.* 2021; Davies *et al.* 2020; Hossain *et al.* 2020; Marin & Nilla 2021) is the lack of focus on different geographical, as well as cultural contexts. Consequently, this study focuses on the context of South Africa, where historical, as well as socio-economic conditions have resulted in societal inequalities; hence there is unequal access to technology, the internet and social media. These are all factors highlighted in studies such as Lembani *et al.* (2020) and Pillay (2021) that focus on internet access among the youth in South Africa. Specifically, the study focuses on Black South African millennials who are already disadvantaged by the residual impacts of the separatist system that marginalised Black people in the country even in the access to quality education. This is a factor that can also negatively impact the use of SNSs for job among Black millennials due to limited knowledge. The South African context that offers the opportunity to gain unique perspectives on the research phenomenon than those offered in studies that are not context specific.

Focusing on Black South African millennials gave this study a unique perspective while assessing the use of social networking platforms for job seeking. There are key challenges that the study was able to glean regarding social network use among this demographic group on South Africa. One of those issues pertains to the quality of social networking platforms that are used, compared to quantity. A study on this subject was conducted by Chowa *et al.* (2022) and it highlights how different social networking platforms have different levels of impact for successful job seeking. For example, broader digital platforms do not have the same level of impact that professional platforms have. This is therefore one of the challenges that Black South African millennials have

to overcome to enhance the probability of obtaining employment. Chowa *et al.* (2022), together with Smith and Watkins (2020) further discuss how the millennial generation struggles in the area of platform utilisation. Smith and Watkins (2020) explain the continual failure to use platform features that align with job seeking. On the same matter, Chowa *et al.* (2022) explain that the digital divide in South Africa is a contributing factor among Black millennials in the country; hence in many instances they do not have the digital literacy skills to use social networking platforms for job seeking. These studies and the key points thereof further motivated the decision that was made for this study to focus specifically on Black South African millennials. Moreover, Chowa *et al.* (2022), Mawbray and Hall (2020), as well as Smith and Watkins (2020) indicate an empirical gap that this study aimed to cover within the body of literature, highlighting how there is a lack of studies that focus on Black South African millennials. These studies indicate how most studies focus instead generally on the youth or on international contexts.

## **1.4 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.4.1 Aim**

The aim of this study was to explore employment opportunities for Black South African Millennials through LinkedIn. The study was based on case comparison research, where the focus was on Black South African millennials at selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal.

### **1.4.2 OBJECTIVES**

- To identify the exchange rewards or benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees.
- To evaluate how feasible social networking platforms are for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities.
- To determine how accessible and user-friendly these social networking platforms are to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.
- To identify the barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.

- To create a model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media.

### 1.4.3 QUESTIONS

- What are the exchange rewards or benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees?
- How feasible are social networking platforms as tools for information seeking and in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities?
- How accessible and user friendly are social networking platforms to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities?
- What are the barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms?
- Which model can be used to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media?

## 1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

### 1.5.1 HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

As indicated by Aithal and Aithal (2020), Barroga and Matanguihan (2022) and Mweshi and Muhyila (2024) hypothesis development is a critical process that should be conducted in studies that are either quantitative or that include a quantitative component. These studies indicate that when hypotheses are effectively developed, they guide both the collection and analysis of data. Based on the recommendations of these studies, the following steps were followed in hypotheses development:

- **Clarification of the aim and objectives of the study:** These are stated in section 1.4 and they were informed by both the research problem and current literature on the research topic.
- **Establishing relationships through a comprehensive literature review:** Conducting the literature review which is presented in the next chapter was essential in identifying the relationships that the variables of the study have.

- **Develop hypotheses:** Based on the identified relationships and the objectives, as well as questions guiding the study, testable predictions were then developed.

### 1.5.2 STUDY HYPOTHESES

The study was thus conducted based on the following hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>: The benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees are not statistically significant.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are statistically significant benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees

H<sub>0</sub>: Social networking platforms are not feasible for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities.

H<sub>1</sub>: Social networking platforms are feasible for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>: Social networking platforms are not accessible and user-friendly to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.

H<sub>1</sub>: Social networking platforms are accessible and user-friendly to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>: There are no statistically significant barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are statistically significant barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.

H<sub>0</sub>: The model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media does not significantly improve their abilities in this regard.

H<sub>1</sub>: The model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media significantly improves their abilities in this regard.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Studies centred on LinkedIn and South African millennials are relatively limited, as few studies have been conducted in this regard. More so, no study has been conducted in KwaZulu-Natal advocating the exploration of employment opportunities through social networking platforms for Black South African millennials. In line with the above sentiments, the significance of this study is based on the premise that the study explored several strategies and approaches through which LinkedIn has proven to be effective in enabling recruiters gather information about the organisations they want to work for and build a network of connections, while also attempting to address some of the predominant challenges faced by this group. Theoretically, this study extends social exchange theory, highlighting its relevance in the South African context. It specifically reveals costs and benefits are core issues surrounding Black South African millennials' use of SNSs for job seeking. Additionally, based on Wilson's behavioural model, the study also highlights not only the significance of SNSs as platforms for information sharing. Thus, these platforms are conducive spaces where Black South African millennials can seek and utilise information that enhances their likelihood to secure employment. Managerially, recruiters, universities and even policymakers in South Africa can utilise information from this study to develop interventions that enhance digital reciprocity among Black South African millennials, thus contributing to better employment outcomes among this population group.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used a quantitative and qualitative method, with questionnaires distributed to 609 postgraduate students in KwaZulu-Natal, together with four interviews performed with the Department of Public Service and Administration personnel and seven interviews performed with personnel from recruitment agencies. Students from the Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology, and the University of KwaZulu-Natal made up the target audience. The questionnaire's questions were written in English and were closely related to the study's aim and goals. The researcher took this demographic into account because the study's goal

is to see how employment opportunities can be attained through social networking sites among South African millennials at selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal.

In this case, a technique known as purposeful non-probability sampling was used. The use of surveys yielded useful data, which was subsequently compiled and categorised into topics. As a result, the data was analysed with the help of a statistical tool, and conclusions and recommendations were formed. The thesis' third chapter delves deeper into the subject. The approach used in this study is described in further detail in the third chapter of this thesis.

The study followed a quantitative and qualitative approaches. The questions posed in the questionnaire were structured in English and carefully linked to the study's aim and objectives. This target population was considered as ideal as the study intended to determine how to explore employment opportunities through social networking platforms for Black South African millennials at selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal. The purposive non-probability sampling technique was utilised in this regard. Pertinent information was obtained through the application of the questionnaires, which were then collated and classified into themes. The information was analysed using a statistical program and based on the results that were obtained from that analysis recommendations and conclusions were drawn. The third chapter of this thesis provides a more detailed description of the methodology implemented in this study. The synopsis of the research methodology is provided in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.2: Synopsis of research methodology**

	<b>ORDER OF SEQUENCE</b>	<b>Approach</b>
<b>1</b>	Method	<b>Quantitative and Qualitative</b>
<b>2</b>	Instrument	<b>Questionnaire</b>
<b>3</b>	Instrument	<b>Interviews</b>
<b>3</b>	Population	<b>609 DUT, UKZN and MUT students</b>
<b>4</b>	Sampling	<b>Purposive non-probability sampling technique</b>
<b>5</b>	Data collection	<b>Self-Administration (researcher)</b>

6	Analysis	SPSS (version 24.0)
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## **1.8 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study entails social networking sites, with a prime focus on LinkedIn. The research only addresses employment challenges faced by the millennials and excludes other age groups. This study's population comprised only registered students of the 2019/2022 academic session from the Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology, as well as the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other tertiary institutions in South Africa or non-South African millennials.

## **1.9 STRUCTURE OF THESIS**

This thesis comprises five chapters. These chapters are segmented as follows.

### **Chapter One: Orientation and overview**

Chapter one demarcates the field of study and provides the significance, scope and limitations of the research topic. It further highlights the aim and objectives and serves to provide an overview of the research topic.

### **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

This chapter explores the existing literature on employment opportunities through social networking platforms for Black South African millennials at selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal.

### **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

The focus of this chapter is on the research approach, sampling technique, sample size, target population, data collection method, validity and reliability, data analysis, inclusive and exclusive criteria, confidentiality and anonymity, ethical considerations as well as the limitations of the study.

### **Chapter Four: Data Analysis and Interpretation**

This chapter presents the statistical results of the questionnaires that were distributed among the students from the aforementioned institutions, as well as the interviews performed with the DPSA and recruitment agencies. The findings are thereafter presented and discussed in relation to the study's objectives.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations**

The conclusions to this study are drawn and recommendations are made in relation to the aim and objectives of this study.

### **1.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Chapter one provided a background to the study, research problem, aim and objectives wherein the primary aim was to explore employment opportunities for Black South African Millennials through LinkedIn. The study is based on case comparison research, where the focus was on Black South African Millennials at selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal. This chapter briefly explained the importance of the research, the research methodology, as well as the scope and limitations. This chapter also provided insight into the topic: "Exploring the employment opportunities through social networking platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal". It finally concluded with the structure of the thesis. The next chapter reviews the literature on the effectiveness of using social media as a marketing tool to inform South African Millennials on social issues, including employment and career opportunities.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter includes a narrative as well as a critical review of scholarly articles related to the central concepts of this study. The chapter commences with an analysis of the underpinning theories that capture the essence of the research problem that informed this study. Thereafter, the chapter flows into sections and sub-sections focusing on exploring literature perspectives on employment opportunities through social networking platforms, with particular focus on the millennial generation. The goal of this chapter is to shape a compelling argument that critically evaluates scholarly studies and the results that were obtained by other researchers in studies that relate to the aims and objectives of this research. These arguments and results will thus be compared to the primary results of this study in the following chapters of this research report. This chapter is divided into four sections and concludes with a summary and a brief glimpse into the following chapter of this research report.

#### **SECTION ONE**

In this section of the literature review, the main objective is to provide a theoretical understanding of this study. This section commences with the theoretical framework in which social exchange theory (SET) and information behaviour theory are critically analysed in exploring both the critical nature of social networking sites as avenues for employment for Black South African Millennials and some of the barriers regarding the use of these sites that are preventing them from seeing their potential in that way. By exploring LinkedIn as an avenue for employment for Black South African Millennials, this study took on a social marketing identity; thus, the purpose of critically engaging in the topic was to show its aptitude as a tool to educate specific groups of people for social development. In this case, that group of people is Black South African millennials who are actively seeking employment, thus behavioural and attitudinal change is required in the manner in which they engage with social networking sites. For that reason, two other theories were reviewed to enhance the compelling argument on social marketing, as well as to support arguments presented in the theoretical framework in this section.

## **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The crux of social networking sites is social interaction and the selected theories encapsulate this. The theories not only capture this, but they also include technological and marketing components on both the individual as well as the organisational levels.

### **2.2.1 SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY (SET)**

Social exchange theory (SET) is a sociological theory that was developed by Richard M. Emerson in 1976. SET is a micro-level (individual level) theory that is beneficial in exploring why people participate in social networking. SET is a common phenomenon that is deeply inculcated in our daily lives (Ahmad *et al.* 2023) and is a significant theoretical concept that is used to understand people's reactions (Thomas & Gupta 2021). This theory provides an avenue for understanding social networking use, and this is also relevant to Black South African millennials. The current body of literature reveals that the theory is being widely applied in studies that focus on social media use, for instance Chen and Wei (2020), Surma (2016) and Wang *et al.* (2022). However, while these studies support the choice to use this theory in this study, they also reveal a gap concerning the application of the theory to critically examine employment opportunities that are available to millennials; more so, Black South African millennials. Applied to the current era where social networking sites are dominating the field of technology in an era of digital media (Muhammed & Mathew 2022), SET explains how individuals benefit from being members of these networks and it explains the communication exchange of people and how communication helps them build relationships based on communication (Rammutla & Sundani 2024). Therefore, this theory focuses on relational issues which are imperative not just in social marketing, but in being able to successfully obtain employment. Which is why studies such as Chen and Wei (2020), Surma (2016) and Wang *et al.* (2022) focus on how people are able to relate to others and build positive relationships through social media. The two main constructs of SET that are assessed in this section are cost and rewards, as well as reciprocity.

#### **Cost and rewards**

In his theory, Emerson (1976: 336) indicates that “social exchange as here conceived is limited to actions that are contingent on rewarding reactions from others.” The statement explains the cost-benefit analysis that is conducted by individuals before they join any social relationship

and that includes social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Emerson's definition of social exchanges was informed by earlier research conducted by Homans (1958) on social behaviour; thus, he indicated that participation in social behaviour is often premised on the exchange of both material and non-material goods. Huang *et al.* (2016) referred to these as transactions and social media provides platforms for them to take place. Empirical support for this line of argument can be obtained from Jahan and Kim (2020) who state that people become part of online communities, and they become active members of SNSs because this allows them to share not just information, but also resources. The aspect of sharing that is highlighted by Jahan and Kim (2020) is the same rewarding reactions that is alluded to by Emerson (1976); hence people join SNSs because of the benefits (information and resources) that they obtain at the cost of being members. The critical point inherent within SET is that people choose to form relationships based on the perceived benefits of doing so. Thus, for millennials to engage organisations on such platforms as LinkedIn and to actively respond to employment advertisements, they first assess the benefits of doing so. Jahan and Kim (2020) are supported by Raza *et al.* (2020) who emphasise the notion of perceived benefits. This study covers the gap left by Jahan and Kim (2020) who made no distinction between perceived and actual benefits, and it also introduces another benefit that is valuable to the youth (a population group that encompasses millennials), which is social support. Therefore, Raza *et al.* (2020) indicate that perceived rewards lure people into joining SNS relationships (personal or professional). However, if actual benefits fail to meet the perceptions of users, in this case millennials and if they are perceived to exceed costs, then the logical choice becomes termination of the relationship. It is in this instance that current socio-economic conditions in South Africa, such as high unemployment can affect millennials' engagement with job advertisement and social marketing strategies from organisations, because the labour market does not have enough opportunities for everyone. Hence, many millennials have developed negative perceptions that are based on past failures.

### **Reciprocity**

Another core idea behind SET is the concept of reciprocity. As such, those who participate in social networking always do so with anticipation of reciprocal behaviour from others who are part of the network (Ahmad *et al.* 2023). Reciprocity can thus be regarded as a critical perceived benefit in the use of SNSs if evaluated from the perspectives of Jahan and Kim (2020) and Raza *et al.* (2020) who were reviewed in the previous subsection. Hence, reciprocity is a vital

aspect of social exchange (Thomas & Gupta 2021) which allows individuals to engage in interactions and transactions that allow them to acquire tangible and intangible rewards (Ayop & Ishak 2024). In contemporary times, social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter offer cheap, easy, and fast vehicles for communication and sharing opinions among users in ways that create relationships (Junaidi *et al.* 2020). However, those relationships are founded on the principle of reciprocity and the belief that the actions of one party will result in actions from the other party. It is crucial therefore to understand that reciprocity extends beyond just the sharing of ideas and social support, but it also transcends employment relationships (Kim 2021; Duggan *et al.* 2020; Nayak *et al.* 2021). Meaning that it is not just employers who expect job seeking millennials to be proactive and to actively respond to job advertisements, but the millennials themselves also expect that their engagement will be reciprocated. The importance of SET in this regard is that it digresses from popular rhetoric that millennials fail to take advantage of employment opportunities that are marketed through SNSs because of negative behavioural attributes such as poor engagement and excessive use of social media for entertainment purposes (Smith & Watkins 2023). SET presents another angle to the argument by highlighting how lack of reciprocity by possible employers can discourage millennials from engaging in such relationships (Ham, *et al.* 2019). SET thus explains that ‘relationships are built through a series of positive, reciprocal exchanges wherein parties involved equitably benefit’ (Ham, *et al.* 2019). This does not apply only to social interactions, but also to those seeking employment prospects as well. When such individuals fail to receive interview invitations, their attitudes towards these online employment platforms may become negative, resulting in diminished persistence to keep trying and pushing towards a positive outcome.

### **Critical evaluation**

Studies have been conducted which have focused on exploring why SET is crucial in social networking and in engaging job seekers (Kim & Feng 2021). An important observation made in these studies (Johan & Kim 2020; Kim & Feng 2021; Raza *et al.* 2020) is that those who broadcast reciprocal messages in turn enjoyed an increase in reciprocity reactions from their audiences. This is a critical factor that connects SET to social marketing where one of the key principles is being able to engage with the identified target audience. The crux of the matter is therefore that organisations need to be more reciprocal, by even just providing feedback to millennials if they desire to have more engagement from this group. However, there are always constraints that inhibit millennials from being reciprocal and this is a critical issue within the

context of South Africa. Kim and Feng (2021) found that the ability to use communication technology encouraged online reciprocity and noted that individuals who were skilled at using social media and email were more reciprocal. This study brings to the fore the issue of skill which may be a major limitation among millennials from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in South Africa. Due to inadequate access to quality education and technology, such millennials may not have the skills to competently navigate SNSs, which negatively impacts their ability to reciprocate.

This review on the basis of SET will however not be complete without an analysis of literature that presents alternative arguments to SET. What is clear is that online exchanges are multi-faceted, which is why different people participate for different reasons, be they social, economic or political (Islam *et al.* 2020:81; Wong *et al.* 2021:255). This is an extremely potent line of argument because it highlights how, for many people, the intent in using social networks is not to utilise them for possible employment but most time this is for socialisation and millennials and subsequent generations have been at the core of this argument (Karahoca & Yehin 2018; Alenezi & Brinthaupt 2022; Perez, Ramos & Gomez 2011:45; Hajarian 2021:182). This is further supported by Hajarian (2021:182) whose study also found out that people mainly use social network websites to connect to their friends and family during leisure time. This may be caused by a lack of knowledge or general ignorance of that fact. Another study by Voorveld, *et al.* (2018) which analysed what people do when they use social networks and highlights that there are four categories of social media usage which are:

- i. “Relationship represents social media platforms that are profile-based and consist mostly of customised messages; this category includes platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn.
- ii. Self-media platforms are also profile-based but offer people the chance to manage their own social media communication channels. A typical example is Twitter.
- iii. Creative outlet platforms are content-based and allow users to share their interests and creativity, for example, You Tube and Instagram.
- iv. Finally, collaboration platforms are also content-based but allow people to ask questions, get advice, or find the most interesting news and content of the day.” (Voorveld *et al.* 2018)

Voorveld *et al.* (2018) validates the multi-faceted nature of SNSs. Though this study is not contextual to South Africa, global trends regarding social media use have been consistent,

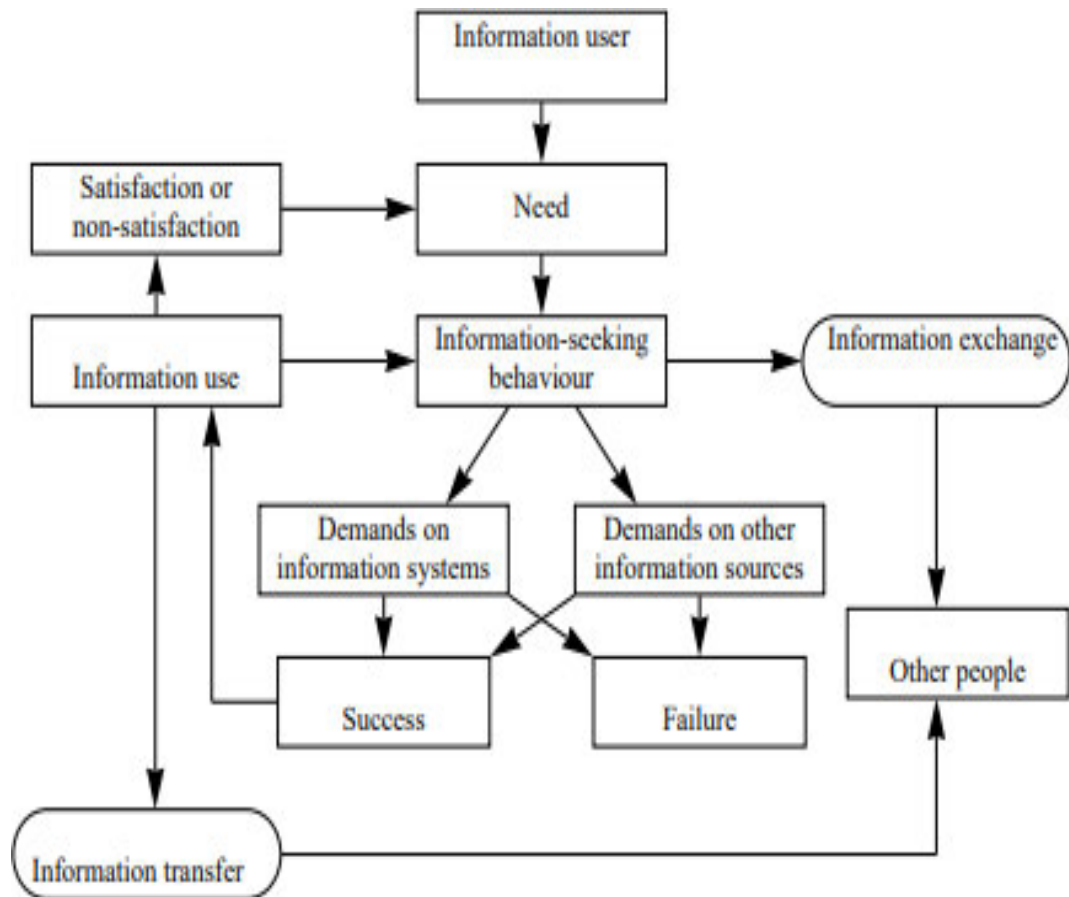
validating the application of these categories as in understanding why Black South African millennials may be missing out on online employment prospects. The first group of users, according to the study, does not see value in reciprocal behavior; they watch and listen to content that they use for personal reasons, including decision-making. This is the vast majority of the people with an online presence on social networks (79.8%) (Voorveld *et al.* 2018). These people do not actively participate and mostly maintain anonymity; they rarely comment and desist from including any personal information about themselves. It appears that for this segment of users, opportunities are few because of limited connections with other users and a lack of reciprocal behaviour that draws the attention of other users. Therefore, Black South African millennials who choose to maintain this kind of online presence fail to position themselves properly to take advantage of employment opportunities.

However, opportunities for employment and for organisations to market effectively are available for the next three groups of users. These are the sharers (61.2%) who use the platforms to share and upload information for the benefit of others, the commenters (36.2%) who provide insightful reviews on products to attract attention, as well as help others make correct decisions, and the producers (24.2%) who engage in the creation of content about their identities for recognition purposes and thus new digital media channels are essential for this cause (Chen 2023). A critical explanation that justifies why employment opportunities are more accessible to these three groups of people is provided in the study conducted by Luo and Hancock (2020) on self-disclosure. Focus on self-disclosure can enhance relationship quality (Luo & Hancock 2020) Self-disclosure simply pertains to one's ability to make a self-presentation in the creation of a personal brand that appeals to others. There are seven categories of self-disclosure goals that are identified by Bazarova and Choi (2014). Those goals include 1.) identity clarification, 2.) relational development, 3.) social validation, 4.) social control and resource gain, 5.) self-expression and relief of distress, 6.) information sharing to benefit others, and 7.) information storage and entertainment. These seven categories are based upon a functional theory of self-disclosure which hypothesizes that disclosure goals or subjective reasons for self-disclosure activate disclosure decision-making (Derlega & Grzelak 1979). Individuals self-disclose hoping to attain rewards the rewards that are alluded to in SET. Specifically, this study determines which self-disclosure goals are fulfilled by posting selfies on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and Snapchat. Disclosure may fulfil needs for social connectedness and belonging. Relational development was also found to be a significant form of self-disclosure.

Future research should look more closely at the specific SNS uses among millennials, which affects their ability to take advantage of employment opportunities (Williamson *et al.* 2017).

### **2.2.2 WILSON'S INFORMATION BEHAVIOUR MODEL**

In 1981, Wilson developed a model meant to explain information-seeking behaviour. While the model was not developed on the basis of a specific theory but was rather formulated on the basis of studying human behaviour, it was influenced on a general level by phenomenology and general systems theory (Wilson 2005). In that model, Wilson raised two compelling arguments that were groundbreaking in the analysis of behaviour; hence, they also became the premise of future information behaviour theories and models. Wilson (1981) states that when humans seek information, it is not a primary need; thus, this secondary need is driven by more basic needs that may be physiological (shelter, water, food), cognitive (learning and planning for the future) or affective (dominance, attainment and such other things thereof). To a greater extent, Wilson's (1981) analysis of information behaviour related to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which assigned different levels of importance to human needs. In this study, the initial assumptions of Wilson (1981) hold weight, and thus the researcher concurs that behaviour related to seeking information related to employment opportunities definitely stems from more basic needs, including being able to provide for oneself, affording decent accommodation, gaining or improving social status, safety and self-esteem, among many other things. Wilson's model is presented in the following figure, and it is conceptualised thereafter.



**Figure 2.2: Wilson's information behaviour model**

**Source: Adapted from Wilson (1981: 3)**

The model presented above fully explains the process that information users go through to satisfy a specific information need. In the model, it is evident that the goal of attaining information begins with a need (Wilson 1981; Wilson 1999). The identification of the unmet need then leads the individual to seek relevant information on how to satiate the need. In the context of this study, there is a specific group of people (Black South African millennials) with a peculiar need (employment). The model further suggests that to assuage needs, people make demands or seek information from information systems that are both formal and informal (Wilson 1981; Wilson 1999). This is particularly the pith of what this model is defining in this review, concerning information systems, because the landscape of information exchange has drastically changed since social networks took over. While newspaper advertisements, television advertisements, physically dropping off your *curriculum vitae* and using postal services may have been effective before 2000, they have long since been sidelined in the area

of job advertisements and recruitment methods instead, e-recruitment processes are now preferred (Sudha *et al.* 2021:618).

### **Convergence with SET**

Wilson's model converges with SET in that while the millennial generation continues to dominate internet use and social media presence, many still fail to realise how the same platforms are also critical for individuals seeking work. On the other hand, there are also many Black South African millennials who, because of the separatist history of the country (Louw & Steyn 2020) encounter socio-economic barriers (Mabhunu 2021) that inhibit them from using social networks for their potential to provide employment prospects. All these variables need to be considered in strategies geared towards equipping Black South African millennials to realise the economic benefits of social networking sites like LinkedIn.

The model shows that the procurement of vital or useful information results in success, resulting in the satisfaction of the need. Most importantly, the model indicates that "part of the information seeking behaviour may involve other people through information exchange and that information perceived as useful may be passed to other people, as well as being used (or instead of being used) by the person himself or herself" (Wilson 1996: 251). In this instance again, the model converges with SET, recombining the supremacy of information exchange and reciprocal behaviour for the success of not just one individual but many individuals who share compelling information. While Wilson's information behaviour model was developed at a time when oral and paper writing were dominant, its most defining points continue to hold water even now in what has been coined as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), the era of massive data collection, analysis, and communication (Shaturaev 2022). The model is hospitable to the exploration aimed at discovering the reasons why Black South African Millennials are failing to use social networking sites such as LinkedIn to look for employment.

### **Possible answers from literature**

Literature provides possible answers to questions regarding the information seeking behaviour of millennials and why they are failing to utilise LinkedIn to look for employment opportunities. In a study that was conducted by Barlett *et al.* (2020), which focused on information seeking behaviour among millennial university students, it was determined through empirical data that the challenge was in the resources that they preferred to use to

obtain the information they need. This is a critical factor, because SNSs can be classified into different groups according to their main functionalities. For instance, Instagram is mainly used for the purpose of sharing images and videos; Twitter is used for sharing current news and furthering campaigns and Facebook is for social networking and marketplace activities, but LinkedIn is specifically for professional networking and job seeking (Manca 2020; Robson & Banerjee 2022; Utz 2016). Therefore, seeking job related information on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook will not be as effective as doing so on LinkedIn, which is the challenge that Bartlett *et al.* (2020) highlight. However, the answer is not complete if it only ends with identifying the use of the incorrect resources for job seeking. Earlier in this review it was highlighted based on Voorveld *et al.* (2018) that most people who use SNSs do so as passive users. Therefore, while millennials may be registered users of LinkedIn, there is also the possibility that they do not actively engage with possible employers and that they do not intentionally market themselves as good candidates. However, Nadlifatin *et al.* (2022) disagree with Voorveld *et al.* (2018) on the notion that millennials do not actively engage in information and employment seeking behaviour. They also do not agree with Bartlett *et al.* (2020) on the assertion that millennials do not use the correct resources to obtain critical job-related information. What Nadlifatin *et al.* (2022) argue is that millennials have strong intentions of being employed, but they are more drawn to employment activities that are more entrepreneurial, meaning that they respond better to opportunities that give them more autonomy and leadership capabilities.

Literature to some extent provides answers on the basis of SET and Wilson's model on the study phenomenon, but empirical evidence from this study will provide context relevant information that can be used to help millennial job seekers and organisations in South Africa. The following section delved into the concept of social marketing which is critical in this study.

## **2.3 SOCIAL MARKETING**

### **2.3.1 WHAT IS SOCIAL MARKETING**

Social marketing is a relatively new concept that has become a buzz word in both the marketing and development communication arenas due to the ever-present need to avail sublime societal living for all citizens. It is a concept that is often misunderstood by many. Therefore, clarification in this study was essential. A plethora of definitions have been proffered to explain the concept. In actuality, social marketing refers to the use of marketing (processes that involve

actions related to advertising, researching, promoting, selling and/or distributing goods and services) to solve problems that may be social or health-related (MacFadyen *et al.* 2017). A similar definition is provided by Samad *et al.* (2018), who state that it is the deliberate effort to influence human behaviour using marketing principles for the benefit of society or to improve health. Likewise, Venturini (2016) provides a similar conceptualisation, in line with the European Social Marketing Association; thus, social marketing is defined as the integration of the core concepts of marketing, like the marketing mix with approaches from other fields for the greater good of individuals and society, through influenced behaviour change. It is based on general marketing principles and strategies whose purpose is to improve society by providing socially relevant information (Immroth & Lukenbill 2021).

The above definitions clearly communicate general agreement among researchers with regards to the manner in which social marketing is perceived. Regardless of the particular area that it is applied to, it appears social marketing has slightly distinct characteristics in that it is aimed at developmental processes. A synthesized analysis of Immroth and Lukenbill (2021), MacFadyen *et al.* (2017), Samad *et al.* (2018), Venturini (2016) reveals that social marketing is firstly based on the application of marketing strategies. Two that apply in this study include content marketing (which employers can use to improve engagement with millennials by sharing the required skills for specific jobs and the success stories of other millennials who would have successfully obtained employment through SNSs) and social media marketing (which can include job advertisements placed on SNSs to improve employment among millennials. Secondly, Immroth and Lukenbill (2021), MacFadyen *et al.* (2017), Samad *et al.* (2018), Venturini (2016) reveal that social marketing is concerned with addressing greater societal issues; hence in this study that issue is unemployment in South Africa, which has far reaching social and economic implications. Lastly, social marketing as encapsulated in the definitions by Immroth and Lukenbill (2021), MacFadyen *et al.* (2017), Samad *et al.* (2018), Venturini (2016) is concerned with behavioural change, which can include addressing the negative behaviour of Black South African millennials which hinders them from being able to successfully obtain employment opportunities through SNSs.

### **2.3.2 A deeper analysis of Social Marketing.**

Social marketing gained recognition as a discipline in the 1970s, due to the influence of prominent researchers like Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman (Kotler & Zaltman 1971). Since the groundbreaking work of Kotler and Zaltman, social marketing has become fundamental to

“reduce tobacco use, decrease infant mortality, stop the spread of HIV/AIDS, prevent malaria, help eradicate polio, make wearing a bike helmet a social norm, decrease littering, stop bullying, increase recycling, encourage the homeless to participate in job-training programmes and persuade pet owners to license their pets and scoop their poop” (Lee & Kotler 2015). Currently, social marketing seeks to develop and integrate marketing concepts with other approaches to influence behaviour that benefits individuals and communities (Akbar *et al.* 2021). In light of this, there is a definite distinction between social marketing and its disciplinary counterpart, commercial marketing. While commercial marketing’s ultimate goal is financial gain (marketing for goods and services to satisfy needs), the primary focus of social marketing (for behaviours and social needs) is to influence behaviour for the benefit of both societies and individuals within those societies (Lee & Kotler 2015; Kumar *et al.* 2021). It can be particularly effective when targeted at specific interest groups and individuals involved in policy making and there is a need for a thorough discernment of both the objects and services that underpin behaviour change in humans. Only then can social marketing strategies lead to the accomplishment of stipulated objectives. Implied here is that social marketing is not done with the ultimate view of making a profit, though it has a similar framing to commercial sector marketing. The common denominator among the meanings assigned to social marketing above is that it is not divorced from commercial sector marketing (Kumar *et al.* 2021). The difference lies in that while marketing for commercial purposes is preoccupied with widening the customer base by persuasively engaging people to try new goods and services with a view to making a profit, social marketing engages in similar activities but for a dissimilar goal, which is to make social change and subsequently social impact (Kotler 2022; Szablewska & Kubacki 2019).

Social marketers are behaviour change agents who work with a view to influencing their target audience to either accept a new behaviour, reject a potentially undesirable behaviour, modify a current behaviour or abandon an old undesirable behaviour (Raciti 2021). The change is being done primarily for the benefit of the audience, not the corporations or organisations delivering the message. Therefore, unlike commercial sector marketing, in which the prime target beneficiary is the corporate shareholder, social marketing primarily benefits society (Duh & Dabula 2021). To that end, the messaging in social marketing campaigns must be aware of the intended audiences, if possible, messaging should be a result of endogenous approaches to market research. Suffice to say, social marketing looks at the provision of services from the viewpoint of the consumer in order to ensure the most effective adaptation or interpretation of

a message. It is important then that social marketers apply a human rights-based approach in addressing the identified social problems which the social marketing interventions needs to address (Szablewska & Kubacki 2019).

Even though there is a clear-cut difference in the goals of social marketing and commercial sector marketing, it is important to note that the two are not entirely divorced (Szablewska & Kubacki 2019). Instead, social marketing applies marketing techniques. It is also more than just advertising and promotional tools. Social marketing presents a wave of guidelines on how to bring about social change through effective and just programmes that emphasise on the social good (Szablewska & Kubacki 2019). George and Wilson (2020) also claim that “social marketing is the application of marketing principles to non-tangible “products,” including ideas, attitudes, and lifestyle changes. Unlike traditional marketing, the primary goal of social marketing is to improve society and the economy, not to increase the marketer’s profitability.” They present the following set of characteristics in the marketing mix, which includes a “the 5 Ps: product, price, place, promotion, and positioning. Product incorporates the target behaviour, price refers to the social, economic, and psychological costs involved in adopting the target behaviour and place is the setting, community context, or distribution channels” (George & Wilson 2020). There are therefore three main concepts that social marketing is premised on, which are audience orientation, segmentation and market focus.

### **Audience Orientation**

Social marketers view their audience as decision-makers with choices rather than students to be educated or incorrigibles to be regulated. Thus, commercial orientation and audience orientation have been seen as two different rationalities (Blassnig & Esser 2022). Audience orientation in social marketing can focus on the main premised of SET as indicated by Emerson (1976) which is the cost-benefit analysis made by individuals before they engage in social or economic relationships. It can also include focusing on the information seeking behaviour of individuals that Wilson (1981; 2005) alludes to in Wilson’s information behaviour model. As such, a thorough investigation of the demographics, behaviour, beliefs and values is important in audience orientation (Hine *et al.* 2019). In the case of Black South African millennials, this is critical because successfully engaging them requires an understanding of their unique position within the socio-economic landscape and their core values. It is argued that in the digital media age, audiences gained much power and influence where there is audience democracy, which allows for a participatory, open, empathetic, and responsive engagement

with ordinary audiences (Hine *et al.* 2019). Hence, this is critical information that employers can use to influence reciprocity from Black South African millennials. For that reason, social marketing begins with a bottom-up versus a top-down perspective and therefore rejects the paternalist notion that experts know it all. Instead, in social marketing, an audience-centered approach is used that seeks to understand what people want or what their needs are and results in the initiation of information dissemination strategies to address those needs or problems. Hence, Cash (2018) advocates for the central role of empathy, citing that putting oneself in the audience's shoes yields the best results. In so doing, developed messages can be specifically tailored to reach the target audience for the most effectiveness (Hine *et al.* 2019). The value of audience orientation can be identified in a study that was conducted in the Netherlands by Mathijssen *et al.* (2017) on alcohol consumption in young adults aged between 18 and 24. They identified alcohol consumption-related behaviour such as binge drinking as a challenge affecting this target audience. Thus, they conducted a study that focused primarily on values and attitudes. By means of factor analysis, Mathijssen *et al.* (2017) were able to identify five different segments within this target audience. For that reason, social marketing strategies developed to modify alcohol-related consumption among the youth could be tailored to target all five segments. The same is applied to this study, thus a thorough exploration of Black South African millennials would provide insight on social marketing needs with regards to future strategies to improve employment within this population segment through social networks.

## **Segmentation**

According to French (2017), segmentation can produce merit in social marketing projects. Audience segmentation is an approach used to subdivide populations into groups with shared characteristics, for example, socio-demographic, behavioural, or psychographic (Jones, et al 2019). The major aim of segmentation in social marketing is to establish differences between different groups of people, which drive approaches to relevant solutions (Walsh *et al.* 2010). However, social marketing has at times been criticised for adopting strategies such as market segmentation (Dibb 2017; Dietrich, Rundle-Thiele, & Kubacki 2017). In order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, subsets of populations are selected, evaluated, and then prioritised as targets based on useful aggregation variables. The segments selected are those most likely to adopt the intended behaviour or those most important to the goals of the social marketing strategy and to provide value in yielding societal benefit (Ibrahim *et al.* 2018). Even among difficult-to-reach populations, strategies are developed that appeal to those within the chosen

population that are the ‘most ready for action’. Within the university community, it is thus important for the social marketing team to understand that they are dealing with a cosmopolitan audience brought together by academic pursuit.

The inherent differences, therefore, naturally lead to the need for a survey that brings out the parallels and variances rather than addressing issues as if students were a homogenous entity. A critical point to the success of segmentation in social marketing in the current era is raised by Dibb (2016), who states that there should be a thorough utilisation of technological advancements and that was a defining factor in this study. When ICT solutions have been introduced to every sphere of social, economic and political livelihoods, their potential in solving problems that plague specific population groups, like unemployment amongst South African millennials, should be explored.

### **Behaviour Focus**

Behaviour is defined as an individual’s observable action or lack of action (Candea 2019). Regardless of this, human behaviour is a multi-faceted concept, and it is determined by such things as subjective norms, socio-economic conditions, moral values and socialisation (Gieschen *et al.* 2023). Social marketing is interested in behaviour that results in societal benefit and considers the underlying factors that influence the behaviours exhibited by people. Many marketing strategies also have intermediate responses, but social marketing success is ultimately measured on whether the desired behaviour was adopted and requires a more understanding of the existing social, cultural, behavioural, and structural dynamics. Which is not a one-size-fits-all (Domegan 2021). What social marketing does is create an offer that has greater value as opposed to the continuation of the previous status quo (Gordon *et al.* 2016)). It is not sufficient to merely change awareness, knowledge, attitudes, or behavioural intentions; thus, social marketing’s broader aims include social advocacy where consumers recommend or discourage others from certain brands based on their positive experience (Campbell *et al.* 2024) and holistic macro-level social development.

From a holistic perspective, it is apparent that the three characteristics of social marketing are inherently intertwined. They have specific roles to play but are also interactive. The focus of highlighting the strategies in this review was to provide a broader breadth of insight regarding the use of social marketing to positively influence behaviour for greater societal benefit. Based on this study, the social problem that was the crux of this research is rising unemployment in

South Africa, particularly amongst the Black youth population. As such, it was necessary to explore social networking platforms as an avenue for employment opportunities. This research, which was concerned with the use of social networking sites in social marketing, realised that social networking sites have the potential to reform employment prospects among millennials. Reformation is understood here to be a change of behaviour, which is congruent to what social marketing sets out to achieve. Gritskevich (2018: 427) aptly defines reformation as a “specific type of social the activity of the subject having authority to transform the society due to the political status; it is directed to deliberately modify the object (institution, social relations, structurally functional and social communications)”. Reformation is seen as a game that takes place on the ‘fields of attraction of discourses and does not lead to the solution of social problems. Different forms of reformation take place; these include youth campaigns as well as mass media campaigns that reach large audiences can direct and indirectly reform the behaviour of whole populations (Young *et al.* 2018). Majlesi. *et al.* (2020: 2) also mention that these types of reformations often have a positive impact as they are capable of improving knowledge, modifying attitudes, and bbringing about constructive and progressive changes among the intended group

Having fully conceptualised social marketing, it is apparent that while the field is firmly rooted in the core discipline of marketing, it does include interdisciplinary facets, thus it also involves aspects of sociology, social psychology, communication, anthropology as well as other related areas of research. Likewise, the study upon which this research is based incorporated major points of argument from other disciplines, particularly psychology.

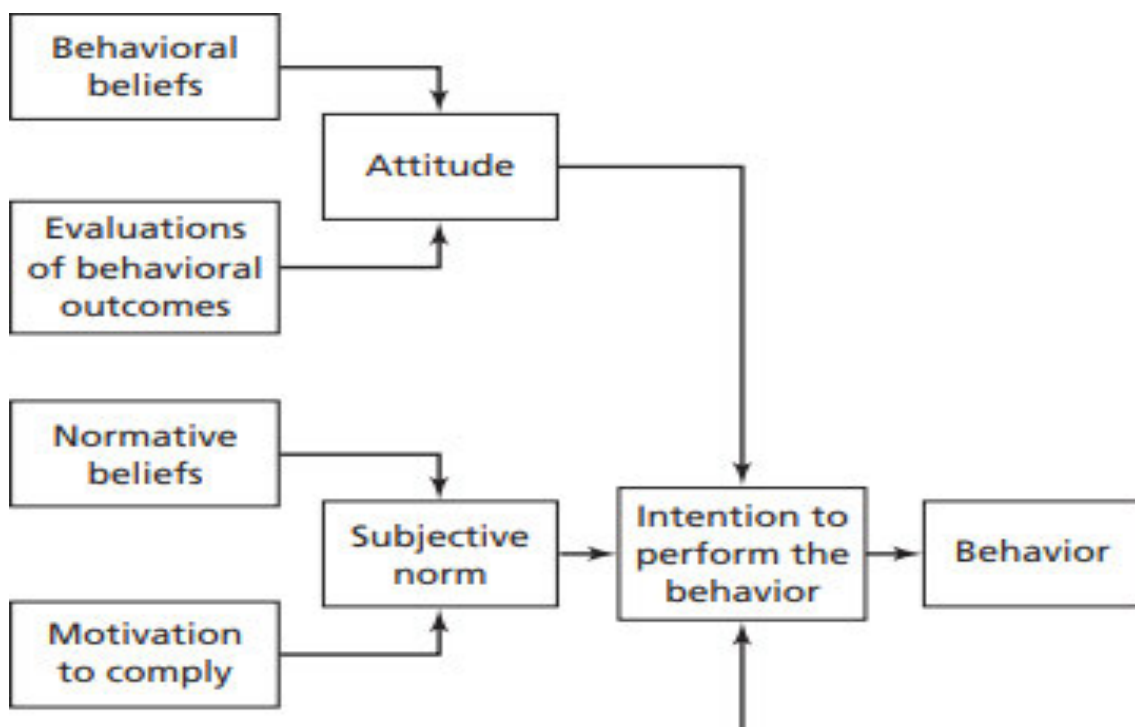
### **2.3.2 THEORIES RELATED TO SOCIAL MARKETING**

There are many theories and models that are applicable to social marketing. However, the use of these theories is contingent on a number of factors, including the type of social problem, geographical context and demographic issues, among other things. Having considered these things in relation to youth unemployment in South Africa and how social networks can be used as avenues for employment opportunities, the following theories are considered in this review. These theories further exhibit the interdisciplinary nature of social marketing.

#### **Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)**

The theory of reasoned action (TRA) has long been dominant in the field of social psychology. The theory was first conceptualised around 1967, mainly through the work of Martin Fishbein (Montano & Kasprzyk 2015). TRA posits that “behavioral intention (BI), of a product or a system is dependent upon an individual's attitude towards the behaviour and the subjective norms related to the behaviour.” (Han 2021:2). At its core, the theory seeks to explain human behaviour through three cognitive characteristics which include attitudes, social norms and intentions (Mital et al 2018). Thus, the theory assumes that “the best predictor of a behaviour is behavioural intention, which in turn is determined by attitude toward the behaviour and social normative perceptions regarding it” (Montano & Kasprzyk 2015: 68). This theoretical assertion is very important in this study because the adoption and use of social network platforms and the internet in general to achieve an objective such as creating employment or seeking employment opportunities requires behavioural intention on the part of the user; hence, this can be influenced by both attitude and socially constructed perceptions.

The following figure depicts the process leading to the performance of a specific behaviour, based on TRA. Moreover, the figure captures the essence of the arguments in the above paragraph with regards to the applicability of the theory in the study that was undertaken.



**Figure 2.2: The crux of the Theory of Reasoned Action**

**Source: Adapted from Montano and Kasprzyk (2015: 70)**

The figure above shows the two determinants of an individual's intention to perform a behaviour. The central of these is *attitude*, which "is an intention, a motivational construct that is considered the most proximal determinant of behaviour. Intention reflects the extent to which an individual is likely to plan to do and invest effort in pursuing a given behaviour. Intention is conceptualized as a function of two belief-based constructs: attitudes and subjective norms. Attitudes are positive or negative evaluations of performing the behaviour in the future, while subjective norms reflect beliefs that significant others would want them to perform the behaviour. The theory of reasoned action demonstrates effectiveness in predicting variability in people's behaviour across many contexts, populations, and behaviours" (Hager 2019). The dimension of attitude is a personal factor, which is why it stems from one's beliefs about the behaviour, together with evaluations of the potential outcomes of the behaviour after it is performed (Nguyen *et al.* 2018). Attitudes are thus determined by an individual's belief about what the ensuing consequences are for performing the behavior juxtapositioned with their evaluation of consequences (Nguyen *et al.* 2018). As such, social marketing initiatives that seek to promote or explore the use of social networking sites as employment avenues or for any other social causes, when adopting TRA as a theoretical foundation need to take into account, as well as internationally target subjective beliefs on social networks and the perceived outcomes of using such frameworks. On the other hand, the second determinant to intention of perform a behaviour, as depicted in the above figure, is the *subjective norm*. These are normative beliefs, meaning that they pertain to behavioural standards that are either acceptable or unacceptable. For that reason, the subjective norm pertains to whether other individuals or important groups would approve or disapprove of the intended behaviour (Hager 2019).

Prior studies give valuable evidence on the pivotal role of TRA in social marketing, particularly when the adoption and use of technology are involved. For instance, Mishra *et al.* (2014) conducted a study in Turkey titled "*Theory of Reasoned Action Application for Green Information Technology Acceptance*", which focused primarily on investigating behaviour that promotes the endorsement of green information technology (GIT) amongst IT experts using TRA. The study was conducted using quantitative methods and the results supported the main assertions made by the researcher in this instance concerning TRA. Mishra *et al.* (2014) were able to establish that the perceptions and attitudes of IT professionals influenced the adoption of GIT. Furthermore, subjective norms are instrumental motivations for GIT. Another study in

Romania was conducted to investigate the role of TRA on the behaviour of individuals to conserve water in a lodging context (Untaru et al. 2016). The study found through the TRA model reveals that attitudes positively influenced an individual's intention to conserve water coupled with other factors such as environmental concern (Untaru et al. 2016). Another study that was conducted, by Otieno et al. (2018) sought to conduct a “*Validation of extended theory of reasoned action to predict mobile phone money usage*”. In that study, the TRA model was used, with a specific focus on mobile phone services. To begin with, the study found that user beliefs and attitudes toward the benefits of mobile money had a positive correlation to the usage of mobile money. In addition, awareness of mobile money directly influences one's behavior and intention to use it (Otieno et al. 2018:12).

In another study that was conducted within the field of marketing, Wolny and Mueller (2013) sought to conduct an “*Analysis of fashion consumers’ motives to engage in electronic word-of-mouth communication through social media platforms*”. Despite the date of publication of the article, its relevance lies in its foundational contribution to the topic being discussed which is social networking. In that study, the TRA model was used, with specific focus on Facebook and Twitter. To begin with, Wolny and Mueller (2013) found that such things as brand commitment were important in order for people to engage in word-of-mouth communication on social networks, proving the importance of attitude. They further found that individuals are further motivated to participate in word-of-mouth marketing as a result of brand involvement, which was fuelled by social engagement on these media platforms (Wolny and Mueller 2013).

These studies provide a theoretical foundation underpinning this study which is why there was keen interest in gleaning in on the sometimes-under-utilised capacity of social networks to increase employment probability amongst Black millennials in South Africa.

### **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)**

Bandura's (2018) social cognitive theory (SCT) is a psychological theory that again seeks to explain human behaviour. The basis of SCT is that a ‘model of triadic reciprocity’ essentially captures why humans function the way they do (Siwitry et al. 2015). This model consists of three factors: *cognitive/personal factors* (attitudes, knowledge and expectations); *environmental factors* (the influence of other individuals, societal norms and values, as well as one's community access); and *behavioural factors* (self-efficacy, practice and skills) (Siwitry et al. 2015). These three factors do not exist independently; they constantly interact in a bi-

directional manner (Stajkovic & Sergent 2019). Moreover, the three factors are identified in SCT as the determinants of human behaviour.

SCT offers a slightly differentiated strategy to TRA and many other behavioural theories because it incorporates observational learning through the environmental variable. In this theoretical section, all the theories that have been reviewed do not directly touch on this component and SCT covers that gap. The major point of argument raised here, as was established in research by Abdullah *et al.* (2020), is that environmental factors influence both personal issues and behaviour. In essence, the defining principles of this environmental component of SCT are hinged together with those of social learning theory (SLT). Therefore, Beauchamp *et al.* (2019) are of the view that throughout one's life, the social environment continues to interact with internal stimuli. In very basic terms, this implies that watching the behaviours of others and witnessing the consequences or outcomes of those behaviours influence both feelings and cognition.

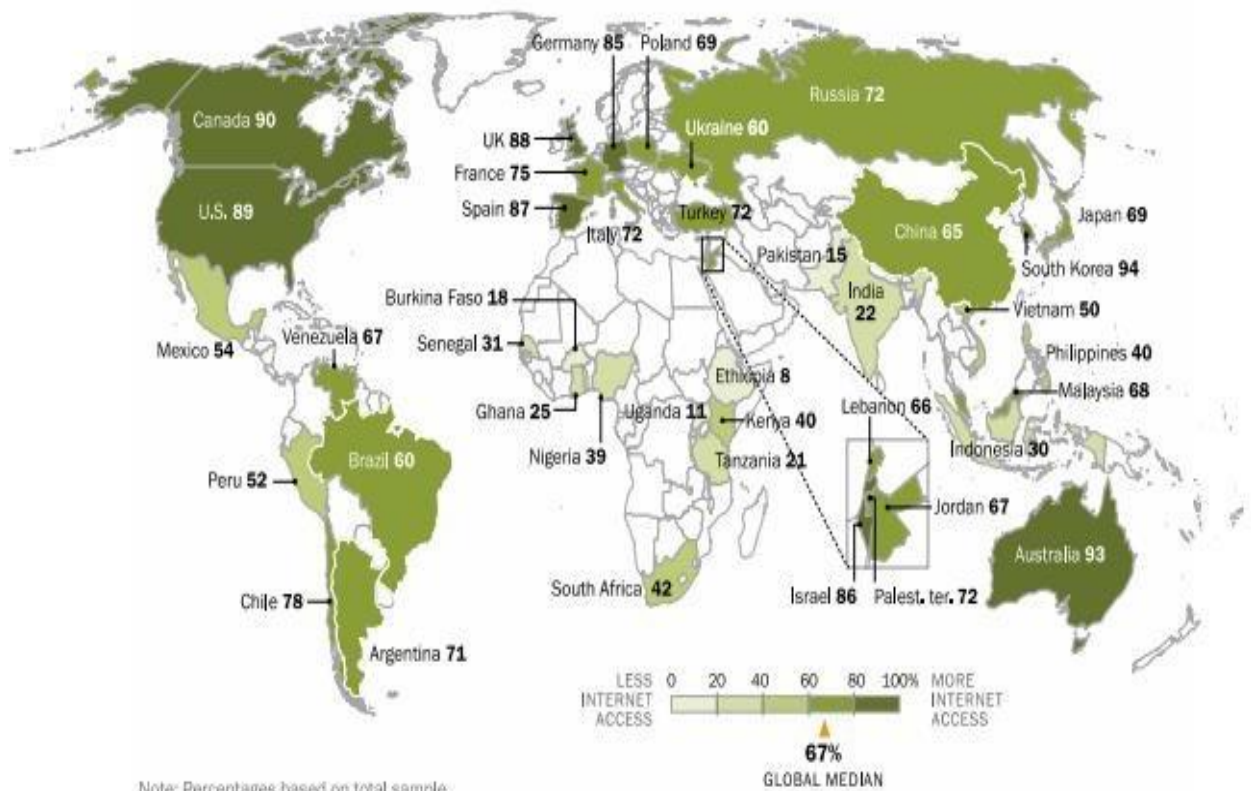
Variable outcomes are produced by this interaction, including the learning of new behaviours that are identified as beneficial, the reinforcement of behaviours with positive outcomes and even the quitting of behaviour that are characterised as detrimental. SCT applied to this study allowed further reinforced arguments set forth in SET and Wilson's behaviour model concerning the benefits of both reciprocity and information sharing for the dissemination of information, which results in behavioural modification. Simply explained, witnessing and hearing testimonials from other social network users concerning employment opportunities will help Black South African millennials intentionally exhibit this behaviour for better success in becoming employed.

## **SECTION TWO**

The main objective of this section of the review is to use literature to identify the benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black Millennials and South African organisations seeking employees. This section covers topics ranging from social media use in South Africa, to the current rise in youth unemployment. Ultimately, it highlights, with reference to previous studies, how social networks can help alleviate the challenge.

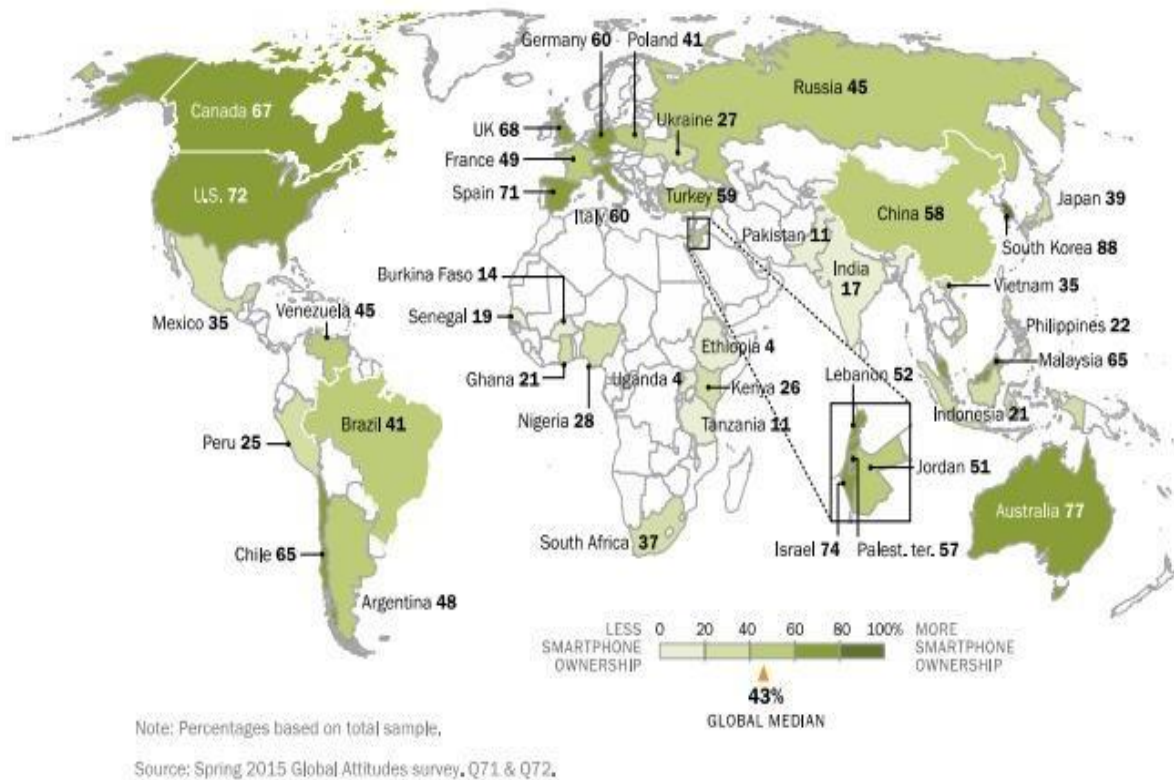
## 2.4 SOCIAL MEDIA IN SOUTH AFRICA

A search of the available literature yielded minimal data concerning the use of social media in South Africa. Even government bodies, including Statistics South Africa, do not have relevant data on the theme. Therefore, there was need to rely on statistics provided by other bodies. On the notion of internet usage in general, indicate that while South Africa was lagging behind like the rest of Africa, internet usage has drastically accelerated (Roos & Jordaan 2022). One of the contributing factors to the increase of internet usage in South Africa is growth within the telecommunications industry, which has allowed many more South Africans to access the internet. To this effect, Roos and Jordaan (2022) highlighted that, amongst all the countries in Africa at large, South Africa provides a platform that is most favourable when it comes to internet use and broadband access. Therefore, South Africa has followed the same social media usage trajectory as all the other countries in the world. With greater internet access, social media users have more than quadrupled in South Africa over the past few years. The internet and growing social media use in South Africa have also been contingent on mobile technology, particularly the growing ownership of smartphones, which has resulted in a leapfrog effect, allowing those who previously were unable to access information systems to do so conveniently. Statistics provided by Poushter (2016), in the following figures, indicate that 42% of the people in South Africa have access to the internet and 37% reported that they own smartphones, which enable them to do so. This would translate to one in 15 people having access to the internet (Roos & Jordaan 2022). A study conducted in 2020 highlights that a small proportion of 22% of the population has good ICT infrastructure such as internet access (Lembani *et al.* 2020:1). These statistics have likely improved over time, but they, together with the comparisons made with other countries indicate that South Africa as a developing country is a long way behind first world nations like the United States of America, but it is at the forefront in Africa.



Note: Percentages based on total sample.  
 Source: Spring 2015 Global Attitudes survey, Q70 & Q72.  
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**Figure 2.3: Percentage of people who use the internet around the world**  
 Source: Adapted from Poushter (2016: 4)



**Figure 2.4: Percentage of people who own smartphones around the world**

**Source: Adapted from Poushter (2016: 4)**

Interestingly, in the studies that was conducted by Poushter (2016) and Budree *et al.* (2019) the majority of the people who use the internet reported that they primarily participated in social networking on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. More than half of South Africa's population engages online and 37% of its population uses social media platforms (Hootsuite 2020). In Africa alone, 76% of internet users reported the same. This corresponds with information provided by Statcounter (2020) concerning social media use in South Africa, indicating that internet users mostly use it for Facebook (34.04%), Pinterest (27.39%), Twitter (23.35%), Instagram (11.85), YouTube (3.54%) and Tumblr (0.38%). The statistics place LinkedIn right at the end of the line in South Africa, which reinforces one of the recurring arguments in this report about the very limited focus on platforms that can actually help Black South African millennials take advantage of employment opportunities.

## 2.5 A DEMOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

Many studies have been conducted around the world with the sole aim of demographically mapping out social network users, particularly in relation to age. Consistencies in results are

evident throughout the entire body of literature. In 2014, conducted a study that examined the demographic attributes of users. In essence, they were interested in establishing a topology (a hierarchical outline of different kinds of users and the intensity of usage). In a similar manner, this sub-section is for the same purpose, and it justifies why the research explored social networks to help reduce the problem of unemployment amongst the millennial generation in South Africa. In 2019, Paideya *et al.* (2019) further conducted another study that examined the social media usage patterns of young adults in South Africa and explored the implications of social media usage on social interactions. In essence, they were interested in establishing Quality face-to-face relationships were affected by social media. From the study, it can be noted that social networking is an integral part of modern-day daily lifestyle and has various effects on its users. Similarly, this sub-section justifies why the research explored social networks to help reduce the problem of unemployment amongst the millennial generation in South Africa. Through the aforementioned prominent use, a direct link that affects the users in the field of employment can potentially be established.

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn, which are the focal points in this study, are some of the most popular social networks throughout the world. In fact, some of these social media platforms are very popular in that they are recording exponential growth rates; Facebook records the largest number of online users in South Africa (Hootsuite 2019). In 2023, It also recorded that it had 3.05 billion monthly active users. Meta also reported in 2023 that 3.96 billion people use at least one of their core products (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, or Messenger) every month. But who are these users who have caused the proliferation of these networks? One of the interesting studies that was conducted recently compared the intergenerational use of social media. The study by Fietkiewicz *et al.* (2016) compared three major generations of social network users which are Generation X (1961-1981), Generation Y, also known as Millennials (1980-2000) and Generation Z (born after 1999). The results of this study provide a lot of analytical insight for this research report. They indicate that people who are part of Generation X can be labelled as immigrants to the digital space because of their very low usage of social networks, while millennials are very dominant (Fietkiewicz *et al.* 2016). Research studies have been generating corresponding results for many years. Cabral (2008) reported that the largest group of users of social media was Generation Y, followed by Generation Z and lastly Generation X (Hysa, et al 2021:6).

Other studies also correspond with the findings of Fietkiewicz *et al.* (2016) and Hysa *et al.* (2021) in different ways, but particularly in relation to the demographic map of social network users on the basis of age. In the United States of America (USA), Bocanegra Ochoa (2018:75) utilised by looking at how social media impacted millennial students who were selected from Texas Tech University between the ages of 23-38 in their learning and behaviour. The findings revealed that Facebook was the most used social network and just like Fietkiewicz *et al.* (2016), Bocanegra Ochoa (2018) reported that social media use is significantly higher amongst millennials and further indicated that they have a significantly higher integrative use of interactive technologies. The South African perspective provided by Duffett and Wakeham (2017) is that Africa is plagued with the lowest access to the internet. millennials in the country are just as much natives of social networking as those in more developed countries around the world (Azionya 2022). Social networking sites such as Facebook are an integral part of the lives of millennials in South Africa.

Having established that millennials do indeed dominate social networking spaces, the results of this study again concur with the flowing rhetoric in this review. Fietkiewicz *et al.* (2016) found that while Generation X users focus mostly on social networks like Twitter that allow for the sharing of news and business ideas, Generation Y (millennial) users mostly concentrate on information sharing platforms like Facebook and Generation Z users are more picture-oriented; hence, they dominate spaces like Instagram. However, contrary to this, Bocanegra Ochoa (2018) found that millennials do not just use social networks for entertainment purposes and for technology exploration, but they also use them to seek information as the findings indicated that they were knowledgeable though social media on food safety. This is the juncture that was explored by Ochoa (2018), but definitely many other studies that are more practical will be required to explore ways in which millennials can be motivated to seek information on relevant platforms. At this point, literature suggests that millennials by nature prefer social networks like Facebook, but to increase their employment prospects, their attention has to be shifted to social spaces such as LinkedIn, which are for such purposes. The sample results that were obtained by Mdletshe (2017) support this notion because they indicate that of the three social networking Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn sites they focused on, Facebook was largely preferred by millennials, followed by Twitter (34.2%) and LinkedIn (18.5%) was at the bottom. Another study also found that those who had a LinkedIn account were not effectively marketing themselves in their LinkedIn profiles (Daniels *et al.* 2023:18) which impacted its effectiveness.

Zavattaro and Brainard (2019) state that, while research results from different studies have shown that the majority of millennials are social media users' studies are split on whether millennials are more active or more passive. This means that, there is definitely a need for studies that continue to explore Generation Y's usage of social networks to see if engagement in there context goes beyond simple likes or shares (Zavattaro & Brainard 2019). Of particular interest in this study is the fact that likes and shares are referred to as passive and are not considered effective engagement practices. There is thus need to explore effective ways in which social networks can be used to intentionally and effectively recruit Generation Y users. Having established that their social network interests differ from those of other users, it is likely that such initiatives as social marketing can cover the gap in educating millennials of the benefits of diversifying their social network interests for better employment prospects.

## **2.6 BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MILLENNIALS**

There are many different ways in which millennials around the world are different from both Baby Boomers and Generation X, as well as all the other previous generations, behaviourally. However, only the following five behavioural traits are highlighted in this review, as they help to explain why social networking sites such as LinkedIn can improve employment prospects for this generation in particular.

### **They are Digital Natives**

Millennials are also referred to as Digital Natives or the Net Generation, among many other names, and this has made them one of the most investigated and intriguing groups of people (Evans & Robertson 2020). These terms are all coined based on the notion that this generation was born in conjunction with the digital technological era. As a result, millennials have throughout their lives been exposed to rapidly developing technologies, which have in turn resulted in them having both skills and behavioural traits that are different from previous generations (Chopra & Bhilare 2020). Millennials are 'tech savvy', which is why they have dominated internet-based activities, including virtual social networking (Chopra & Bhilare 2020). However, this has not happened without seemingly consequential negative effects. Research shows that this generation greatly lacks interest in traditional forms of media such as newspapers, and they in many ways lack interpersonal skills because of their preference for 'online communication' (Vozab 2019). To this effect, Vozab (2019) states that they use social networking sites such as Facebook to satisfy their social needs. Being digital natives,

millennials are in prime position to take advantage of the changes that have taken place in business practices, particularly recruitment practices, in response to technological developments. What is seemingly required is to help them realise their potential and capitalise on the opportunities, but most importantly, to explore the barriers that may be inhibiting them.

### **Their communication style is nomadic**

One of the defining characteristics of millennials is that they are constantly in communication and maintain multiple channels of communication, including instant messaging on social networks. Consequently, they tend to have dozens or even hundreds of friends with whom they constantly communicate. Herein lies a defining characteristic that aligns perfectly with SET as was discussed in the previous section. Millennials, according to Hartman and McCambridge (2011), thrive on engagement or reciprocal communication. They further state that when millennials communicate, they look forward to feedback and even praise, which is one of the reasons why they have been regarded within organisational spaces as ‘high maintenance’ (Omilion-Hodges & Sugg 2019; Onukwuba 2020). Myers and Sadaghiani (2010), on the other hand, view millennials’ desire for frequent communication as valuable. However, the researcher recognises in this instance that there are pros and cons to millennials’ style of communication when it comes to using social networks to seek employment. Millennials have ‘been described as impatient, bold, honest, and frank, independent, overconfident, opinionated, high minded, aggressive, and uncomfortable with criticism’ (Shrivastava 2020:261). While their nomadic communication positions them to receive critical information on employment opportunities, social networks that are more business-oriented like LinkedIn may not be able to keep them engaged because of the low level of reciprocity. This is one gap that has been already established in this review but would need to be explored by future studies, as millennials have greater preferences for social networks like Facebook and much less preference for sites that focus more on news and business.

### **Learning from experience**

Literature paints millennials as bona fide experiential learners. Millennials are a generation of individuals who desire a blended work environment where remote work is a possibility (Meisel 2022:16). They also value mentoring as a means to attain their professional goals. In relation to this, state that this generation of individuals

## **Less Reading**

As has been emphasised many times, millennials invest the majority of their time into using the internet and the gadgets that facilitate its use. However, these things have negatively affected reading culture. Rahmat (2018) emphasizes this point, citing that, considering the amount of time that millennials spend on the internet and on social networks, there is hardly any time left for reading. Rahmat (2018) further discovered that millennials prioritise reading when it is done for academic studies; even then, their reading happens in classrooms, with little or no reading outside of that. Studies conducted by other researchers confirm that millennials read significantly less than previous generations. Larioque (2019) reached the same conclusion after conducting research with Filipino millennials who were first-year university students. One may simply argue that millennials have different reading interests compared to other generations and that they are just not as responsive to print books as they are to electronic content, which is an argument that holds value. Whatever the case, millennials' reading tendencies would need to be considered to understand their use of social networks. Facebook, for instance, may be appealing to them because it contains a wide variety of content, but the biggest component is the social one, which just allows individuals to satisfy social needs. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is business-oriented, and its content is serious and professional. These two parallel social networks offer completely different content to millennials, and with a culture of less reading, this may justify a preference for Facebook over LinkedIn.

## **2.7 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA**

South Africa is currently facing a crisis of rising unemployment among the youth. The challenge is increasingly affecting both Generation Y (millennials) and Generation Z. Youth unemployment, including university graduate unemployment, global statistics point this out as a fact. In fact, unemployment in general is rapidly affecting people of all ages around the world, but the most devastating effects have been noted among the youth. Statistics provided by the International Labour Organisation (2019) indicate that the number of unemployed people in the world was approximately 172.5 million. According to the International Labour Organization (2019), 59.3% of these unemployed people were youth, which is a very significant proportion of the population for just one group. Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) correspond with international trends in unemployment. However, because Africa is economically important, the creation was magnified in SSA recording annual growth rates averaging 4.5%. Despite this growth and improvement in SSA, the economies continue to fail

to accommodate the exponentially increasing number of youths who are in need of employment (Kappel 2021:19). The challenge of youth unemployment in Africa stems not only from rapid increases in the youth population but also from increased access to better education (Baah-Boateng 2016). Unfortunately having access to better education without the necessary competence needed in the workplace still contributes to the high youth unemployment rates. Youth employment thus has to be matching with the required skills if unemployment is to be reduced (Habiyaemye *et al.* 2022). This has been the reason why there has been an increased demand for employment, even amongst educated young graduates and South Africa has not been spared.

### **2.7.1 WHAT IS CAUSING THIS SCOURGE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The scarcity of jobs in South Africa is quite evident, and unfortunately, the Black people who are the majority of the population are the most affected (Mishi *et al.* 2022). This phenomenon is not new to the country and unemployment statistics have been rising since the 1970s (Maskaeva & Msafiri 2021). The severity of unemployment in South Africa and the desperation that it has caused amongst the citizens can be seen in the xenophobic attacks that constantly erupt in the country over job opportunities (Ekanem 2022). The most disturbing aspect of unemployment in South Africa is that the unemployment duration is increasingly becoming longer year after year, which suggests that the economic conditions are declining (Stadler 2022). The South African government is constantly plagued with the need to create more jobs to reduce unemployment, especially amongst Black people (Habiyaemye *et al.* 2022). Black people suffered the injustice of the separatist apartheid agenda, which sidelined their progress in all spheres of life. The government has tried to introduce effective labour policies such as the broad-based black economic empowerment (BBBEE) policy to increase the prospects of Black people receiving employment opportunities (Musabayana & Mutambara 2022). However, redressing the past is not just a slow process; it is also a process that is affected by other mitigating circumstances. The following are therefore some of the issues that have, in particular, affected Black people, especially millennials, resulting in the lack in improvement of employment statistics that concern the population group.

#### **University graduate unemployment**

According to Meyer and Mncayi (2021), youth unemployment has been on the rise in South Africa, and it has mostly affected those with tertiary education. This is one of the major

contributors to the high unemployment statistics in the country. The end of apartheid in South Africa came with increased educational success for Black people (Pillay 2021). For that reason, an increased number of South African youths who are aged between 15 and 34 (Barnes 2021) are getting better educated. However, the labour market is failing to assimilate these young, educated people. Penniston (2021) states that Black youth make up a significant two-thirds of all unemployed young people in South Africa. According to their study, the majority of unemployed youth in South Africa are concentrated between the ages of 15-35 Penniston (2021:4) where four out of every 10 of this age group were unemployed or enrolled in any education or training program. This is the age at which graduates should be entering the labour market. This analysis corresponds with research findings that it is taking much longer for people to find employment than when they initially start searching (Mncayi & Mdluli 2019). The labour market in South Africa is saturated by unemployed millennials, which is why avenues need to be explored to increase employment statistics for this generation.

### **Lack of networks and intergenerational correlations**

The critical role that is played by parents in their children's success, particularly with regards to employment prospects, cannot be denied. Employment status has been considered as an important determinant of a household's well-being (Makhalima 2020). Research further states that parents have the ability to provide their children with important employment information, references that give them a competitive advantage on the job market as well as employment opportunities in family-owned businesses (Ntari & Deliwe 2023). Children and youths whose education and wealth have a significant impact on their future employment prospects as they can supply their educational demands such as access to the latest facilities and technologies (Vadivel *et al.* 2023). Youth whose families do not own many assets usually accept unfavourable jobs to avoid a prolonged period of unemployment (De Mel 2020). Research conducted Cooper and Stewart (2021), which sought to review evidence on the causal relationship between household financial resources and children's social-behavioral outcomes supports this notion. It found out that children from low-income households usually did worse in life because they came from a household with a low income. The importance of family ties or family networks was also established by Alive *et al.* (2023). In their research, evidence of the interplay between social contacts and the labour market was established. Recent evidence comes from the 2016. The statistics revealed that personal contacts such as relatives, friends, or acquaintances were among the most commonly used and successful methods of getting a

job (Alive *et al.* 2023). This thus revealed that the life domains of the family are greatly linked to prospective domains of employment in the labour market (Alive *et al.* 2023). In essence, the study pointed towards power dynamics and the ability to influence employment. However, in our instance, it is important to note that the parents of Black South African millennials do not possess any of these qualities that could help them get employed. Many Black youth in South Africa are born to parents who made a living as housemaids, gardeners and informal traders (Nkosi 2020). Moreover, many of them had to endure absent fathers and they were raised by single mothers. These and many other factors have placed Black millennials in a position of disadvantage. As such, they have to build their careers from nothing, without the benefit of family support, but rather have to support their families, a phenomenon which is informally referred to as 'Black tax' (Oppel 2023).

### **The lack of substantial small firms**

The South African economy is dominated by large corporations that include FirstRand Limited, Anglo America, the Vodacom Group and the British Tobacco Company (Gqubule 2021). These corporations offer very high remuneration packages and follow very strict business regulations. However, South Africa is a middle-income country that is characterised by socio-economic inequalities. The majority of South Africans have to endure living standards that are not different from those of people in very poor countries (Anyanwu & Salami, 2021). These people are mostly Black and the majority of them, because of this historically rooted inequality, never meet the requirements of being employed in the large corporations that dominate the economy. This situation is exacerbated by intense competition to be employed by these corporations and the tendency of employees to remain there until retirement, which results in very scarce employment opportunities for everyone else. In countries that are part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), studies have pointed towards small firms as a viable solution to this problem where entrepreneurship can also be utilised as a cure for problems such as unemployment (Endris & Kassegn 2022). Regardless of this, small firms are not flourishing in the economy, and this is caused by the government's lack of formal business support for such small firms. Government must unlock entrepreneurship potential through 'multi-sectoral and sustainable approaches through policy measures that offer financing schemes to vulnerable and marginalised small business' (Endris & Kassegn 2022:13). The same issue is raised by Gamage *et al.* (2020) who cite the recognition of small to medium Enterprises (SMEs) as critical in the industrial modes of both developed and developing countries as they

employ about 60 percent labour force in the world (Gamage *et al.* 2020:4). They thus can be seen as a solution to rising unemployment. It is further cited that SMEs failing rate is 75% in the initial start-up phase (Jobo & Phyllis 2020:4). In South Africa it has been argued in South Africa SMME performance remains weak despite the numerous pro-SMME growth programs that have been initiated by the government (Mukwarami *et al.* 2020). Current evidence suggests that approximately 40% of new business ventures fail in their first year, while 60% fail in their second year, and 90% fail in their first ten years of existence (Mukwarami *et al.* 2020:491). According to, the leading reason why these small firms fail at a record-breaking rate in the country is because of a lack of financial support, 'lack of risk management knowledge, insufficient resources, poor control environment and risk management skills by management in capitalising available funds for the well-being of the business' (Jobo & Phyllis 2020:6) and this is firmly in line with arguments raised above. It is agreed that supporting SMMEs may produce the desired effect of creating employment opportunities for millennials. These policymakers, and financial institutions may need to address the challenges faced by the SMMEs such as limited access to finance and creating training centres to equip entrepreneurs with requisite managerial skills. Black South Africans need these opportunities without which the majority remain unemployed, perpetuating the cycle of poverty and inequality.

### **2.7.2 THE EFFECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT**

Unemployment negatively affects both the unemployed and the economy. South Africa has a wide array of human capital that could be utilised to better the economy but is otherwise going to waste. For the youth, especially, unemployment represents failed dreams and unrealised hopes, resulting in damning negative consequences. The following effects of unemployment are widely discussed in literature, and they relate to the current focus on Black South African millennials.

#### **The risk of becoming undesirable to employers**

One of the detrimental effects of unemployment is that remaining unemployed for such a long time after completing school significantly reduces the probability of getting employed. As such, when people remain unemployed for a very long time, they end up being discriminated against because no one wants to employ someone who is not wanted by other organisations and has no experience. In short, remaining unemployed for a long period creates an impression amongst possible employers that the individual possesses some undesirable negative

characteristics. It has been seen that employers view unemployment duration, to screen candidates in recruitment processes as long-term unemployment is associated with skill deterioration and undesirable behavioural traits (Benda *et al.* 2020). Furthermore, employers have a tendency to prefer experience when seeking employees and to place an age restriction for graduate programmes. To be employed currently, there has been the need for experience, and where one has limited or no experience that has impacted their employability. Limited work experience thus is an issue that potentially affects all the unemployed (Graham *et al.* 2019). This places millennials struggling to find employment at a big disadvantage; hence, the possibility of employment declines with every year that an individual remains unemployed. This is very concerning considering the current observed trend in South Africa, which indicates that graduates are waiting much longer after completing their education before being offered opportunities in the labour market (Motsabi *et al.* 2020).

### **Engagement in illegal activities**

When the youth fail to find legal ways of earning a living, there is a propensity for them to resort to crime. Furthermore, unemployment results in negative psychological consequences including low self-esteem, reduced life satisfaction (Bartelink *et al.* 2020), and a general lack of well-being (Picchio & Ubaldi 2024) in all areas of life. This leads to the use of drug and alcohol abuse, resulting in cycles of chemical dependency. These facts, translated in a statistical manner, infer that there is a positive correlation between unemployment and crime, as well as unemployment and substance abuse (Mongale 2022) In a study conducted by Mazorodze (2020), it was shown that youth unemployment can be a catalyst for violent crimes. The study concluded that in KwaZulu- Natal, a deteriorating labour market is conducive to crime and thus job creation for young people can be an alternative mechanism through which policymakers can reduce murder crimes. With unemployment being extremely high amongst the youth, this places Black South African millennials in the high-risk demographics. Assisting this population cluster to gain employment does not just have an impact on an individual level; it benefits households, communities and the entire nation.

## **2.8 THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Research rightly states that the role of social media in business practices can no longer be ignored as it plays an important part in the digital transformation of businesses (Dwivedi *et al.* 2023). A rounded view of social media and social networks is that their role in all spheres of

life, socially, economically and politically, cannot be ignored. Social networks have evolved to become an integral part of everyday life. Social networking sites in particular were initially created for social communication purposes (Aichner *et al.* 2021). They allow for the creation of individual profiles that are web-based, giving people a virtual presence. One integral role of social media as a business tool that is relevant to this study pertains to its use in recruitment practices. Web 2.0 provides a platform for interactive communication (Capriotti *et al.* 2021) and with ever growing access for the general populace, it has garnered the attention of corporations, large and small. The convenience of communication that social networks offer significantly reduces hiring times by accelerating the recruitment process (Villeda & McCamey 2019). That is why they have overtaken traditional recruitment methods and have been integrated into human resources practices (Rodrigues & Martinez 2020). In the recruitment process, social networks can be used for three main purposes which are advertisements, searching, and the reviewing or screening of candidates (Ruparel *et al.* 2020).

### **2.8.1 BENEFITS FOR ORGANISATIONS**

There are various reasons why social media platforms have taken over recruitment practices. They offer the following benefits to organisations:

#### **Social networking platforms are cost-effective**

One of the reasons is that social networking platforms are cost-effective, and employers spend much less when they use these online services (Venkateswaran *et al.* 2019). Venkateswaran *et al.* (2019) state that, compared to their traditional counterparts, social networks cost significantly less compared to newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV. The results of the study, which was conducted in the United States by Sameen and Cornelius (2015), also confirmed the fact that recruiters' main reason for preferring SNSs is that they are cost-effective. Hosain *et al.* (2020) provided that the cost-effective nature of social networks is two-pronged because they do not just cost less; they also allow for improved targeted recruiting, which is difficult to accomplish with traditional methods (Wowor *et al.* 2022). On social networks, potential employees' profiles are scanned and those with specifications that meet the job requirements see particular job advertisements. Therefore, for much less than they spend when using traditional recruitment methods, recruiters can reach a wide array of potential candidates across geographical divides and their efforts are complemented by a more targeted approach.

## **Social networking platforms help to build the brand**

Using social networking platforms for e-recruiting is a strategic way to help advance the brand of an organisation. Hafez (2021) states that organisations that utilise social media tools for enhancing brand awareness are viewed as progressive. This means that social networking platforms further help to unveil the culture of an organisation to potential candidates (Allal-Chérif *et al.* 2021). One relevant example proving the importance of social networks to building a company brand is given in the study that was conducted by Savitri *et al.* (2022). In that study, they emphasise the impact of the relationship between social media marketing and brand image. Through the use of a quantitative approach, the study found that there was a positive and significant relationship that existed between advertising, brand image, and purchase intention. Social media marketing was seen as having a positive effect on purchasing decisions and brand image, which means that if there is an increase in social media use, then the brand image will in turn increase. This means that in purchase or employment, social networking affects the brand image of a company. In South Africa, several organisations have managed to build their brand names to the extent where they can easily acquire the most talented candidates; organisations including Unilever, Vodacom Group, Procter and Gamble and many others fall into this category. Most importantly, when organisations build their brands using e-recruiting, they do so not on a local or national scale but on a global scale. Social networks defy time and location, connecting people all around the world. Therefore, organisations gain recognition on an international scale when they use social networks in their recruitment process.

### **2.8.2 BENEFITS FOR THOSE SEEKING EMPLOYMENT**

Social media tools such as SNSs do not just benefit organisations. Individuals who use SNSs in their pursuit of employment also benefit in the following ways.

#### **Candidates develop realistic expectations**

In the case of candidates without prior work experience or with limited work experience, it can be easy to be off the mark with regards to job expectations. Without practical labour market experience, one can easily develop expectations that are much more or much less than what is realistic. Social networks, as has been established social networks are interactive, which is why, unlike newspaper advertisements and other traditional methods, they allow candidates to gain

insight into organisations, to learn more about labour-specific available jobs and to even interact with employees who are more experienced (Wibowo *et al.* 2020:6). Therefore, in social marketing organisations need to understand how the quality of marketing content helps them to recruit employees by creating a brand image that meets certain personal characteristics and in essence leads to a good perceived customer or employee experience (Wibowo *et al.* 2020). In South Africa, this is an integral component, given the high unemployment rate affecting the youth population. With information obtained through SNSs, candidates not only build realistic expectations about the opportunities that are available on the labour market, but they also they gain enough insight to even inspire some to assess their own capabilities and even aim higher to become employers themselves. Millennials in South Africa who are currently hard hit by unemployment will definitely benefit from constructively engaging on SNSs that offer business employment as well as broader business outcomes.

### **SNSs are time effective**

Traditional recruitment methods were time-consuming for candidates wishing to apply for vacancies. They had to type out their curricula vitae (CVs) and motivational letters, print them, as well as post them. According to Mamatha *et al.* (2022), e-recruiting makes filling out application forms and sending CVs more efficient. In most instances, candidates simply keep an electronic version of their application details and applying for vacancies is just the click of a few buttons. Moreover, when candidates respond to job advertisements posted on social networks they can do so anytime and anywhere without time limitations (Mamatha *et al.* 2022). Most importantly, when candidates use social networks, the turnaround time for applications becomes much shorter. Organisations are able to process applications and respond efficiently, sometimes within a matter of hours or days (Mamatha *et al.* 2022). Therefore, with social networks, candidates can conveniently apply for multiple jobs every day and receive responses promptly. Statistically, this increases the probability that one will be recruited for a job that matches their knowledge and skills.

### **A synthesized view on the benefits associated with SNSs**

Social networking platforms have resulted in many changes to the job market. They have also transformed organisational recruitment policies due to characteristics such as cost savings, and ease of communication with candidates (Pham & Vo 2022). Many organisations are resorting to using social media platforms to advertise employment opportunities. Moreover,

professionals with a strong online presence increase the likelihood of making beneficial connections and being headhunted for employment opportunities (Acquisti & Fong 2020). Research conducted throughout the world proves that the millennial generation is significantly influenced by the internet and social media networking (Park *et al.* 2021). In a study that was conducted by Curtis *et al.* (2019), comparing social media usage between Generation Z and millennials, they emphasised that the level of importance that is placed on visiting social networking platforms by both generations is noteworthy. Park *et al.* (2021) study also posits that millennials are more influential in speech and influence on the internet and they have the potential to affect the world's market through their habits and behaviors on social networks. Rodney and Wakeham (2016) conducted a study titled "*Social media marketing communications effect on attitudes among millennials in South Africa*". In their study, they indicated that in South Africa there were at least 10 million millennials and generation Ys, a figure which has likely increased leading up to the current year. They further indicated that the majority of the people who are part of that generation own smartphones and have access to both the internet and social networks (Rodney & Wakeham 2016). Given such compelling statistics on social network use amongst the millennial generation, one wonders why many who are part of the Black population group are caught in the quandary of unemployment. Again, arguments raised by research appear to be valid, thus many focus on using social networks mostly for entertainment purposes (Karahoca & Yehin 2018; Alenezi & Brinthaupt 2022; Perez Ramos & Gomez 2011; Hajarian 2021). Not to say that this is the only challenge; other competing issues will be discussed further in the review.

In South Africa, Duffett (2020) states that the millennial generation is highly technologically advanced in online technologies and on a vast array of digital platforms. Given the correlation between social media and employment creation and access to employment opportunities, Black South African Millennials who use the internet much more than older generations have greater access to employment opportunities. However, as indicated in SET, success on social media is contingent mainly on self-disclosure, which increases awareness of the individual among other users. There is a requirement to deliberately make oneself more visible or likable or to self-market to increase the probability of employment in one way or another. Given the millennial generation's constant social media presence, this study was well justified in exploring avenues through which social networks, which do not always have a clean reputation, can be taken advantage of to increase employment prospects for a generation much in need of work, given rising unemployment statistics in South Africa and the rest of the world. To this effect, social

marketing strategies that target Black South African Millennials could result in extremely positive outcomes.

### **2.8.3 THE LINKAGES OF SOCIAL MARKETING, RECRUITMENT AND JOB SEEKING BEHAVIOUR ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS**

A critical analysis of this literature review thus far reveals how the job market is being significantly influenced by the linkages associated with social marketing, recruitment practices and the job seeking behaviour of not only millennials but all generations during this digital era. Studies conducted by Buettner (2017) and Ruparel *et al.* (2023) present a compelling case on how social marketing is increasingly becoming embedded in recruitment practices. This is evident in the use of targeted advertising, employer branding strategies, as well as network-based advertising all of which are aimed at influencing the behaviour of job seekers (Buettner 2017 and Ruparel *et al.* 2023). It is also evident that social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are no longer just being viewed as spaces where people can engage in interactions on a social level; hence, they are increasingly also becoming employment marketplaces. Job seekers and recruiters alike are recognising the potential that social networking platforms in injecting efficiency, while at the same time reducing the costs associated with the recruitment process.

Denan *et al.* (2020), Nadlifatin *et al.* (2022), together with Smith and Watkins (2020) provide critical information that enables understanding job seeking behaviour among millennials from a behavioural perspective. These studies indicate that the most influential determinants of SNS use for job seeking among millennials are the perceived usefulness of these platforms, ease of use, as well as privacy. To this effect, Denan *et al.* (2020) and Nadlifatin *et al.* (2022) concur and are of the opinion that perceived usefulness is the most influential determinant of the three. Nevertheless, Smith and Watkins (2020) present a different opinion, arguing that in instances where there are competing platforms, then ease of use is more influential. The argument presented by Smith and Watkins (2020) though premised on the functionality of social networking platforms is supported by studies such as Chowa *et al.* (2022), Lembani *et al.* (2020) and Pillay (2021) that highlight how job seeking behaviour among Black South African millennials in particular is influenced by factors that include digital literacy and access to technology. These factors diminish ease of use thus discouraging Black South African millennials from using social networking platforms for job seeking even when there is perceived usefulness. Therefore, in the context of South Africa Smith and Watkins (2020)'s

argument appears to have greater support compared to Denan *et al.* (2020) and Nadlifatin *et al.* (2022)'s argument.

A holistic approach to understanding the linkages between social marketing, recruitment and job seeking behaviour on SNSs requires also approaching this discussion from the employer perspective. In this review therefore it is evident that another notable linkage is organisational branding which recruiters achieve through social marketing. Through this organisational branding, the recruitment process also becomes part of the organisational branding process as recruiters seek to attract the best candidates. However, in this regard, there is also evidence of agreement and contention among researchers. For instances, in studies conducted by Knežević and Ivković (2022) and Wübbelt and Tirrel (2022) there is agreement regarding the significant impact of recruitment content on SNSs that is authentic and relevant. These studies essentially highlight how the recruitment content needs to relate with the candidates. For instance, attracting Black South African millennials may require recruitment content that aligns with their socio-economic and political context, thus enhancing their propensity to engage. Buettner (2017) is however not of the same opinion, arguing that while authenticity may have some effect it is actually networking and endorsement that are critical determinants of candidate engagement. Essentially Buettner (2017) argues that such things as recommendations and connections cause candidates to engage with potential employers; hence Laukkarinen (2023) supports this argument. Laukkarinen (2023) further adds that when recruitment content is visible within a candidate's network, then their chances or engagement increase compared to candidates whose SNS networks lack in this area. This is the reason why LinkedIn as identified through multiple studies including Podhorcová and Balková (2023) and Smith and Watkins, (2020) is the most significant recruitment social networking platform. The networks that are created on the platform are designed to enhance job skills, professionalism, visibility and recruitment. Other SNSs such as Facebook that are more inclined towards social networking are also increasingly being used for recruitment based on their complementary value and also because of user demographics, for instance the high concentration of millennials (Denan *et al.* 2020).

### **SECTION THREE**

The overall aim of this study was to explore how Black South African millennials can benefit from using social networking sites to access and capitalise on employment opportunities, with

a concentrated focus on LinkedIn. This section's purpose is to provide a closer introspection of LinkedIn, its purpose and its potential in the context of this study.

## **2.9 LINKEDIN**

### **2.9.1 WHAT IS LINKEDIN?**

Like all the other SNSs, LinkedIn is a social networking site that is based on Web 2.0. However, unlike Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and other such sites, LinkedIn is business-oriented, thus it was developed with the aim of initiating networks among business professionals (Alzhrani 2020; Osman 2020). Based on that orientation, LinkedIn found its niche on the social network spectrum and was launched officially on May 5, 2003, and has since grown tremendously. Presently, LinkedIn has in excess of 500 million users, and it is estimated that the number of business professionals who use it make up approximately 50% of all the business professionals in the world (Osman 2020). The total number of business professionals in the world is estimated to be between 350 million and 600 million (Osman 2020). Statistics thus indicate the manner in which LinkedIn has grown since its introduction. They also indicate its importance in the area of business.

### **2.9.2 HOW IT WORKS**

LinkedIn is a widely used social networking platform that was designed for professional networking, job searching, and career development. LinkedIn offers an opportunity for candidates to look for jobs and internship opportunities as desired as allows job people to look for jobs in vast and different fields (Alzhrani 2020). An additional feature that LinkedIn provides to its clients is the ability to post a job vacancy and millions of people would be able to see the job posted. (Alzhrani 2020). People have to register to access this service. Each person that registers on LinkedIn makes a professional contact that represents his or her professional identity by offering a prominent professional social network (Ruparel *et al.* 2020). LinkedIn has a collection of profiles of professionals belonging to different kinds of organisations and industries. Whereas organisations use social networks to build their brands, LinkedIn offers its users a platform on which they can advertise their 'personal brands'. One of the ways in which individuals build their brands and market themselves on LinkedIn is through the information they share in revealing their identities. Vaccari and Valeriani (2021) states that upon completion of the registration process, LinkedIn members then have to create

their professional profiles. They further indicate that to create these profiles, they have to highlight information important enough to attract other business personnel, including education and work history, all professional memberships or affiliations, with an option to upload a photo (Davis *et al.* 2020). At this juncture, the use of SET as part of the theories upon which the study was premised is justified. Davis *et al.* (2020) explains the importance of one's profile on LinkedIn for professional networking and how it can influence the career benefits received. and their argument complements the research on self-disclosure, as those disclosing are most likely to reap the benefits of social networking are the ones who are not passive but rather active participants. This notion supports early research that has been of the view that the internet may encourage more active users to become more engaged and vice versa for the less involved. However, a study by Vaccari and Valeriani (2021) contradicts this view and highlights that this claim could not be justified. What it entails is that, when you maintain anonymity and prefer to keep information to yourself, other users will not have a basis to network with you. A LinkedIn profile acts as a magnet that generates interest from other people. Most importantly, it makes other people glean in on characteristics that may be needed and beneficial to their organisations or areas of influence. For that reason, the profile needs to have sufficient details on the member's identity for it to warrant what SET refers to as reciprocal behaviour.

As was highlighted in the previous section, LinkedIn, like all the other social networks, facilitates connectivity. Therefore, when members complete their profiles, they can send out invitations to other members so that they can be linked. In the same manner, they can also accept invitations that are sent to them and LinkedIn facilitates this as it provides job-related connections (Wowor *et al.* 2022). These networks are essential because they build connections and allow people to access different kinds of information. In this instance, the building principles of SET are also reflected in the sense that its core is 'social exchanges'. On LinkedIn, these social exchanges are enabled by these important features that allow members to both send out and accept invitations that essentially link them with other people. When these links are formed, they enable the transactions that are explained by Huang *et al.* (2016) in SET; hence, the transactions take place within the networks. These networks therefore become the basis for the three ways in which people communicate (transact) through LinkedIn. Through LinkedIn, users can promote their image and develop a long-term online reputation in front of employers (3). LinkedIn is for people looking for employment (job hunters), people who act as intermediaries as they pass information along via their networks and to recipients of inquiries

(Wowor 2022) as is the case with organisations that are approached by people seeking employment; hence, these are the three major roles that LinkedIn members play. Therefore, there is room for Black South African millennials on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is based on business networks and transactions that take place on the platform offer many employment opportunities. LinkedIn not only covers the gap left by the lack of connections developed by their parents or other family members, but it also gives them an opportunity to build their own connections, market their skills and increase their odds of being employed.

### **2.9.3 EVIDENCE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LINKEDIN**

Various studies give concrete evidence on the importance of LinkedIn as an effective social network to join when seeking employment. Some of those compelling studies are reviewed in this section.

Davis *et al.* (2020) conducted a study titled *Networking via LinkedIn: An examination of usage and career benefits* with a primary focus on LinkedIn. In their study, they used a mixed-mode survey and collected data from 322 working professionals who used LinkedIn as their predominant professional networking tool. One of the interesting aspects of this study is that it confirmed that LinkedIn ranks first among the most common platforms used to find a job. Also, of those surveyed, 71% used it frequently. In another study, Sameen and Cornelius (2015) evaluated the usage of different social networking sites by organisations seeking to hire employees. Results derived from their sample indicated that a very significant majority of organisations preferred to use LinkedIn (79.8%) in their recruitment process; thereafter, Facebook (35.9%) and Twitter (14.8%) followed (Sameen and Cornelius 2015). These results show that both employers and employees use LinkedIn (Melão & Reis 2020). These statistics are backed by a study conducted by Melão and Reis (2020) in which it was discovered that of personnel working in human resources management use LinkedIn in the HR selection process. Both these results firmly confirm the assertions the impact and importance of LinkedIn for their professional career. What this implies and cements is that LinkedIn is the leading recruitment method being used by recruiters and job pursuits have a much higher probability of yielding positive results when they incorporate the use of LinkedIn.

In another very recent study that was conducted in the context of South Africa by Koch *et al.* (2018), results confirmed the above findings. The study looked at the impact of social media on the recruitment process in South Africa. Koch *et al.*'s (2018) study results were derived

from a sample of 12 organisations that operate in different industries through the use of semi-structured interviews. According to Koch *et al.* (2018), the results they obtained indicated that not only are recruiters in South Africa following international trends in using social networks, but they also prioritise LinkedIn. The study found that traditional methods of recruiting were still in use, however.

Literature does not only give evidence of the fact that LinkedIn is a central part of the recruitment process in many organisations. There are also studies that explore the effectiveness of some of the features available on the network. For example, Dasanayake (2022)'s findings focus on understanding LinkedIn behavioural patterns and preferences of working professionals. Its findings showed that professionals preferred being approached through email and there were limited responses received if one reached out to another via LinkedIn. Research has also expanded to look at the impact of LinkedIn on dating. A study by Turker (2024) titled *The Use of LinkedIn as An Alternative Dating App* looked at a new landscape for LinkedIn users. Through the use of qualitative data that was collected from 12 interviews in Sweden. The study aimed to discover if the platform was used for online dating. The research findings show that privacy and security concerns threaten the use of LinkedIn for online dating and the study's primary limitation is an overreliance on a small sample, which limited the generalisability of the results. More studies thus needed to be conducted.

In a very similar study, Edwards *et al.* (2015) examined the importance of the LinkedIn profile in the recruitment of individuals for work, concentrating in their study on just one aspect of the profile, which is the profile picture. However, unlike other research, it confirms that the profile photo is a vital aspect of LinkedIn (Davis *et al.* 2020). Edwards *et al.* (2015) interrogated issues of credibility and interpersonal attractiveness, which are some of the features that recruiters look for. Their study is by no means peculiar, as there are other studies that have focused on this area of research. For instance, examined profile deception on LinkedIn. They highlight that fake profiles have an adverse effect on the trustworthiness of the network as a whole. Despite this being the case, it is difficult to identify fake profiles. Chiang and Suen (2015) also looked at self-presentation and the need for LinkedIn users to influence the recruitment recommendations of recruiters. According to Cardon and Shi (2018), the presence of a profile picture as part of one's profile is a defining feature. In their study on Chinese and Americans, the findings indicated that pictures reflected professionalism and status signals especially among Chinese men. American women on the other displayed individuality and expressiveness

signals in professional profile pictures. As a result, the profile pictures were either showing the person to be a friendly, corporate leader, expressive leader, casual, or independent.

Previous studies reviewed in this section, together with those contained in the greater body of literature confirm various facts that need to be considered in assisting millennials see the value of LinkedIn as a potential for success when seeking employment. Evidence confirms the detachment that was identified in the previous section, suggesting that millennials are mainly interested in Facebook, yet their focus if they are to increase the likelihood of being employed should be on LinkedIn, which is mostly preferred by recruiters. It also suggests that when using LinkedIn or any other social network for job applications, having a detailed profile is very important because it serves as a resumé. This information is one's self-representation and it depicts an image of attractiveness, credibility and competence. All this information is vital and should be brought to the attention of Black South African millennials to enhance their employment prospects. Regardless of the high unemployment rate in South Africa, this section warrants an argument on the notion that in some instances, Black millennials are missing out on job opportunities because they are not focusing on the correct recruitment methods, and thus they may also be failing to represent themselves adequately.

## **SECTION FOUR**

South Africa is a developing country, and it is home to people of different races who speak different languages. Moreover, the country was born out of a brutal colonial past. All these contextual issues have resulted in social, economic and political conditions that are sometimes not enabling for certain groups of people. Therefore, in this final section, the barriers that inhibit Black South African millennials from seeking employment using social networks are interrogated.

### **2.10 BARRIERS TO SEEKING EMPLOYMENT THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA**

There are various challenges that Black South African millennials face that they make their access to social media difficult. The following challenges were identified by other researchers who have conducted studies in South Africa.

#### **Less internet compatible devices in low-income homes**

The ownership of home computers in South African low-income homes is very minimal). In a study conducted by Mphahlele *et al.* (2021), the result showed that 46.1% of the participants had access to computers at home. About 36.5% of the students had a public library where they could access computers connected to the Internet for free of charge. This concludes that the majority of the students did not have access to computers at their homes (Mphahlele *et al.* 2021). The same applies to having home internet connectivity since these homes tend to survive on a hand-to-mouth basis, with many of them being on government support grants. This problem concerning low-income families is not unique to South Africa, and the same trends are noticed even in first-world countries, as proven by research. It has been seen that from 2015 there has been an increase in access to home internet and computer ownership however many children from families with incomes below the minimum wage still lack these essentials (Katz & Rideout 2021). Low-income families simply cannot afford to have internet access and the corresponding gadgets in their homes. But one of the factors that has made the internet easily accessible in South Africa and throughout the world is the development of mobile phones. However, in low-income homes, even mobile phone ownership is very limited. Literature has shown that millennials are digital natives. It has also been shown that many millennials often access the internet through mobile phones with internet access, characteristically referred to as smart phones. The same applies to South Africa, where young people's multimedia device of choice is a smartphone and the majority own a smartphone (Muller 2020). Regardless of this, Black millennials from low-income households often do not own mobile phones, which usually covers the gap of not having home computers.

### **The economic divide that affects the education system**

Information communication technology (ICT) has been widely recognised as an important tool to have in children's education. This includes the hardware that is needed, like computers, the software and networks, which all work together for the best systems. For instance, mobile learning can be feasible and beneficial because it can occur anywhere and anytime (Crompton & Burke 2018). Therefore, South Africa has also recognised the critical role of ICT in primary and secondary schools. The integration of ICT in schools in developing countries is still underdeveloped and less ICT broadens the gap of the digital divide (Ismail *et al.* 2020). South Africa has not been spared of this challenge, as the integration of ICT in South Africa's education system has only been achieved in schools that cater to the economically elite and in institutions of higher learning (IHL). It has been seen that with such a divide It is crucial for

rural-based institutions to adopt simple, accessible and efficient technologies and not copy the advanced technologies as used in elite universities (Kativhu 2021). The issue of the digital divide was investigated in the study conducted by Faloye and Ajayi (2022) where they highlighted that several factors contribute to the digital divide, which has led to unequal access to resources across schools in South Africa. It further found that in South Africa many schools and universities still lack basic technological resources. This divide significantly affects first-year students coming from disadvantaged schools. Where there is a digital divide, this affects technology, and skills which in turn impacts academic performance (Faloye & Ajayi 2022). The study was based on four primary schools; one of the schools was previously for White people only, while the other schools are for disadvantaged learners. According to Woldegiorgis (2022:199), the findings indicated that there is still a digital divide in South Africa's education system. What this implies is that Black millennials who attended digitally marginalised schools likely lack the technological knowledge they need to fully take advantage of social media and social networks, yet knowledge is power.

### **Lack of access to the internet in rural areas**

The level of public or private access to internet services in South Africa is not uniform between urban and rural areas. South Africa has a pattern of inequality that was birthed during the apartheid era and the government has been on a mission since the attainment of independence to attain equal social as well as economic inclusion (Seretse *et al.* 2018). The lack of access to internet services is a very significant issue, especially pertaining to rural South Africa. The most concerning issue about it is that Black millennials raised within those areas are disproportionately technologically marginalised and have very little access to social media.

There is therefore a critical role that is played by internet connectivity and computer access in South African universities. It levels the field and allows students from disadvantaged backgrounds to gain the knowledge and skills they need so that they can adequately use the internet to their benefit. This includes the use of social networks to apply for job opportunities.

### **2.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, literature that explored different issues on how social networks can increase employment opportunities for South African millennials was reviewed. The chapter was divided into four sections, with each section playing a critical role in the entire review. In

particular, SET and Wilson's behaviour model provided a theoretical lens through which job seeking behaviour among Black South African millennials and the factors thereof could be analysed. SET highlighted how job seekers weigh costs and rewards, while Wilson's behaviour model utilise information to their benefit, depending on their needs, as well as their context. Social networking platforms thus function as spaces for social exchange where recruiters and potential candidates exchange information to each other's benefit. It was also determined that through social marketing job recruitment campaigns better align with the motivations and behaviours (particularly in information seeking) of Black South African millennials fostering reciprocal engagement.

Millennials are digital natives who significantly engage in social networking platforms. However, in the literature review there was significant support of arguments relating to the use of SNSs mostly for social engagement, limited digital literacy and poor access among Black South African millennials which impacts use for job seeking. Nevertheless, these social medial platforms are increasingly reshaping recruitment processes offering both recruiters and job seekers efficiency and cost effectiveness. Hence, social networking platforms offer an avenue through which youth unemployment, particularly among Black South African millennials can be addressed.

Through the review it was determined that LinkedIn is the most significant social networking platform for recruitment and job seeking. Regardless, other platforms including Facebook are also increasingly being used for the same purpose. However, for these platforms to be effective the barriers that continue to plague Black South African millennials need to be addressed.

The following chapter details the methodological approach that was taken in conducting the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The term methodology according to Dubey and Kothari (2022) denotes the techniques, methods and skills that are used by a researcher throughout the research process to prove or disprove the objectives or gather data pertaining to a study. In this chapter, the methodological approaches that were followed while conducting this study are systematically laid out, discussed, and analysed. The chapter discusses all aspects of the methodology, including the philosophy, research design, data sources, data analysis, reliability, validity, data presentation and ethical considerations. During all these steps, justification is given for the choices made. The chapter concludes with a summary.

#### **3.2 PRAGMATIST RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The pragmatist philosophy was utilised in this study and determined to be most suited. According to Elgeddawy and Abouraia (2024) pragmatism in research is a philosophy that enables addressing an existing approach using both objective and subjective approaches. In this instance, objective approaches are the ones that follow positivism (quantitative), while subjective approaches are the ones that are interpretivist and based on the subjective experiences of people (qualitative). Pragmatism thus allows for the combined use of quantitative and qualitative research approaches within the auspices of a single study (Elgeddawy & Abouraia 2024), which is why it was the appropriate philosophy for this mixed-methods study.

Unlike positivism and interpretivism, pragmatism advocates for the reliance on multiple perspectives in research. The key benefit recognised within this research philosophy is in its ability to produce in-depth data pertaining to the research problem (Kaushik & Walsh 2019). Additionally, pragmatism prioritises the development on evidence-based insights which can be used to practically produce positive outcomes while addressing the research problem (Kaushik & Walsh 2019). Therefore, in aligning with this research philosophy, this study was positioned to not only produce in-depth information on the research phenomenon, but to also provide empirical data that employers seeking employees and millennials seeking employment

opportunities can use to market themselves effectively, as well as position themselves for success.

### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The use of both qualitative and quantitative data in this study warranted the complementary use of both inductive and deductive approaches. The inductive approach is aligned with qualitative research, focusing on the in-depth information that is based on patterns, themes, as well as theoretical insights (Champagne-Poirier *et al.* 2021; Nair & Prem 2020; Proudfoot 2022;). On the other hand, the deductive approach is aligned with quantitative data and the numerical testing relationships, as well as theories (Nevedal *et al.* 2020). Therefore, the integration of these approaches in this study was simultaneous. In line with Kajama *et al.* (2020) and Proudfoot (2022) the inductive approach was used to reveal patterns, while the deductive approach was used to test these patterns.

### **3.4 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE**

This study followed a mixed-methods approach, which involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative studies allow data to be collected in numerical form, while qualitative studies gather data related to the study in the form of text (Leko *et al.* 2023; Shan 2022). The mixed-methods approach enables assessing the research problem as a synergy, thereby allowing holistic summaries to be drawn. Battista and Torre (2023) state that the most commonly used designs include exploratory, embedded mixed methods and triangulation mixed-methods designs.

In this study, quantitative and qualitative approaches to research were combined in a triangulation mixed-methods design. The combination of different research approaches that do not have the same shortcomings enhances the quality of information that is generated on a research problem (Leko *et al.* 2023; Shan 2022; Turner, Cardinal & Burton 2017). Turner *et al.* (2017) further elaborate that both qualitative and quantitative approaches are not without limitations, which is why better answers can be generated from the combination of the approaches that mitigate the limitations. According to Kavar and Dunbar (2024), as well as Sciberras and Dingli (2023), the triangulation mixed-methods design allows for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data at the same time for a comparison as well as a contrast of findings. Donkoh and Mensah (2023) reaffirm this by stating that triangulation is an attempt

to map out or explain fully the richness and complexity of human behaviour by studying or looking at it from more than one standpoint. Triangulation also allows the collection of data that is qualitative and quantitative within the same framework. This method can also be referred to as the parallel or concurrent mixed-methods design to avoid the misinterpretation of the term triangulation, which is also used when generating themes in qualitative research (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub 2021).

Given the foundation of the triangulation design in mixed methods research, Turner *et al.* (2017) state that there is a need to consider how the different methodologies are linked and what the aim of that link is. This is one of the considerations that were therefore made, leading to the realisation that the main reason to link quantitative and qualitative methods was to arrive at a better conclusion. As a result, the choice was made to follow the route of the holistic triangulation mixed-methods design over both the convergent and holistic (used when trying to uncover agreements between different methodologies) and convergent triangulation (used when the main aim is to assess the validity of a theory) designs. Holistic triangulation is therefore used when the aim is to gain a fuller understanding, or a rounded view of the situation based on the study objectives (Turner *et al.* 2017). Holistic triangulation has such a strong methodological orientation, which is why Flick (2017) posits that it is essential for the generation of new knowledge and is not just a way of confirming what is already known. The researcher was therefore able to identify how holistic triangulation could edify the study; hence, the choice of the research design that was followed.

### **3.5 RESEACH STRATEGIES**

To fulfil the requirements of conducting a mixed-methods study, complementary research strategies were used. These were the case study strategy since this study focused on specific universities in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and the survey strategy. As indicated by Poth *et al.* (2024) and Walton *et al.* (2020) case studies facilitate in-depth data exploration, while surveys allow numerical examination from a broader sample. This is the research strategy that was thus followed in this study leading to the development of not just in-depth contextual insights but also supporting numerical evidence (Hong *et al.* 2020; Younas & Durante 2023).

### **3.6 TIME HORIZON**

This study was conducted to suit the cross-sectional time horizon and not the longitudinal time horizon which would have required significantly more time. Cross-sectional research is designed to enable the collection of data from participants within a single timeframe. The major challenge with it is that it does not allow assessing the research problem over a longer period to establish trends (Maier *et al.* 2023; Spector 2019; Wang & Cheng 2020). Regardless of this weakness cross-sectional research is still effective at identifying characteristics and associations within obtained data, which is why it was chosen. Based on the recommendations of Petrova and Westerlund (2020) this approach was strengthened in this study through careful sampling and the reduction of biases that could compromise the quality of the findings. Additionally, the analysis of data was conducted with reliance of proven methods and ethical codes of conduct.

### **3.7 SAMPLING**

#### **3.7.1 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

##### **General population**

Every study has a general population that makes up the wider group of people who fit within the determined boundaries of the study. On a general level, because the study was looking at employment opportunities among Black South African Millennials through social networks, the general population of the study covered every South African who fits the particular criteria. There are two main components to what can be regarded as the general population of a study. Asiamah *et al.* (2017) state that the general population refers to the entire group of people who can potentially participate in a study and, at the same time, a group of people about whom information has to be obtained. Being able to determine the general population of a study is thus done in accordance with set criteria that would allow the researcher to identify individuals who qualify and to distinguish them from those who do not qualify. Potential participants had to satisfy three determining components to be identified as members of the general population. These were being South African, being racially of Black/African origin and being of millennial age. Therefore, all the people who satisfied these three requirements were part of the general population and the results that were obtained from this study can be largely generalised to those individuals.

## **Target Population**

As with other studies, the general population is too large, difficult to work with and difficult to access. This called for further refinement of the population group for the identification of what can be referred to as the target group. In refining the general population, a researcher searches for the attribute of relevance (Asiamah *et al.* 2017). For instance, because this study focused on employment opportunities through social networking sites, there were further attributes that needed to be considered with regards to the potential participants. These included having a social media presence, and the right kind of qualifications to be eligible for vacancies that are posted on LinkedIn, as well as being geographically located in an area that allowed participation in the study. With due consideration given to those factors, the general population was refined for the identification of the target population. The target population for this study was Black South African Millennials in KwaZulu-Natal who are studying towards a postgraduate degree at Durban University of Technology (DUT), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN).

## **Accessible population**

After members of the target population were identified, this group was further refined to include only those who were willing to participate and were available to participate during the allocated timeframe for data collection and a sample had to be decided upon to provide the quantitative data required for the purpose of this study. A sample of 609 participants was drawn from this accessible population, who provided the required quantitative data for this study.

As a mixed-methods study, a larger group of participants were required for the quantitative component and a significantly smaller one for the qualitative component. The qualitative component of the study was satisfied through interviews that were conducted with employees from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) as well as employees from two recruitment agencies who held the requisite knowledge to participate in the study. In line with the sampling technique that was deemed appropriate for the study, a targeted approach was used to identify participants for the study. Both the quantitative and qualitative samples for the study were obtained from what had been identified as the accessible population.

### 3.7.2 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

Purposive sampling, also known as judgement sampling, which is a non-probability sampling technique (Campbell *et al.* 2020), was used to obtain participants from the accessible population during sampling. The choice to use a non-probability sampling technique was based on the participant characteristics that needed to be met. While probability sampling techniques allows making inferences about the greater population or universe from which a sample is drawn, non-probability sampling is best suited for situations where a targeted approach is used to identify research participants (Sarker & AL-Muaalemi 2022). In the case of this study, the focus was primarily on millennials who were within the specified age range, together with employees from recruitment agencies and DPSA. Another reason that compelled the use of a non-probability sampling technique is that the study was not longitudinal and therefore bound by both time and resources. For that reason, non-probability sampling, which is both cost-and time-effective (Sarker & AL-Muaalemi 2022), proved to be a suitable option.

#### **Homogenous purposive sampling**

There are multiple variations of purposive sampling, which include maximum variation sampling (MVS) (used when trying to research an issue from all angles), typical case sampling (useful in being able to decipher a set standard), extreme/deviate case sampling (used when dealing with peculiar or unusual individuals), total population sampling (where all members of the population participate, for greater depth of insight) and expert sampling (which is used when the researcher is just looking to draw data from experts in a particular field) (Etikan *et al.* 2016). However, for the purpose of this study homogenous purposive sampling was deemed most suitable. This is a sampling technique that allows collection data from individuals who share the same traits and characteristics. Purposive sampling utilises the judgement of the researcher in selecting cases with specific criteria in mind (Campbell *et al.* 2020). In other words, purposive sampling allows deliberately choosing or targeting certain individuals in the study based on pre-determined criteria (Campbell *et al.* 2020). Good application of purposive sampling according to Andrade (2021) requires the researcher to have sufficient knowledge regarding study participants, which can then be used to create rapport with them within targeted networks. While it was traditionally used for hidden populations and in qualitative studies, the use of purposive sampling in survey methods, where samples are much larger, is growing (Berndt 2020). Because this was a mixed-methods study, purposive sampling was essential to secure the right participants to provide both qualitative and quantitative data. It was thus

imperative to use specified criteria in the judgement process in order to determine those who were suitable to participate and those who were not. This could not be achieved with other sampling techniques and in particular with probability sampling techniques. Therefore, specific characteristics were considered during the sampling process and each of the participants had to meet all of them. These characteristics are as follows:

- Student participants needed to be of millennial age as defined in the literature review.
- In this case, the aim was to have study participants who have university education.
- Participants needed to be registered postgraduate students seeking employment.
- The Durban University of Technology (DUT), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) students were considered for the study, in line with the time and resource capabilities of the researcher and the non-longitudinal nature of the study.
- Gender was also considered as it was important to ensure that both male and female participants are equally represented.

These specified criteria for the selection of participants were mapped out before sampling and data collection commenced. As such, during the sampling process, all potential participants who were approached met the stipulated requirements, which made the process more efficient.

### **3.7.3 SAMPLE SIZE**

Giner-Sorolla *et al.* (2024) explains sample size as a basic statistical principle in which a specified quantity or number of participants that will be included in a study is ascribed. Giner-Sorolla *et al.* (2024) further mentions that this is often determined before the commencement of a study in order to avoid being biased when interpreting results. This is the exact procedure that was followed in this study, as the sample size was predetermined before the commencement of the study. There were two different samples that had to be obtained from the accessible population of potential participants. A larger sample was required for the quantitative portion, while a significantly smaller sample was required for the qualitative portion of the study.

#### Quantitative sample size

It was difficult to determine the exact parameters of the accessible population for the study. As such, the normal mathematical calculations that are used to determine the sample size for the survey could not be done. These calculations are normally performed with due consideration for the confidence level (80% or 95%) and margin of error (5% or 10%). Regardless of this limitation, previous studies have yielded general guidelines for acceptable sample sizes for quantitative data collection for results that are statistically sound and significant. The general guideline acceptable in quantitative studies is that there should be a minimum of 100 participants for populations that are large. A sample of 609 students was therefore selected from the three universities (DUT, MUT and UKZN).

The participants in the quantitative component of the study were registered students at the DUT, MUT and the UKZN, aged above 18 years and within the millennial age range of 24-44. The exclusive criteria were registered students of the aforementioned institutions and students who are within the specified millennial age range that was followed in the study. Table 3.1 provides sample sizes for the quantitative component of the study.

**Table 3.5: Sample size for the quantitative component**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Estimated number of registered students (2019 academic session)</b>	<b>Estimated Registered Post-graduate students for 2019 academic session</b>	<b>Estimated Registered Post-graduate students from Faculty of Management Sciences/ Social Sciences</b>	<b>Participants (sample size)</b>
DUT (POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS)	30 000	896	265	204
MUT (POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS)	11512	172	160	101

UKZN (POST-GRADUATE STUDENTS)	46 539	13 064	417	304
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>609</b>

### Qualitative Sample Size

Hennick and Kaiser (2022) report that current trends in research indicate that an effective sample size for qualitative studies, particularly those that use thematic analysis ranges from 9 to 17. This conclusion was reached following a systematic review that was conducted with 23 articles in which interviews were conducted. Thus, Hennick and Kaiser (2022) further concluded reported that in those articles, at least nine participants were required to reach saturation. A similar, but more rigorous strategy to thematic analysis was used in this study, which is interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Keeping in line with the stipulations of Hennick and Kaiser (2022), a sample of four participants from DPSA and seven recruitment agents, (n = 11) were part of the sample group for this qualitative component.

Collectively, a total of 609 Millennials from the stated universities, and an additional 11 people from the DPSA and the recruitment agencies took part in the study. The participants are illustrated in the following table.

**Table 3.6: Total participants of the study**

S/N	INSTITUTION	NO. OF PARTICIPANTS
1	Durban University of Technology (DUT)	204 students
2	University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	304 students
3	Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT)	101 students
4	Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)	4 personnel
5	Recruitment Agency A	4 personnel
	Recruitment Agency B	3 personnel

**Source: Researcher**

### **3.8 DATA COLLECTION**

Because this was a mixed-methods study, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. Data collection was conducted with the utmost adherence to ethical standards; thus participants were not coerced.

#### **3.8.1 DATA SOURCES**

During the data collection, analysis and discussion phases of the study, both primary and secondary sources were used.

##### Primary Data

Data that is originated for the purpose of a specific study is referred to as primary data. This kind of data is essential because it provides the opportunity to come up with original conclusions (Levine-Clark 2019). In this study, primary data was collected using a survey questionnaire in conjunction with in-depth interviews. Based on this data collection strategy it was possible to formulate original opinions on the topic, which were then discussed in conjunction with the reviewed literature, leading to valuable conclusions that are made in the last chapter of this research report.

##### Secondary Data

For the purpose of this study data was also collected from secondary sources. Secondary data is past data collected and analysed by other researchers on similar topics (Ajayi, 2017). A similar explanation of secondary data is offered by Baldwin *et al.* (2022) who states that it implies the re-use of pre-existing data within a study. An important point regarding the use and analysis of secondary data is raised by Johnston (2017), who states that, even though it is empirical it has validity within the research community. Secondary data was primarily collected from past research articles reviewed in the second chapter. The primary data was then compared with secondary data to decipher similarities and differences in relation to the objectives as well as the socio-economic conditions of the population of this study.

### 3.8.2 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Data collection involved both the use of a survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews to satisfy both components of the research. Therefore, this section addresses issues concerning the design of the instruments that were used in the data collection process. Refer to appendices A, B and N for the instruments designed specifically for the purpose of this study.

#### Questionnaire design

McBeath *et al.* (2020) and Vaira *et al.* (2024) affirm that questionnaires can be designed using an open-ended, closed-ended dichotomy or Likert scale style. The questionnaire for this study comprised the dichotomy, Likert scale as well as open-ended questions.

Jayanthi and Shanthi (2022) assert that open-ended questions enable respondents to provide more insightful information. He further alleges that Likert scales are a common form of attitudinal scale, which can be easily interpreted. McBeath *et al.* (2020) and Vaira *et al.* (2024) mention that the Likert scale offers the participants of the study the option of considering the response to each statement separately or combining the responses to produce an overall score. Seeing the benefits of the different kinds of questioning styles that could be used in questionnaire design an approach that integrated it into a single questionnaire was. This was done mainly to break monotony within the questionnaire and to yield greater depth of insight.

The questionnaire design process that was therefore followed included firstly identifying the information that needed to be collected in the data collection process, for the achievement of the aim, as well as objectives of the study. Assessing literature was therefore important during this stage to determine the focus of other studies and to have an understanding of information relating to the research problem on which this study is premised. Thereafter, each of the questions needed to suit the target audience of Black South African millennials. With cognisance of the notion that for this group, English is not the first language, questions were kept simple and without any technical jargon. As indicated earlier, a mixture, of open and closed ended questions were used. The questionnaire was also constructed with considerations for ethical standards such as protecting the anonymity of participants. Most importantly, the questions used were identified from the literature and adaptations were made of the questions that were used in other studies.

The questionnaire of this study was structured as follows:

- **Section A and B** of the questionnaire addressed the demographics of the respondents to the study, followed by the dichotomy line of questioning.
- **Sections C, D and E** followed the Likert scale line of questioning where level of agreement among respondents would be measured.

### Interview schedule

In preparation of the in-depth interviews that were conducted during the data collection process, two interview schedules were prepared; one for DPSA and one for the recruitment agencies respectively (see appendices A and B). According to Kallio *et al.* (2016), in order to increase trustworthiness, objectivity, as well as plausibility of study results, a good interview schedule needs to be prepared beforehand. The interview schedule can basically be defined as a set of questions that are prepared beforehand to guide the interview process (Liem 2018). Therefore, the appropriate list of questions is prepared to gain insight on the study phenomenon.

There are several factors that were considered during the preparation of the interview schedule. These were in line with the recommendations of Hill, Bleicher and Farma (2021) and they included the following:

- The process began with identifying the prerequisites that called for in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Concerning this, the study thoroughly engaged with the research objectives as well as questions and determined the right kind of questions that would yield the necessary data. Moreover, because of the interpretivist philosophy of the study, subjective experiences were deemed important.
- Previous knowledge of the study topic was also considered in the development of the two interview schedules that were used. There was also reliance on previous studies that had been conducted in the area and similar areas to identify areas of interest and then formulated questions in line with those areas of interest.

### **3.8.3 PILOT TESTING**

Before the actual collection of data, there was a need to conduct what is regarded in research as a pilot study. This can be defined as a miniature study of the same nature that is conducted

in preparation for the larger-scale study (Pearson *et al.* 2020). In other words, a pilot test is a mini-version of a full-scale study or a trial run done in preparation for the complete study. Aziz and Khan (2020), together with Pearson *et al.* (2020) explain that pilot testing is an important aspect of research as it enables the researcher to identify possible gaps in the first draft of a questionnaire before the administration of the final questionnaire to the participant in the study. There are several benefits that were identified from the process of conducting the pilot study. These included the following:

- The pilot study enabled the researcher to determine the feasibility or viability of the study as a whole.
- The study also enabled the researcher to identify problem areas concerning the data collection instruments and to address them before conducting the larger study.
- The researcher was able to identify and rectify possible challenges with the data collection procedures that were going to be used.

Lewis *et al.* (2021), as well as Pearson (2020), are of the opinion that literature does not give sufficient guidelines on sample sizes that are suitable for pilot testing. This is an issue that was noted again during the research process. As such, no scientific process was used in determining the sample size, but rather the focus was solely on the above-mentioned benefits of the piloting process. For that reason, the pilot test was conducted with 10 students from Durban University of Technology (DUT).

#### **3.8.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

Prior to the commencement of data collection, letters were sent to relevant authorities from the institutions (DUT, MUT and UKZN) to request permission to conduct this research. The same was done at the Department of Public Service and Administration, where the interviews were conducted. As such, gatekeeper permission to conduct the study was given by the relevant authorities at all the institutions where data was collected.

Before commencing with data collection, contact was made with potential participants. A few problems were encountered in communicating effectively with the potential participants because they were studying toward different postgraduate degrees and doing different modules. Participants who were successfully contacted were made fully aware during this time of the nature of the research and that there would be no monetary gain from participating since the

research was for academic purposes. An information letter was developed (see Appendix L) which was sent to all potential participants. This letter thoroughly explained the study that was to be undertaken, from the topic to the ethical issues that would be adhered to. Therefore, when participants agreed to take part in the study, they already knew through the information letter about the major details concerning the study.

After participants agreed to participate in the study, they were asked to sign consent forms (see Appendix N). However, the participants were informed that they first needed to clarify any issues concerning the study prior to signing. Moreover, participants were informed of the purpose of the consent form. This was to establish that participants had agreed on their own volition to participate in the study. Yet again, the circumstances of the research were explained to each of the participants either telephonically or by email, since face-to-face appointments were difficult to establish and then the participants were given time to ask any questions for reasons of clarity again. After that and after being satisfied that each of the participants completely understood the process, the participants were instructed to sign the consent form, so as to fulfil ethical obligations, after which data was collected.

The guidelines or procedures for the triangulation method under mixed-methods approach require that qualitative and quantitative data be collected simultaneously, meaning that the questionnaire administration and the interviews run concurrently (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub 2021). This is exactly what was done during the data collection process. The following table shows the dates on which interviews were conducted; thus, it is imperative to note that quantitative data collection was conducted during those days as well.

**Table 3.7: Schedule of interview dates**

	<b>VENUE</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>DATE/ DURATION</b> <b>(10 -15 MINUTES)</b>
<b>Department of Public Service and Administration</b>	Online (Phone call)	Personnel 1	11 September 2022
	Online (Phone call)	Personnel 2	11 September 2022
	Online (Phone call)	Personnel 3	11 September 2022
	Online (Phone call)	Personnel 4	11 September 2022
<b>Recruitment Agency A</b>	<b>Recruitment Agency Offices</b>	Participant 1	28 July 2022
	<b>Recruitment Agency Offices</b>	Participant 2	28 July 2022
	<b>Recruitment Agency Offices</b>	Participant 3	28 July 2022
	<b>Recruitment Agency Offices</b>	Participant 4	28 July 2022
<b>Recruitment Agency B</b>	Online (Phone call)	Participant 1	10 September 2023
	Online (Phone call)	Participant 2	10 September 2022
	Online (Phone call)	Participant 3	10 September 2022

*Source: Researcher*

The above table shows that the research included four personnel from the Department of Public Service and Administration, as well as seven recruitment agency personnel. The intent of this was to obtain insight from their experiences regarding the subject matter.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with personnel from Recruitment Agency A while the Department of Public Service and Administration and Recruitment Agency B were interviewed telephonically.

### **3.9 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis was conducted in two stages because the analysis of data obtained from interviews (qualitative) and questionnaires (quantitative) was done separately, then merged after the initial analysis. The merging of the data provided an in-depth discussion and narration of all the aspects at play. In the paragraphs that follow, a thorough account of how both types of data were analysed is given.

#### **3.9.1 QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

Quantitative data which was obtained with the questionnaire was analysed using the latest version of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). This is the full procedure of how quantitative data was analysed.

- After data was collected, the questionnaires were assigned numbers. This was done so that data capture errors could easily be traced back to the questionnaire for rectification.
- Thereafter, information from the questionnaires was captured in a Microsoft Excel, based on the order of the numbers that had been assigned to each questionnaire.
- After the capturing stage, information on the Excel spreadsheet was checked for errors, which were then corrected.
- The data was then exported to SPSS, where the coding and labelling the data was done. During this stage, data that suitably fit nominal, interval and ratio scales was labelled as such.
- After that, the total scores for the data that had been collected through Likert scales were calculated.
- This was followed by the calculation of the Cronbach's alpha levels for the Likert scales. This test assessed the internal reliability of the scales, so the alpha levels had to exceed .70 to be regarded as acceptable.
- Both descriptive and inferential statistics were then conducted.
- The main inferential tests that were used in data analysis are, One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), multiple regression and factor analysis

## ANOVA

One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the association between socio-demographic variables. This is an inferential test which can be used in the assessment of mean difference. In this study ANOVA was thus used to assess differences in socio-demographic variables which are gender, age, and racial group, institution, and faculty.

## Multiple regression

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictors of employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn). Multiple regression goes beyond the capabilities of linear regression and is imperative in determining how the multiple factors in the study influence employment opportunities through LinkedIn for Black South African Millennials. Most importantly, through multiple regression, it was possible to identify the best predictors.

## Factor analysis

Factor analysis was performed to validate the constructs (employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, most effective job-search websites, and user-friendliness and popularity among job-search websites) using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In EFA, principal component analysis (PCA) was used in the identification of components that would be retained for analysis. After EFA, CFA, which is a more advanced technique within factor analysis was then used to test the factor structure in the study.

AVE in factor analysis was calculated using the following formula:

$$AVE = \frac{\sum \lambda_i^2}{\sum \theta_i + \sum \lambda_i^2}$$

Where:

$\lambda_i$ : The standardized factor loadings of the indicator variables.

$\theta_i$ : The error variance ( $1 - \lambda_i^2$ ) of the indicator variables

### 3.9.2 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Data obtained from the interviews was analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This is a qualitative data analysis strategy whose main aim is to understand an individual in a specific context (Smith & Nizza 2022). On a general level, IPA is interested in the experiences of individuals pertaining to a specific phenomenon. Nizza, Farr and Smith (2021) state that its fundamental principles are *phenomenology*, which is about how certain things appear to individuals; *hermeneutics*, which entails comprehending the mind of a participant and the use of language that conveys experience of the world, and *idiography*, which is subjectiveness. IPA was best suited for this study because it is inductive, so making inferences and creating a general hypothesis were necessary. It is also suitable for small samples; hence, it advocates for the collection of data using semi-structured interviews. These are the processes that were followed during data analysis in the study.

The particular data analysis processes that were followed were adapted from Smith (2015) and additionally information that helped refine the process was obtained from Abdellatif and Haynes (2024), Kelly (2022), as well as Morano *et al.* (2022). The strategies that were followed in conducting IPA are presented below.

Stage 1: Multiple Reading and Taking Notes: This stage involved listening to interview audios and reading transcripts multiple times. This enabled recalling the atmosphere that was there during the interview and the setting of the place. At this stage initial interpretative remarks are made.

Stage 2: Seeking Relationships and Clustering Themes: This stage entailed identifying themes and then looking for connections after that. This resulted in the development of themes and sub-themes. At this stage coding and theme clustering was conducted based on individual transcripts to understand the unique experiences of each participant (Abdellatif & Haynes 2024; Kelly 2022; Morano *et al.* 2022).

Stage 3: Cross-case analysis of the themes: The themes that were identified based on the analysis of individual transcripts were then subjected to cross case analysis. This was supported by Abdellatif and Haynes (2024), and Kelly (2022) enables identifying shared patterns in different transcripts and even differences. This stage of data analysis was extensive because

broader interpretations of the data could only be achieved with a holistic understanding of the experiences of the participants.

Stage 3: Write up: After the initial three stages, the only thing that was left was presenting and reporting the findings. So, this stage is conducted over several chapters that follow, in which data will be presented and discussed.

### **3.9.3 STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING (SEM)**

Quantitative data analysis also included conducting SEM. Crawford and Jean (2021), Hidayat and Wulandari (2022), Stoffels *et al.* (2023), together with Thakkar (2020) highlight that this is form of statistical analysis makes testing relationships possible. These studies also indicate that SEM can use aspects of other tests, such as confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to tests variable relationships, which is how it was conducted in this study. SEM has two main types that can be used, and these include Covariance-Based SEM and Variance-Based SEM. Covariance-Based SEM is effective then the aim of the statistical analysis is to validate theoretical models, while Variance-Based SEM offers more statistical flexibility allowing for smaller samples and predictions (Edeh *et al.* 2022; Hair & Alamer, 2022; Hair *et al.* 2021; Hidayat & Wulandari 2022). In this study, SEM was conducted to tests the hypothesised relationships that exist among the latent variables; thus, Variance-Based SEM was used. The steps that were followed to conduct the analysis include,

- Outlining the hypothesised relationships among the latent variables
- Model identification
- Model estimation
- Model evaluation (which was achieved by assessing goodness of fit)

#### How missing data was dealt with

The obtained data was determined to have missing values which complicated statistical analysis using SEM. To overcome this challenge, missing value analysis was conducted on SPSS to assess the extent of the missing data. Based on this analysis it was determined that values were Missing at Random (MAR) allowing for the use of Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML). Essentially, FIML enabled conducting SEM because it allows the use of the data that is available in the dataset without deleting cases.

### 3.10 RELIABILITY

The ability of other researchers to be able to consistently repeat a study and produce similar results is referred to as reliability (Sürücü & Maslakci 2020). Sürücü and Maslakci (2020) state that reliability is concerned with the credibility of the findings in a research project. They further mention that when determining whether the findings are reliable, a researcher needs to ask if the evidence and conclusions stand up to the scrutiny of others? Reliability is also explained as the consistency of measurement through a certain procedure, which implies that if the same variable is measured within the confines of the same circumstances, a reliable measurement process will result in similar measurements (Ahmed & Ishtiaq 2021).

While conducting this study there was concern with maintaining the reliability of the study as a whole and measures were taken to ensure the reliability of both the quantitative and qualitative components. This was done in the following manner:

#### Quantitative component reliability

Maintaining reliability was done by ensuring the internal consistency of the scales that were used in the data collection process. During data analysis there was assessment what is regarded in research terms as the coefficient alpha or Cronbach's alpha reliability estimate. By using this statistical measure internal consistency reliability, which is symbolised by the following Greek letter  $\alpha$  was conducted. There are specific statistical requirements that are used to determine this internal consistency of a measure. These requirements are tabulated below.

**Table 3.8: Statistical requirements from determining internal consistency/Cronbach alpha**

ALPHA CRONBACH VALUE	INTERPRETATION
0.91-1.00	Excellent
0.81-0.90	Good
0.71-0.80	Good and Acceptable
0.61-0.70	Acceptable
0.01-0.60	Not acceptable

During data analysis the alpha values for the measurement instrument had to be at least within the acceptable range to prove internal consistency and reliability. However, because of the

nature of the study, other types of reliability could not be determined, such as test-retest reliability, which would require a repeat of the study to prove.

Apart from Cronbach's alpha reliability, composite reliability (CR) was also assessed in this study. In studies including Aprilisa et al. (2021), Dzin and Lay (2021), as well as Haji-Othman and Yusuff (2022) CR is reported to be preferable compared to Cronbach's alpha of its ability to account for the loadings of different scale items, making it more reliable. These studies also report that CR values are generally acceptable when they are valued at 0.7 or above. In this study CR was assessed as part of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and the obtained construct values were all above the minimum limit.

#### Qualitative component reliability

While conducting the study consistency in the application of procedures in order to ensure that the study could be replicable was maintained. This was done by upholding the values of dependability, as well as confirmability of the study as a whole, particularly the findings. For this reason, every process that was followed while conducting the study was informatively reported, ensuring the dependability of the findings. Finally, the study was conducted from a position of objectivity in every part of the process, particularly with regards to methodological processes; hence, the findings are confirmable.

### **3.11 VALIDITY**

#### Quantitative component validity

In this study the convergent validity of constructs was assessed using average variance extracted (AVE) which was performed as part of CFA. AVE values according to Dzin and Lay (2021), Ghanavati *et al.* (2022), Haji-Othman and Yusuff (2022), as well as Tavassolmand *et al.* (2022) should exceed 0.5. The constructs in this study proved to have reasonable convergent validity with values closer to 0.5, with LinkedIn alone exceeding that figure.

#### Qualitative component validity

The term validity implies such things as truthfulness and the accuracy of findings within a qualitative study. This study was conducted with integrity and the methods and procedures that were chosen were meant to generate data that would accurately answer the objectives (Adler

2022). In ensuring validity two key aspects which are credibility and transferability were emphasised. To begin with, credibility was established through the adoption of qualitative methods and frameworks that are well established and that have been used by many other researchers in the past. Transferability refers to the application of research findings in similar contexts or studies. Therefore, truthfulness and honesty in conducting this study so that it could accurately be applied in similar contexts were upheld. Upholding the validity of the study was of utmost importance while this study was being conducted.

### **3.12 DELIMITATIONS**

The study was conducted within a specified framework of its main objectives, concepts and theoretical foundations. Exclusionary and inclusionary choices directed the delimitation process. The following sub-sections highlight some of the defining boundaries that were set while the study was being conducted.

#### **Geographical Delimitations**

Geographically, the research concentrated only on Black South African millennials located within the boundaries of the country. Specifically, the study was conducted in the city of Durban, in KwaZulu-Natal. While there are many tertiary institutions within that geographical location, the study was confined to just three universities, which are DUT, MUT and UKZN. Consequently, Black South African millennials who did not fit into the geographical location of the study were not considered for participation.

#### **Theoretical Delimitations**

The theoretical perspectives that were used in this study were directed by the theoretical and conceptual framework. The two main theories informed the fundamental concepts and variables of the study are the social exchange theory (SET) and Wilson's information behaviour model. While other similar theories were referred to, only these two provided the founding principles of the study.

#### **Participant Race and Age Delimitations**

Because this study was solely focused on participants who were Black and millennials, considerations were not made for individuals of other races and ages. However, it was

recognised that the problem of unemployment is not unique to black people and millennials only. The specific objectives of this study confined the entire research process specifically to the Black millennial sub-section of the South African population.

### **Methodological scope**

The study was conducted in a mixed-methods manner; thus, it included both qualitative and quantitative components. The data was collected using both a survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Data analysis procedures that were used suited both kinds of data. This methodological approach allowed the researcher to gain deep insight into the topic. What is important to note is that the research design that was employed for the study was suitable specifically for this kind of mixed-methods research.

### **3.13 LIMITATIONS**

The following limitations were specifically encountered in relation to the methodological processes that were followed while conducting the study.

- A study of this nature appears to need longitudinal data collection and analysis in order to determine trends over time.
- The population parameters of the study were difficult to determine, which presented challenges in determining the sample size using prescribed statistical methods.
- The sample size is only a minor segment when compared to the population; hence, generalisation and being able to infer are quite limited.

### **3.14 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While this study was being conducted the relevant ethical code of conduct was adhered to. Realising that the study involved working with people and generating data that is based on their real-life experiences, there was recognition of the need to uphold social responsibility by doing everything possible to mitigate social, economic, emotional or psychological harm to the study participants. Apart from this, it was essential to abide by a strict ethical code of conduct because not only would that enable the collection of data that was reliable, but it would also work towards boosting participant confidence in being part of the study. To that effect, the following ethical considerations were prioritised throughout the research process.

## **Obtaining informed consent**

The principal nature of obtaining informed consent is that it is not just an ethical requirement; it is also a legal requirement (Xu *et al.* 2020). By nature, the defining aim of seeking informed consent from potential participants is to ensure that participants voluntarily decide to participate in the study after having been provided with sufficient information, particularly in a language that they understand very well (Xu *et al.* 2020). Therefore, when potential participants were identified for the study in question, the process of obtaining informed consent was conducted in a step-by-step manner, with the power placed in the hands of the individuals so that they would not feel compelled to participate. A potential issue that was identified prior to the whole process concerned the manner in which informed consent would be obtained.

This potential challenge concerning the data collection process was identified after a reflective analysis of the study, which was conducted by Hutton and Henderson (2015), on obtaining informed consent while seeking data on social networks. While their study was largely mathematical, it did raise great awareness about the relationship between burden and validity. Having identified this issue, it became imperative while conducting this study to mitigate the burden on the participants so that they could participate willingly and actually provide valid data. For that reason, members of the target population group were provided with a detailed information sheet, which they had to read. They were afforded the opportunity to engage with the information in their own personal spaces; thus, phone numbers and emails were provided, which they could use to contact the researcher for further information. It was also specified to individuals that, if they wished so, they could request a face-to-face meeting during which the study would be explained in detail. For participants who then voluntarily agreed to participate, the study was explained yet again before they could sign the consent form; hence, they were also given ample time to ask questions. All the participants who eventually participated in the study went through this rigorous process and signed a consent form to show that they were well informed and that they participated of their own free will.

## **Protecting anonymity and confidentiality**

It has long been established in academia that it is imperative to safeguard participant anonymity and confidentiality while conducting research. As such, safeguarding participant anonymity and confidentiality was highly prioritised, and the necessary measures were enacted to ensure that participants' identities would remain private. To begin with, visual material that could be

used to identify participants was excluded from the study. This was mainly done in relation to found data and researcher-created data. A potential ethical quandary can arise from the misuse of visual data, leading to compromised anonymity and confidentiality. For that reason, Dougherty (2022) purport that visual data, which includes pictures found online, pictures taken by respondents and other representations, increases the risk of ethical challenges. Because of this, the visual material that was used particularly in this research report was thoroughly scrutinised to maintain the anonymity of the persons.

The use of pseudonyms in cases where information was attributed to a particular participant, the numbering of questionnaires for identification rather than the use of names, as well as the exclusion of biographical information that is directly linked to identification from the questionnaire and the interview noted, as well as recorded data.

### **Avoiding deceptive practices/Trustworthiness**

A very principled ethical aspect of research, particularly research that includes qualitative and subjective components, is the trustworthiness of the researcher. Due to the lack of experimental, purely mathematical data and scientific rigour, the kind of research as was conducted by the researcher is viewed as highly prone to deceptive practices and a lack of trustworthiness on the part of researchers (Adler 2022). For that reason, while keeping in line with ethical guidelines, trustworthiness was of great importance throughout the research process. Most importantly there was recognition that the issue of trustworthiness or credibility in research is double-barreled, involving both conduct in relation to participants and conduct in relation to the entire research process and reporting of the findings. Both these aspects of trustworthiness concerning the research are addressed here.

#### Avoiding deceptive practices when dealing with research participants

- Participants were duly informed of the nature of the study with complete honesty. The research process was conducted with honesty, together with being forthcoming with information in order to maintain a rapport with the participants.

#### Avoiding deceptive practices in the research process and in the reporting of findings

- All authors whose publications were used for the compilation of this research report are properly acknowledged. The report does not contain any information that was plagiarised. Moreover, information contained in all citations is accurate.
- The information that is presented in this research report covers all the important aspects of qualitative data in that it is credible, transferrable and dependable; thus, it can be confirmed.

### **The right to withdraw from the study**

Lynch (2020) states that “the right to withdraw from research without penalty is well established around the world”. Lynch (2020) further states that giving consent to participate in a study is not in any way equivalent to making a commitment to being part of the study. Therefore, participants who choose to participate in a study have the ethical as well as legal right to withdraw, even without justification. This right was reserved for all the participants who consented to participate in the study.

### **Minimising the risk of harm**

There is a general assumption that social science research does not pose any threat of harm to participants. Moreover, many believe this to be especially true where qualitative research is concerned, but this is not true. According to Thunberg and Arnel (2022), qualitative research normally involves an extensive, in-depth interviewing process, which can be particularly distressing. Thunberg and Arnel (2022) further report that because of the nature of the data collection process, which is usually face-to-face, there is usually some sort of relationship that develops between the researcher and the participant; hence, the researcher would need to consciously navigate ethical boundaries. Thus, facts cannot be ignored when it comes to the risk of emotional and psychological distress that may be experienced by participants, while participating in seemingly harmless social research. In most instances, participants who are usually inexperienced in the area of research lack knowledge and do not try to find out beforehand, even based on the experiences of others, the amount of emotional and psychological resources it would take to participate in a social study. It therefore falls a researcher to understand the quality of the participants based on the nature of the study and to further curb potential harm to them.

### **3.15 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter was to outline the methodological approach that was used while conducting this study. To summarise, this study was conducted based on the pragmatist research philosophy. This philosophy is compatible with the use of multiple approaches and does not align with a single research method. It was determined to be suitable for the combined use of qualitative and quantitative methods. The approach to knowledge development in this study was based on both inductive and deductive approaches. The inductive approach fulfilled the requirements of the qualitative component of this study, while the deductive approach aligned with the quantitative component. In line with the mixed-methods methodological choice that suited the pragmatist philosophy, the research strategy involved both case study and survey approaches; hence data collection was based on cross-sectional time horizon. Purposive sampling was used to obtain participants and data collection included both interviews and a self-administered questionnaire. The findings presented in the following chapter were obtained through the analysis of the data that was obtained using IPA and SPSS. In the following chapter, data that was collected and analysed through thematic analysis is presented and analysed in-depth.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results that were obtained in the study. The chapter is divided into two main sections, and each of them is dedicated towards quantitative and qualitative results, respectively. The results from a questionnaire distributed to students at the three selected universities in KwaZulu-Natal are presented in the first section. The questionnaire was distributed to 609 postgraduate students. The data collected from the responses were analysed with SPSS (version 27<sup>®</sup>) in line with the research objectives. In the second section, data collected from the interviews with both recruitment agencies is presented. The chapter ends with a summary that is reflective of the full spectrum of results; thus, it also provides a glimpse into the following chapter.

#### SECTION A: QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

#### 4.2 SOCIAL DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

This section details the social demographic characteristics of the respondents. It should be noted that a total number of 609 participants participated in the study. However, not all participants answered all demographic questions, which is why the total number of respondents differs in some instances.

##### 4.2.1 GENDER

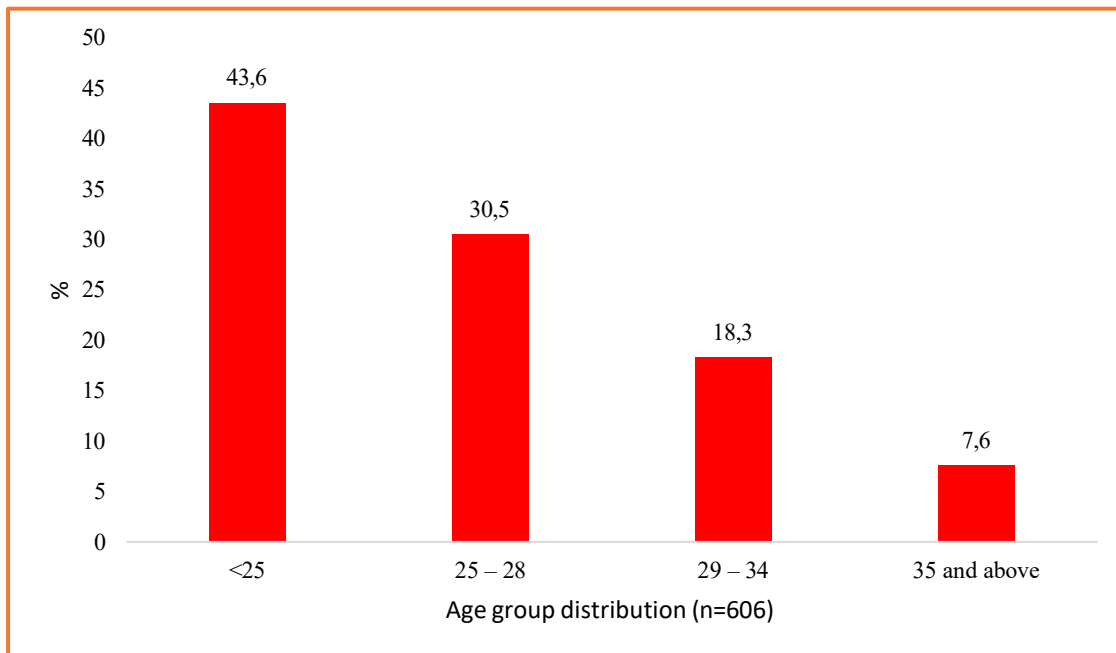
The data in Table 4.1 indicates that 52.2% of the respondents were male while females constitute 47.8%. It is worth stating that seven (7) of the respondents declined to provide their gender.

**Table 4.11: Respondents gender**

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Gender	Male	315	52.2
	Female	288	47.8
	Total	603	100.0

#### 4.2.2 AGE GROUP

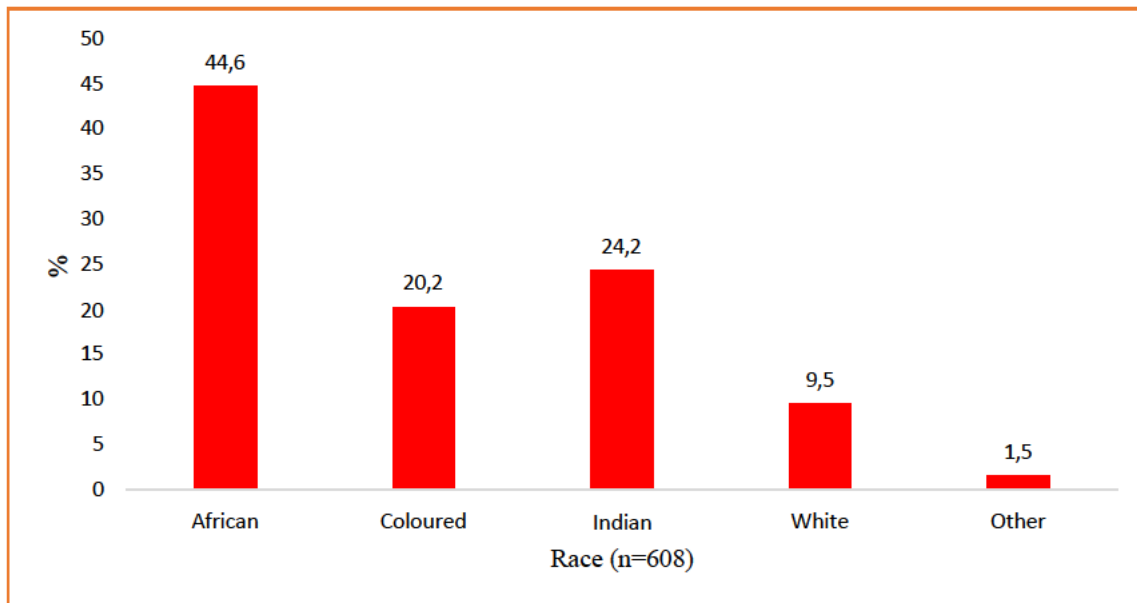
The bar graph in Figure 4.1 shows that 43.6% are less than 25 years of age, 30.5% of the respondents were within 25-28 years of age, 18.3% were within 29-34 years, and 7.6% were 35 and above.



**Figure 4.4: Age distribution of respondents**

#### 4.2.3 RACIAL GROUP

According to the data in Figure 4.2, nearly half of the respondents are African (44.6%), followed by Indian (24.2%), Coloured (20.2%), and White (9.5%). The analysis reflects the racial distribution of students in tertiary institutions in KwaZulu-Natal, which is dominated by Blacks (Africans) and Indians.



**Figure 4.5: Racial grouping of the respondents**

#### 4.2.4 INSTITUTION

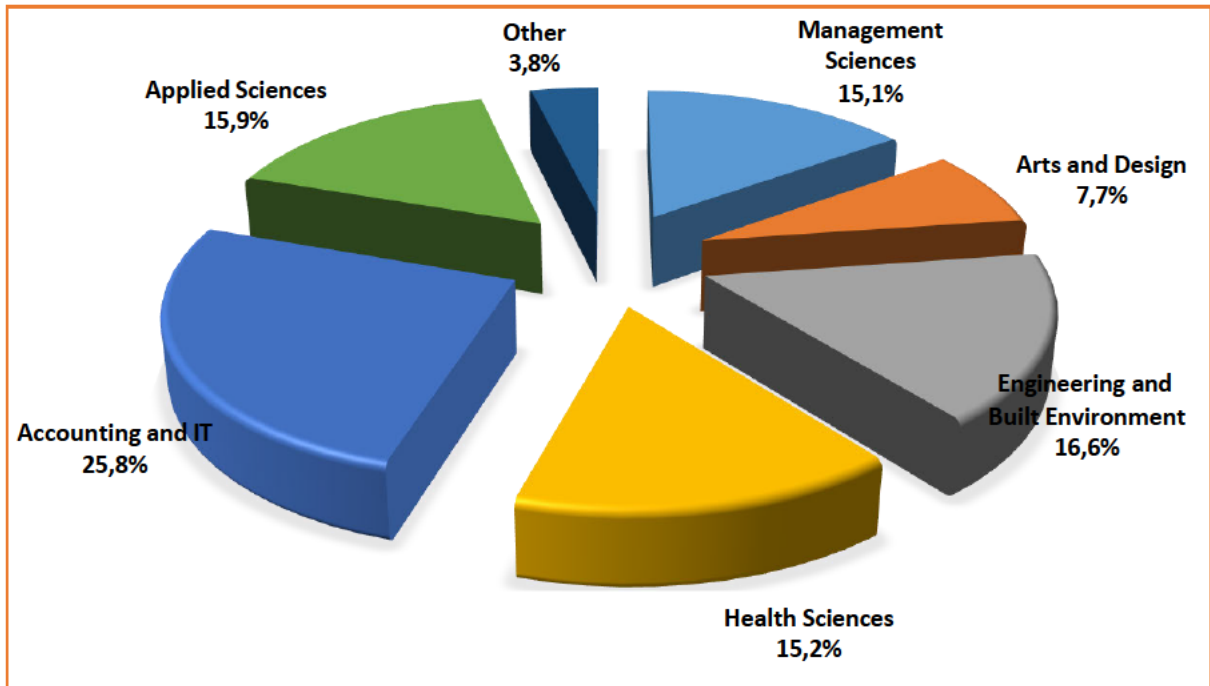
The data in Table 4.2 indicates that 49.9% of the respondents were from UKZN, 33.5% from the DUT, and 16.6% from the MUT. The data is not surprising given that UKZN has the highest number of students in KwaZulu-Natal.

**Table 4.12: Institution of the respondents**

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Institution	MUT	101	16.6
	DUT	204	33.5
	UKZN	304	49.9
	Total	609	100.0

#### 4.2.5 FACULTY

The pie chart in Figure 4.3 shows that 25.8% of the respondents are in the faculty of Accounting and IT, 16.6% are in Engineering and the Built Environment, 15.9% are in Applied Sciences, 15.2% are in Health Sciences, 15.1% are in Management Sciences, 7.7% are in Arts and Design, and 3.8% are in other faculties.



**Figure 4.6: Respondents' faculties (n=598)**

Among those who indicated others, the data in Table 4.3 shows the various other faculties the respondents are in.

**Table 4.13: Other faculties indicated by the respondents**

		Frequency	Percent
Other faculties	Business School	1	7.7
	Economic and Management Sciences	2	15.4
	Education	2	15.4
	Entrepreneurial	1	7.7
	Faculty of Law	1	7.7
	Humanities	2	15.4
	Law	2	15.4
	Natural and Agricultural Sciences	1	7.7
	Science and agriculture	1	7.7
	N	13	100.0

### 4.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

This section details the social media usage of the respondents.

#### 4.3.1 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM

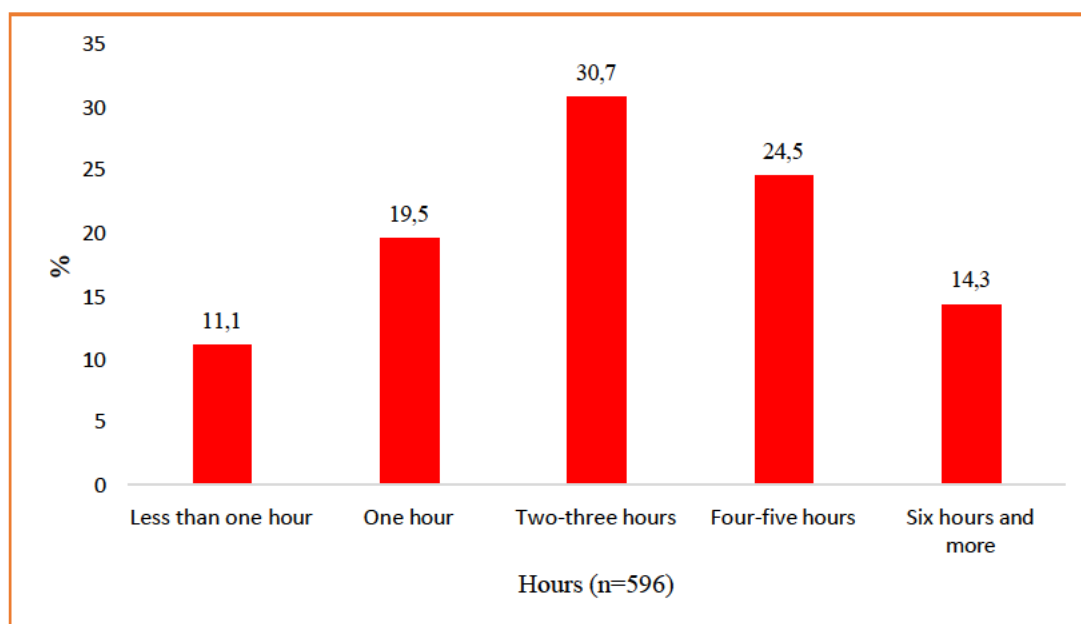
When asked if the respondents are subscribed on any social media platform, out of 605 participants who responded to the question, an overwhelming 99.2% indicated that they were active social media platforms.

**Table 4.14: Number of respondents on the social media platforms**

		Frequency	Percent
Are you on any social media platform?	Yes	600	99.2
	No	5	.8
	Total	605	100.0

#### 4.3.2 NUMBER OF HOURS ON SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Figure 4.5 shows the number of hours the respondents spend on social media platforms. The data indicate that 30.7% of the respondents spent two to three hours, 24.5% spent four to five hours, 19.5% spent one hour, 14.3% spent six hours or more, and only 11.1% spent less than one hour. The analysis indicates the respondents spent on average two hours on social media platforms.



**Figure 4.4: Number of hours respondents spent on social media platforms**

### 4.3.3 SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKING PLATFORMS

When asked to indicate how many social networking platforms the respondents use, several different social media networking platforms were mentioned. It was uncovered that many of the respondents use more than one social media networking platform (Table 4.5). Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp emerged as the most common social networking platforms.

**Table 4.15: Number of social media networking platforms used by the respondents**

Social media networking platforms	Number	Percentage
Facebook	35	7.94
Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp	28	6.35
Facebook, WhatsApp	41	9.30
Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+	11	2.49
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+	9	2.04
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp	38	8.62
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+	70	15.87
Instagram	16	3.63
Instagram, WhatsApp	11	2.49
LinkedIn	22	4.99
LinkedIn, Facebook	15	3.40
LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp	17	3.85
WhatsApp	16	3.63
Twitter	13	2.95
LinkedIn, WhatsApp	9	2.04
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp	5	1.13
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+	3	0.68
Facebook, Reddit	6	1.36
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter	6	1.36
Facebook, Google+	8	1.81
WhatsApp, Google+	3	0.68
Facebook, Tumblr, Pinterest	4	0.91
Facebook, Pinterest	3	0.68
Facebook, Twitter	4	0.91
Facebook, Tumblr, Google+	3	0.68
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Flickr, Google+	3	0.68
Facebook, WhatsApp, Google+	4	0.91

<b>Social media networking platforms</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facebook, WhatsApp, Flickr	3	0.68
Instagram, Reddit	3	0.68
Instagram, Tumblr	3	0.68
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp	4	0.91
Tumblr	7	1.59
Twitter, Instagram	3	0.68
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp	3	0.68
LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Google+	3	0.68
LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr	3	0.68
LinkedIn, Pinterest	3	0.68
LinkedIn, Reddit	3	0.68
Total	441	100

#### **4.3.4 SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM EFFECTIVE FOR JOB SEARCHING**

When asked to indicate which social networking platform is most effective for job searching, it emerged that Google+ (17.4%), followed by LinkedIn (17%), and Facebook (13%), were the top three social media platforms the respondents considered most effective for job searching (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.16: Most effective social media platforms for job searching according to the respondents**

<b>Social media platforms</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facebook	68	13.0
Facebook, WhatsApp	7	1.3
Facebook, Google+	7	1.3
Facebook, Instagram	4	0.8
Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp	3	0.6
Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+	2	0.4
Facebook, Pinterest, Google+	2	0.4
Facebook, Tumblr	2	0.4
Facebook, Tumblr, Flickr	2	0.4
Facebook, Tumblr, Pinterest	2	0.4

<b>Social media platforms</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	2	0.4
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp	2	0.4
Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google+	2	0.4
Facebook, WhatsApp	5	1.0
Facebook, WhatsApp, Google+	4	0.8
Flickr	5	1.0
Google+	91	17.4
Instagram	25	4.8
Instagram, Google+	4	0.8
Instagram, WhatsApp	3	0.6
LinkedIn	89	17.0
LinkedIn, Facebook	17	3.3
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp	1	0.2
LinkedIn, Google+	3	0.6
LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google+	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Facebook, Google+	12	2.3
LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Facebook, Pinterest, Google+	13	2.5
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter	4	0.8
LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Google+	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Facebook, WhatsApp, Google+	3	0.6
LinkedIn, Google+	7	1.3
LinkedIn, Instagram, Flickr	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Pinterest	4	0.8
LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+	2	0.4

Social media platforms	Number	Percentage
LinkedIn, Tumblr	5	1.0
LinkedIn, Tumblr, Flickr	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Twitter	3	0.6
LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+	2	0.4
LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp	2	0.4
LinkedIn, WhatsApp	5	1.0
Pinterest	7	1.3
Reddit	2	0.4
Tumblr	20	3.8
Tumblr, Google+	2	0.4
Twitter	25	4.8
Twitter, Google+	3	0.6
Twitter, Tumblr	2	0.4
Twitter, WhatsApp	3	0.6
WhatsApp	29	5.5
	523	

#### 4.4 RELIABILITY TEST

The focus of this section is on the reliability of the research instrument. The internal reliability of the component variables constituting employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, most effective job-search websites, and user-friendliness and popularity among job-search websites were tested using Cronbach's coefficient alpha formula. 'Knowing that an instrument is considered reliable if it precisely reflects the true value, and then minimizes the residual (error) factor. The reliability coefficient is computed by the following formula: Reliability Coefficient = (True variability) / (Total detected variability) (2) That is, if the value of a reliability coefficient is equal to 0.75, this indicates that 75% of the variability in detected values is assumed to describe true individual differences and 25% of the variability is due to random residual (Hajjar 2018). As shown in Table 4.7, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for working employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn) ( $\alpha=0.740$ ), barriers to seeking employment opportunities

through social media ( $\alpha=0.810$ ) were above the recommended value of 0.70, indicating that the instrument reliability is sufficient. Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha for effectiveness of LinkedIn ( $\alpha=0.758$ ), effectiveness of Indeed search websites ( $\alpha=0.712$ ), and effectiveness of Careers 24 search websites ( $\alpha=0.725$ ) were above the recommended value of 0.70. Overall, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all the items collectively was found to be above the accepted value ( $\alpha=0.830$ ), implying acceptable reliability of the research instrument.

**Table 4.17: Reliability test for the research instrument**

Sections	Items	Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha
C	4	Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn)	0.740
D	4	Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media	0.810
E	3	Effectiveness of LinkedIn search websites	0.758
F	3	Effectiveness of Indeed search websites	0.712
G	3	Effectiveness of Careers 24 search websites	0.725
Total	17		0.830

#### 4.5 SECTION ANALYSIS

This section details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the four constructs (employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, effectiveness of LinkedIn search websites, effectiveness of Indeed search websites and effectiveness of Careers 24 search websites). Positive statements (strongly agree and agree) were interpreted (conflated) as agreement, while negative statements (disagree and strongly disagree) were interpreted (conflated) as disagreement. The mean value was used to show the level of agreement and disagreement. A one-sample t-test was applied to determine if there was significant agreement or disagreement with each statement. The average agreement

score was tested against the central score of '3' to determine if it is significantly different from '3'. The results are summarised in the sub-sections below.

#### **4.5.1 EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA (LINKEDIN)**

This section details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn).

As shown in Table 4.8, the mean values measured for all four statements were below 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement that there are employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn).

"Social media (LinkedIn) is a good platform for employment opportunities". The low mean value (Mean = 1.96, SD = 1.181) and the fact that 76.6% of respondents agree that LinkedIn is a good platform for employment opportunities highlights strong overall approval. Only 16.6% disagree or strongly disagree. The  $t(609) = 41.077$ ,  $p < 0.001$  confirms that the perception of LinkedIn as a good employment platform is strongly supported.

"There are several employment opportunities on social media (LinkedIn)". The mean values (Mean = 2.31, SD = 1.262) and with 63.2% agreeing, this statement shows moderate support that there are multiple job opportunities on LinkedIn, though 23.0% disagree or strongly disagree, indicating that some perceive fewer opportunities. The statistical significance is high ( $p < .001$ ).

"The millennials do not take advantage of the social networking sites in job search". A majority of respondents (63.7%) agree that millennials are not fully utilizing social networking sites for job searching, while 23.0% disagree with this. The mean (Mean = 2.31, SD = 1.221) and statistical significance ( $p < .001$ ) support the view that more millennials could benefit from social networking in their job search.

"Social networking platforms are effective in job searching". The mean values (Mean = 2.56, SD = 1.351) with 56.6% of respondents agreeing that social networking platforms are effective in job searching, this reflects moderate confidence in their utility, though 29.9% disagree or strongly disagree. Despite this, the significance level ( $p < .001$ ) shows that overall, respondents find these platforms useful for job search purposes.

Overall, the first statement, “social media (LinkedIn) is a good platform for employment opportunities” (M=1.96; SD=0.1181; t (609) =41.077, p<0.001) reflected the strongest agreement.

**Table 4.18: Respondents’ views on the employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn)**

	Number		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (SD)	t	Df	p-value
Social media (LinkedIn) is a good platform for employment opportunities.	610	1	289 (47.4)	178 (29.2)	42 (6.9)	78 (12.8)	23 (3.8)	1.96 (1.181)	41,077	609	<,001
There are several employment opportunities on social media (LinkedIn)?	610	2	212 (34.8)	173 (28.4)	85 (13.9)	106 (17.4)	34 (5.6)	2.31 (1.262)	45,147	609	<,001
The millennials do not take advantage of the social networking sites in job search?	610	3	199 (32.6)	190 (31.1)	81 (13.3)	115 (18.9)	25 (4.1)	2.31 (1.221)	46,663	609	<,001
Social networking platforms are effective in job searching?	582	4	169 (27.7)	176 (28.9)	83 (13.6)	117 (19.2)	65 (10.7)	2.56 (1.351)	46,830	609	<,001

#### 4.5.2 BARRIERS TO SEEKING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

This section details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media.

As shown in Table 4.9, the mean values measured for all four statements were below 3. This suggests that there is a significant agreement that the highlighted statements in Table 4.9 constitute a barrier to seeking employment opportunities through social media.

"Affordability is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms". A significant majority (68.5%) of respondents agree that affordability is a barrier to using social media for employment searches, while only 18.2% disagree. The low mean (Mean = 2.11, SD = 1.209) and significant p-value (<.001) confirm that affordability is seen as a notable challenge.

"Accessibility is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms". A moderate majority (52.1%) view accessibility as a barrier, while 24.6% disagree. A considerable proportion (23.3%) remain neutral, indicating mixed feelings on whether accessibility poses a

significant obstacle. The p-value (<.001) supports this perception as statistically significant. This is also supported by the mean values (Mean = 2.46, SD = 1.227).

"User-friendliness of social media platforms can be a barrier to seeking employment". A large proportion of respondents (63.6%) agree that the user-friendliness of social media platforms can be a barrier to job searches, while 19.8% disagree. This shows that ease of use is a notable concern for many. The significance level ( $p < .001$ ) further supports this finding. This is reinforced by the mean value (Mean = 2.26, SD = 1.155).

"Vacancies on social networking sites are not taken seriously". Slightly more than half (53.6%) of respondents agree that vacancies posted on social networking sites are not taken seriously, while 29.2% disagree, indicating that a notable portion of the respondents do find these postings credible. The p-value (<.001) highlights that this perception is statistically significant. The mean value measured further confirms the results (Mean = 2.56, SD = 1.288).

Overall, the first statement, "affordability is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms" (M=2.11; SD=1.209;  $t(609) = 43.128$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) reflected the strongest agreement.

**Table 4.19: Respondents views on the barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media**

	Number		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (SD)	T	Df	P-value
Affordability is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms.	610	1	258 (42.3)	160 (26.2)	81 (13.3)	88 (14.4)	23 (3.8)	2.11 (1.209)	43,128	609	<.001
Accessibility is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms.	610	2	185 (30.3)	133 (21.8)	142 (23.3)	126 (20.7)	24 (3.9)	2.46 (1.227)	49,512	609	<.001
User-friendliness of the social media platforms can be a barrier to seeking for employment.	610	3	199 (32.6)	189 (31.0)	101 (16.6)	107 (17.5)	14 (2.3)	2.26 (1.155)	48,287	609	<.001
Vacancies on social networking sites are not taken seriously.	610	4	164 (26.9)	163 (26.7)	105 (17.1)	134 (22.0)	44 (7.2)	2.56 (1.288)	49,069	609	<.001

### **4.5.3 MOST EFFECTIVE JOB-SEARCH WEBSITES**

This section details the scoring pattern of the respondents on the statements measuring the most effective job-search websites.

#### **4.5.3.1 LinkedIn**

As shown in Table 4.10, the mean values measured for all four statements were below 3.

"LinkedIn is considered more effective than Indeed and Careers 24 (when job searching)". A significant majority of respondents (63.6%) agree that LinkedIn is more effective for job searching compared to Indeed and Careers 24, while only 19.6% disagree. The low mean (Mean = 2.24, SD = 1.265) and a highly significant p-value (<.001) indicate strong support for this statement.

"LinkedIn is more user-friendly than Indeed and Careers 24". A substantial 62.5% of respondents believe that LinkedIn is more user-friendly than Indeed and Careers 24, with only 22.4% disagreeing. This finding is also statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ), reinforcing the notion of LinkedIn's usability. The low mean (Mean = 2.30, SD = 1.333) further supports the findings.

"LinkedIn is more popular than Indeed and Careers 24". Here, 46.7% of respondents agree that LinkedIn is more popular than Indeed and Careers 24, while 26.3% disagree. The proportion of neutral responses (27.0%) indicates mixed opinions on this statement, but the significant p-value (< .001) suggests that the perception of LinkedIn's popularity is relevant (Mean = 2.58, SD = 1.239).

In summary, and in terms of effectiveness, 63.6% of respondents find LinkedIn to be more effective for job searching compared to Indeed and Careers 24. Regarding user-friendliness, 62.5% agree that LinkedIn is more user-friendly, showcasing its intuitive interface. In terms of popularity, 46.7% view LinkedIn as more popular, although there's a notable neutral response rate of 27.0%.

Overall, LinkedIn is viewed positively in terms of effectiveness and user-friendliness, while opinions on its popularity are more varied, as indicated by the significant p-values (<.001) across all statements.

**Table 4.10: Respondents views on LinkedIn as most effective job-search websites**

	Number		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (SD)	t	Df	p-value
LinkedIn is considered more effective than Indeed and Careers 24 (when job searching)	610	1	232 (38)	156 (25.6)	103 (16.9)	79 (13)	40 (6.6)	2.24 (1.265)	43,816	609	<.001
LinkedIn is more user friendly than Indeed and Careers24	610	2	236 (38.7)	145 (23.8)	92 (15.1)	85 (13.9)	52 (8.5)	2.30 (1.333)	42,593	609	<.001
LinkedIn is more popular than Indeed and Careers24	610	3	165 (27)	120 (19.7)	165 (27)	126 (20.7)	34 (5.6)	2.58 (1.239)	51,445	609	<.001

#### 4.5.5.2 Indeed

Table 4.11 reflects the responses of Indeed in terms effectiveness, user friendliness, and popularity. "Indeed is considered more effective than LinkedIn and Careers24 when job searching." A total of 33.2% of respondents agree that Indeed is more effective for job searching compared to LinkedIn and Careers24, while 37.5% disagree. The high percentage of neutral responses (29.3%) indicates ambivalence towards the effectiveness of Indeed, with a mean (Mean = 2.95, SD = 1.246) close to 3, suggesting that opinions are mixed. The p-value (<.001) indicates a statistically significant result, but the relatively low percentage of agreement reflects divided opinions.

"Indeed is more popular than LinkedIn and Careers24." Here, 36.1% agree that Indeed is more popular than LinkedIn and Careers24, while 33.6% disagree. Again, a substantial proportion of respondents (30.3%) remained neutral, indicating uncertainty about Indeed's popularity compared to the other platforms. The mean (Mean = 2.80, SD = 1.254) suggests a slightly favourable view of Indeed's popularity, but the mixed responses highlight a lack of consensus. The p-value (<.001) shows that this perception is statistically significant.

"Indeed is more user-friendly than LinkedIn and Careers24." A total of 43.3% of respondents feel that Indeed is more user-friendly compared to LinkedIn and Careers24, while 30.0% disagree. The mean value (Mean = 2.67, SD = 1.303) indicates a slightly positive perception of Indeed's user-friendliness, although the neutral responses (26.7%) suggest that some respondents are unsure. This finding is also statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ).

In summary, and in terms of effectiveness, 33.2% of respondents agree that Indeed is more effective for job searching compared to LinkedIn and Careers24, while 37.5% disagree. The mixed responses indicate varied perceptions. Regarding popularity, 36.1% believe that Indeed is more popular, with a similar level of disagreement (33.6%), resulting in a significant number of neutral opinions (30.3%). Regarding user-friendliness, 43.3% of respondents find Indeed more user-friendly than the other platforms, showing a more favourable view compared to the previous two statements.

Overall, while some respondents see Indeed as user-friendly, the perceptions regarding its effectiveness and popularity are more divided, as indicated by the significant p-values (<.001) across all statements.

**Table 4.11: Respondents views on Indeed as most effective job-search websites**

	Number		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (SD)	T	Df	p-value
Indeed is considered more effective than LinkedIn and Careers24 when job searching	610	1	115 (18.9)	87 (14.3)	179 (29.3)	172 (28.2)	57 (9.3)	2.95 (1.246)	58,460	609	<.001
Indeed is more popular than LinkedIn and Careers24	610	2	147 (24.1)	73 (12)	185 (30.3)	166 (27.2)	39 (6.4)	2.80 (1.254)	55,100	609	<.001
Indeed is more user friendly than LinkedIn and Careers24	610	3	170 (27.9)	94 (15.4)	163 (26.7)	135 (22.1)	48 (7.9)	2.67 (1.303)	50,569	609	<.001

#### 4.5.5.3 Careers24

Table 4.12 reflects the responses of Career24 in terms effectiveness, user friendliness, and popularity. "Careers24 is considered more effective than Indeed and LinkedIn when job searching." A total of 55.0% of respondents agree that Careers24 is more effective for job searching compared to Indeed and LinkedIn, while only 23.9% disagree. The mean value (Mean = 2.43, SD = 1.255) indicates a favourable view of Careers24's effectiveness, suggesting that respondents lean towards believing in its superiority for job searching. The p-value (<.001) indicates that this result is statistically significant.

"Careers24 is more user-friendly than LinkedIn and Indeed." Here, 53.2% agree that Careers24 is more user-friendly than LinkedIn and Indeed, while 22.9% disagree. This reflects a positive

perception of Careers24’s user-friendliness. The mean score (Mean = 2.46, SD = 1.235) is slightly higher than 2.4, indicating a favourable stance among respondents, with a significant p-value (<.001).

"Careers24 is more popular than LinkedIn and Indeed." A total of 45.3% of respondents feel that Careers24 is more popular compared to LinkedIn and Indeed, while 34.8% disagree. This statement garnered a more balanced response, with a notable number of neutral responses (20.0%). The mean of 2.72 (SD=1.341) suggests that while there is a favourable view of Careers24's popularity, it is not as strong as its perceived effectiveness and user-friendliness. The result is statistically significant (p < .001).

In summary, and in terms of effectiveness, 55.0% of respondents agree that Careers24 is more effective for job searching compared to Indeed and LinkedIn, while 23.9% disagree. The positive mean score indicates a strong belief in its effectiveness. Regarding user-friendliness, 53.2% of respondents view Careers24 as more user-friendly than its competitors, with a relatively low disagreement rate (22.9%), reinforcing a favourable perception. In terms of popularity, 45.3% of respondents think Careers24 is more popular than LinkedIn and Indeed, with 34.8% disagreeing. The responses are more balanced in this area, reflected in the higher disagreement percentage and mean score.

Overall, respondents generally perceive Careers24 positively in terms of effectiveness and user-friendliness, while opinions on its popularity are more mixed, as indicated by the significant p-values (<.001) across all statements.

**Table 4.12: Respondents views on Careers24 as most effective job-search websites**

	Number		Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean (SD)	T	Df	p-value
Career24 is considered more effective than Indeed and LinkedIn when job searching	610	1	193 (31.6)	143 (23.4)	128 (21.0)	113 (18.5)	33 (5.4)	2.43 (1.255)	47,748	609	<.001
Careers24 is more user friendly than LinkedIn and Indeed	610	2	179 (29.3)	146 (23.9)	145 (23.8)	105 (17.2)	35 (5.7)	2.46 (1.235)	49,191	609	<.001
Careers24 is more popular than LinkedIn and Indeed	610	3	162 (26.6)	114 (18.7)	122 (20.0)	156 (25.6)	56 (9.2)	2.72 (1.341)	50,133	609	<.001

#### 4.5.5.4 Comparison on the most effective job search platforms

Figure 4.5 illustrates the comparison between the three social media job searches assessed in this study. LinkedIn is viewed as the most effective job searching platform, with a significant majority (63.6%) rating its effectiveness positively. Careers24 also has a notable percentage (55%) who believe in its effectiveness. Indeed, however, lags behind considerably with only 33.2%, indicating it is less favoured compared to the other two platforms in terms of effectiveness. LinkedIn again leads in perceived user-friendliness, with 62.5% of users finding it easy to navigate. Careers24 follows, with over half of the respondents (53.2%) viewing it as user-friendly. Conversely, Indeed falls behind at 36.1%, indicating a perception that it may not be as intuitive or accessible as the other platforms. In terms of popularity, LinkedIn remains the frontrunner with 46.7% of respondents recognizing its popularity. Careers24 closely follows with 45.3%, indicating it is also regarded as popular among users. Indeed, while still popular, has a lower rating (43.3%), suggesting it is slightly less favoured than the other platforms.

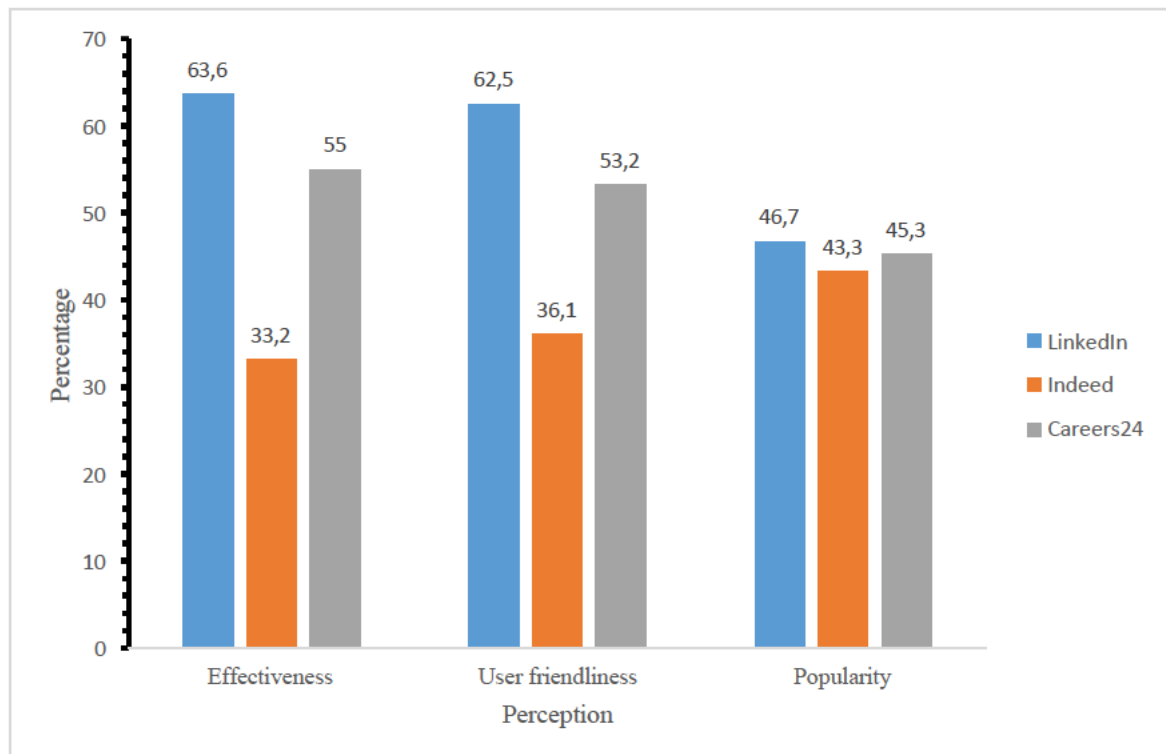


Figure 4.5: Percentage comparison on the most effective job-search websites

#### **4.6 EXAMINING THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES CONSTRUCTS**

The relationship between the respondent's demographic characteristics (gender, age, and racial group, institution, and faculty) and the constructs (employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, most effective job-search websites) was conducted using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent t-test were appropriate. The results are summarised in Table 4.13 below.

In terms of the respondents' gender, the results of the t-test in Table 4.13 reveal that there are no differences in their views on employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn) ( $P=0.825$ ), most effective job-search websites ( $P=0.763$ ), LinkedIn ( $P=0.747$ ), Indeed ( $P=0.152$ ), and Careers24 ( $P=0.9974$ ).

In terms of the age group, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there are no differences in the respondents' views in all LinkedIn, Indeed, and Careers24, most effective job-search websites ( $P>0.05$ ). This suggests that regardless of the age group identified by the respondents, their views were more or less the same. On the contrary, employment opportunities through social media ( $P=0.001$ ), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media ( $P=0.042$ ), and LinkedIn ( $P=0.045$ ) differs significantly. The mean measured for the respondents within 35 and above were consistently lower for employment opportunities ( $M=1.78\pm 0.50$ ) and barrier ( $M=1.98\pm 0.95$ ), and LinkedIn effectiveness ( $M=2.04\pm 0.97$ ) when compared to other age groups. This suggests that the respondents agreed more with statements than other groups.

In terms of race, the results of the ANOVA in Table 4.13 reveal that there are no differences in their views on employment opportunities for all the constructs tested and the demographic variables ( $P>0.05$ ).

In terms of the institution, the results of the ANOVA in Table 4.13 reveal a statistically significant difference in their views on employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn) ( $P<0.001$ ), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media ( $P<0.001$ ), LinkedIn effectiveness ( $P<0.001$ ). The means measured for MUT respondents on employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn) ( $M=1.77\pm 0.70$ ), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media ( $M=2.04\pm 0.80$ ), LinkedIn as most effective

job-search websites ( $M=1.97\pm0.70$ ) were consistently lower among MUT respondents when compared to other institutions. This suggests that MUT students agreed more on employment opportunities available through social media, the barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, most effective job-search websites.

In terms of the faculty, the ANOVA values measured suggest that there are no differences in the respondents' views on all assessed constructs. This suggests that regardless of the faculty identified by the respondents, their views were more or less the same.

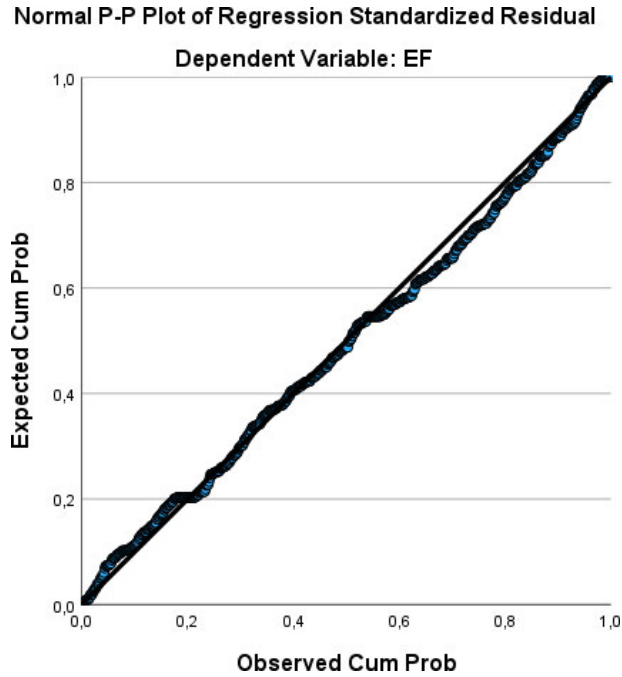
**Table 4.203: Association between constructs and respondents' socio-demographic variables**

Socio-demographic	Employment	Barriers	LinkedIn	Indeed	Careers24
	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD	
Gender					
Male	2.30±0.92	2.38±0.99	2.37±1.05=6	2.87±0.99	2.54±0.99
Female	2.29±0.97	2.31±0.95	2.40±1.04	2.75±1.03	2.54±1.07
Sig.	0.918	0.356	0.747	0.152	0.994
Age group					
<25	2.36±0.93	2.35±1.02	2.34±1.07	2.81±1.04	2.53±1.10
25 – 28	2.35±0.94	2.44±0.89	2.42±1.03	2.79±0.96	2.57±0.88
29 – 34	2.23±1.03	2.38±0.96	2.51±1.05	2.82±1.00	2.48±1.04
35 and above	1.78 ±0.59	1.98±0.95	2.04±0.97	2.78±1.09	2.54±1.11
Sig.	0.001	0.042	0.073	0.992	0.907
Race					
African	2.26±0.95	2.36±0.96	2.42±1.08	2.86±1.01	2.63±1.07
Coloured	2.34±0.86	2.37±0.92	2.23±0.92	2.76±1.01	2.51±0.96
Indian	2.31±0.99	2.36±1.02	2.43±1.10	2.76±1.00	2.40±1.03
White	2.32±0.91	2.27±1.09	2.35±1.09	2.69±1.06	2.48±0.96
Other	1.58±0.77	1.89±0.72	1.93±0.78	3.22±1.07	2.56±1.05
Sig.	0.217	0.640	0.277	0.474	0.307
Institutions					
MUT	1.77±0.70	2.04±0.80	1.97±0.70	2.88±0.97	2.41±0.77
DUT	2.30±0.76	2.52±0.71	2.21±0.84	2.73±0.92	2.58±0.86
UKZN	2.45±1.05	2.33±1.14	2.62±1.21	2.84±1.08	2.55±1.19
Sig	0.000***	0.000***	0.000***	0.293	0.364
Qualification					
Under	2.55±0.67	2.58±0.67	2.30±0.93	2.91±1.01	2.28±0.95
Degree	2.50±0.75	2.62±0.71	2.32±1.00	2.77±0.97	2.57±0.99
Postgraduate	2.60±0.88	2.76±0.66	2.58±1.15	2.91±1.02	2.66±1.09
Sig.	0.460	0.0075**	0.018***	0.192	0.017***
Faculty					

Socio-demographic	Employment	Barriers	LinkedIn	Indeed	Careers24
	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD	M±SD	
Management Sciences	2.57±0.97	2.67±0.82	2.48±1.01	2.71±0.96	2.75±1.10
Arts and Design	2.74±0.92	2.62±0.80	2.43±0.96	2.60±1.10	2.40±1.02
Engineering and Built Environment	2.38±0.80	2.66±0.77	2.40±1.17	2.79±1.05	2.50±1.05
Health Sciences	2.53±0.67	2.69±0.62	2.35±0.95	2.94±0.89	2.49±0.93
Accounting and IT	2.54±0.65	2.58±0.58	2.35±1.03	2.81±0.99	2.60±0.99
Applied Sciences	2.55±0.80	2.71±0.56	2.29±1.02	2.93±1.08	2.47±1.05
Others	2.70±0.82	2.86±0.35	2.64±1.02	2.96±0.92	2.35±1.14
Sig.	0.331	0.631	0.788	0.391	0.352

#### 4.7 EXAMINING THE PREDICTORS OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA (USING MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS)

Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictors' employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn). The predictors measured were barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, most effective job-search websites, and user-friendliness and popularity among job-search websites. Normality was also assessed through descriptive analysis. The resulting skewness values fell within the acceptable range of +1 to -1, as per Al-Qeisi (2009: 243), indicating that no data transformation was necessary. Additionally, residual analysis was performed using a normal P-P plot to examine the regression standardized residuals (Pallant 2016: 277). The P-P plot in Figure 4.6 demonstrated sufficient normality, with standardized predicted values and standardized residuals aligning in a straight line, suggesting no significant deviations from normality. Linearity and homoscedasticity were evaluated by inspecting the residual scatter plot. The plot showed a linear distribution, indicating a linear relationship between employment opportunities and the independent variables, thus confirming the assumption of linearity (Saunders *et al.* 2016:549). Furthermore, the consistent pattern in the residuals verified the assumption of homoscedasticity, meaning the variances between the independent and dependent variables remained constant (Everitt & Skrondal 2010: 458).



**Figure 4.6: Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardised Residual**

The final assumption of collinearity or multicollinearity, which requires that no significant correlations exist between two or more independent variables, was examined. As Saunders *et al.* (2016: 549) note, a general guideline suggests that high correlations, typically 0.90 or greater, indicate the presence of collinearity. Upon checking the correlations, no bivariate relationships displayed such high values. According to Pallant (2016: 276) and Saunders *et al.* (2016: 549), collinearity can also be identified by reviewing tolerance coefficients and variance inflation factor (VIF) values. The rule of thumb is that a tolerance coefficient below 0.10 signals collinearity, while a VIF value above 10.0 points to multicollinearity. Table 4.14 presents the collinearity statistics for the sample. The results in Table 6-6 show that all tolerance coefficients exceeded the 0.10 threshold, and all VIF values were below 10.0. Consequently, none of the independent variables violated the multicollinearity assumption, allowing them to be retained in the regression model. After confirming these assumptions, the hypotheses formulated in Chapter One were tested using inferential methods, including multiple regression analysis.

**Table 4.14: Tolerance and VIF Distribution of Independent Variables**

	Collinearity Statistics <sup>a</sup>	
	Tolerance	VIF

(Constant)		
Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media	,892	1,121
Most effective job-search websites	,816	1,226
User-friendliness and popularity among job-search websites	,910	1,099
a. Dependent Variable: Employment opportunities		

As shown in Table 4.15, the regression coefficient suggests that there is a strong causal relationship in the model, and the relationship is statistically significant ( $r=0.691$ ;  $p<0.001$ ). It was found that the beta coefficients all for social media platforms such as LinkedIn ( $\beta = 0.348$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), ( $\beta = 0.272$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), and ( $\beta = 0.380$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) were all positive and significant predictors of employment opportunities. Overall, the beta coefficients LinkedIn the strongest predictors of employment opportunities through social media. The three platforms' accounts for 47.8% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.478$ ).

**Table 4.15: Perceived predictors of employment opportunities through social media**

IV	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	df1; df2	p-value	B (regression coefficient)	T	p-value	DV
LinkedIn	0.691	0.478	184.763	3; 609	.001	,348	11,197	.001	Employment opportunities through social media
Indeed						,272	8,357	.001	
Careers24						,380	12,356	.001	

#### 4.8 FACTOR ANALYSIS AND VALIDATION OF THE RESEARCH CONSTRUCTS

Factor analysis was performed to validate the constructs (employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, most effective job-search websites, and user-friendliness and popularity among job-search websites) using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Watkins (2018: 220) states that factor analysis can help identify common factors that explain the order and structure among measured variables. EFA analysis made use of the principal component analysis (PCA) extraction method and varimax rotation was set as the measuring parameters. Factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were retained. As explained by Shrestha (2021: 7), the condition for EFA is that the Kaiser-Meyer value should exceed the value of 0.5 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity must be statistically significant. The data in Table 4.16 shows that the Kaiser-Meyer value for all constructs exceeded the recommended values while

Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant for the constructs. This, therefore, supports the suitability of the correlation matrix.

**Table 4.16: KMO and Bartlett's Test for the constructs**

<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,808
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3333,239
	Df	136
	Sig.	<,001

Using the eigenvalues greater than one, the PCA for all 17 items, the rotated component revealed five factors explaining 63.933% of the total variance. The practical criterion for extracting components usually involves selecting those with eigenvalues greater than 1. In this case, the first five components meet this criterion. Together, these three factors explain nearly 65% of the total variance in the dataset, which is typically regarded as satisfactory in social science research for capturing the underlying structure of the data.

**Table 4.17: Factor coefficient on the employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn)**

Component	<b>Total Variance Explained</b>								
	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4,742	27,893	27,893	4,742	27,893	27,893	2,580	15,175	15,175
2	1,968	11,575	39,468	1,968	11,575	39,468	2,258	13,282	28,457
3	1,557	9,160	48,628	1,557	9,160	48,628	2,079	12,230	40,686
4	1,498	8,815	57,443	1,498	8,815	57,443	1,982	11,662	52,348
5	1,103	6,490	63,933	1,103	6,490	63,933	1,969	11,585	63,933
6	,951	5,596	69,529						
7	,661	3,887	73,416						
8	,650	3,826	77,242						
9	,560	3,297	80,538						
10	,550	3,234	83,772						
11	,496	2,920	86,692						
12	,463	2,726	89,417						
13	,444	2,609	92,026						

14	,391	2,303	94,329
15	,364	2,139	96,468
16	,309	1,817	98,285
17	,291	1,715	100,000

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Tables 4.17 and Table 4.18 further show the component matrix of the extracted factor. In this analysis, a varimax rotation with Kaiser normalisation was applied to improve the interpretability of the factors.

**Table 4.18: Rotated Component Matrix**

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
E1		,643			
E2		,777			
E3		,677			
E4		,742			
B1	,770				
B2	,813				
B3	,765				
B4	,718				
EF1			,836		
F1			,835		
F2			,563		
EF2				,778	
F4				,781	
F3				,698	
EF3					,831
F5					,809
F6					,722

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The results of a factor analysis, which examines the underlying constructs measured by the different groups of items. Factor 1 loaded into Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn). This factor (E1-E4) reflects how social media, specifically LinkedIn, provides employment opportunities. The variance extracted indicates that this factor explains 15.175%

of the total variance in the data, and the Cronbach's alpha of 0.740 suggests acceptable reliability, showing consistent responses across the items in this factor.

Factor 2: Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media. This factor (B1-B4) identifies barriers individuals face when seeking jobs through social media platforms. The variance extracted is 13.282%, and the high Cronbach's alpha (0.810) indicates good internal consistency, suggesting that the items reliably measure the concept of barriers in social media job searches.

Factor 3: Effectiveness of LinkedIn search websites. This factor (EF1, F1, F2) captures the perceived effectiveness of LinkedIn as a job search platform. With 12.230% of the variance explained and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.758, the items in this factor are moderately reliable in measuring LinkedIn's effectiveness.

Factor 4: Effectiveness of Indeed search websites. This factor (EF2, F3, F4) assesses the effectiveness of Indeed as a job search website. It explains 11.662% of the total variance, and the Cronbach's alpha of 0.712 indicates acceptable reliability.

Factor 5: Effectiveness of Careers 24 search websites. This factor (EF3, F5, F6) evaluates the effectiveness of Careers 24 as a job search platform. With a variance extracted of 11.585% and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.725, this factor is considered sufficiently reliable for measuring the effectiveness of Careers 24.

In summary, the above factors explain a meaningful portion of the variance in the data, and the Cronbach's alpha values for all factors are within an acceptable range, indicating that the items used to measure each construct are internally consistent. The highest reliability is found in Factor 2 (Barriers to seeking employment opportunities), while the other factors also show moderate to good reliability.

**Table 4.19: Underlying constructs measured by the different groups of items**

Construct	Label	Items included	Number of items	Variance extracted	Cronbach's alpha
Factor1	Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn)	E1-E4	4	15,175	.740

Factor 2	Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media	B1-B4	4	13,282	.810
Factor3	Effectiveness of LinkedIn search websites	EF1, F1,F2	3	12,230	.758
Factor 4	Effectiveness of Indeed search websites	EF2,F4,F3,	3	11,662	.712
Factor 5	Effectiveness of Careers 24 search websites	EF3,F5,F6	3	11,585	0.725

Notes: E1-E4= Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), B1-B4= Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, EF1, F1, F2= Effectiveness of LinkedIn, EF2, F4, F3=Effectiveness of Indeed, EF3, F5, F6=Effectiveness of careers

#### 4.8.3 VALIDATION OF THE EXTRACTED CONSTRUCTS

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was computed to validate the EFA analysis of the above extracted constructs. The reliability of the five Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, Effectiveness of LinkedIn, Effectiveness of Indeed, Effectiveness of careers 24) was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The data indicate that the emerged constructs have inadequate reliability. The validity of the dimensions was assessed using both convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity was assessed using the average variance extracted (AVE). As per the recommendation made by Hair *et al.* (2010), standardised factor loading with a value of 0.50 or higher provides evidence of convergent validity. The data in Table 4.17 indicates that only employment opportunities through social media have adequate convergent validity. Discriminant validity was assessed using maximum shared square variance (MSV). Based on the rule of thumb, the AVE value should be greater than the MSV (Mimouni-Chaabane and Volle, 2010:34). The data in Table 4.17 show that the AVE values for the three factors were higher than the measured MSV values, which suggests discriminant validity.

Composite Reliability (CR) measures the internal consistency of the constructs. Values above 0.7 indicate acceptable reliability. The data suggests that all constructs show good reliability:

BA (0.775), LinkedIn (0.762), Careers (0.735), Indeed (0.712), and Employment (0.745), indicating consistent responses within each construct.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) measures the amount of variance captured by the construct relative to the variance due to measurement error. Values above 0.5 are preferred but values close to 0.5 are still acceptable. LinkedIn (0.517) and Careers (0.485) are close to the 0.5 threshold, indicating decent convergent validity. BA (0.466), Indeed (0.452), and Employment (0.427) are slightly below 0.5 but still reasonable in social sciences.

Maximum Shared Variance (MSV) measures the extent of variance shared between constructs. According to Hair *et al.* (2014), MSV refers to “the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs by empirical standards”. For discriminant validity to be satisfactory, MSV should be less than AVE for each construct. The data suggests that all constructs meet this criterion, as their MSV values are lower than their respective AVE values, indicating good discriminant validity.

MaxR(H) (Maximum Reliability H) is another measure of reliability that considers the highest level of reliability a construct can achieve. The values for MaxR(H) are slightly higher than CR, confirming the constructs have good reliability. MaxR(H) values are BA (0.787), LinkedIn (0.768), Careers (0.765), Indeed (0.713), and Employment (0.762).

Inter-Construct Correlations (BA, LinkedIn, Careers, Indeed, Employment) suggests that BA has the strongest correlation with Employment (0.526), indicating a moderate relationship between perceived barriers and employment outcomes. LinkedIn has a moderate correlation with Employment (0.520), showing that LinkedIn usage is moderately related to employment opportunities. Careers has relatively weak correlations with the other constructs, with the highest correlation being with LinkedIn (0.096), indicating that Careers is somewhat independent of the other variables. Indeed has moderate correlations with Employment (0.371) and LinkedIn (0.419), suggesting that Indeed is moderately related to both LinkedIn and employment outcomes.

Overall, the constructs display good internal consistency (CR values), reasonable convergent validity (AVE values close to 0.5), and satisfactory discriminant validity (MSV < AVE). The relationships between constructs indicate moderate associations, particularly between barriers

and employment, and LinkedIn and employment, reflecting the interdependence of these factors in the context of job searching.

**Table 4.20: Showing the reliability, discriminant and convergent validity of the extracted constructs**

	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	BA	Lindkin	Careers	Indeed	E
<b>BA</b>	0,775	0,466	0,277	0,787	<b>0,682</b>				
<b>LinkedIn</b>	0,762	0,517	0,270	0,768	0,407	<b>0,719</b>			
<b>Careers</b>	0,735	0,485	0,158	0,765	0,291	0,096	<b>0,696</b>		
<b>Indeed</b>	0,712	0,452	0,262	0,713	0,512	0,419	0,398	<b>0,672</b>	
<b>E</b>	0,745	0,427	0,277	0,762	0,526	0,520	0,286	0,371	<b>0,653</b>

Notes: = Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn), BA= Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, LinkedIn= Effectiveness of LinkedIn, Indeed=Effectiveness of Indeed, Careers=Effectiveness of careers 24

### 3.2 Fitness of the Model

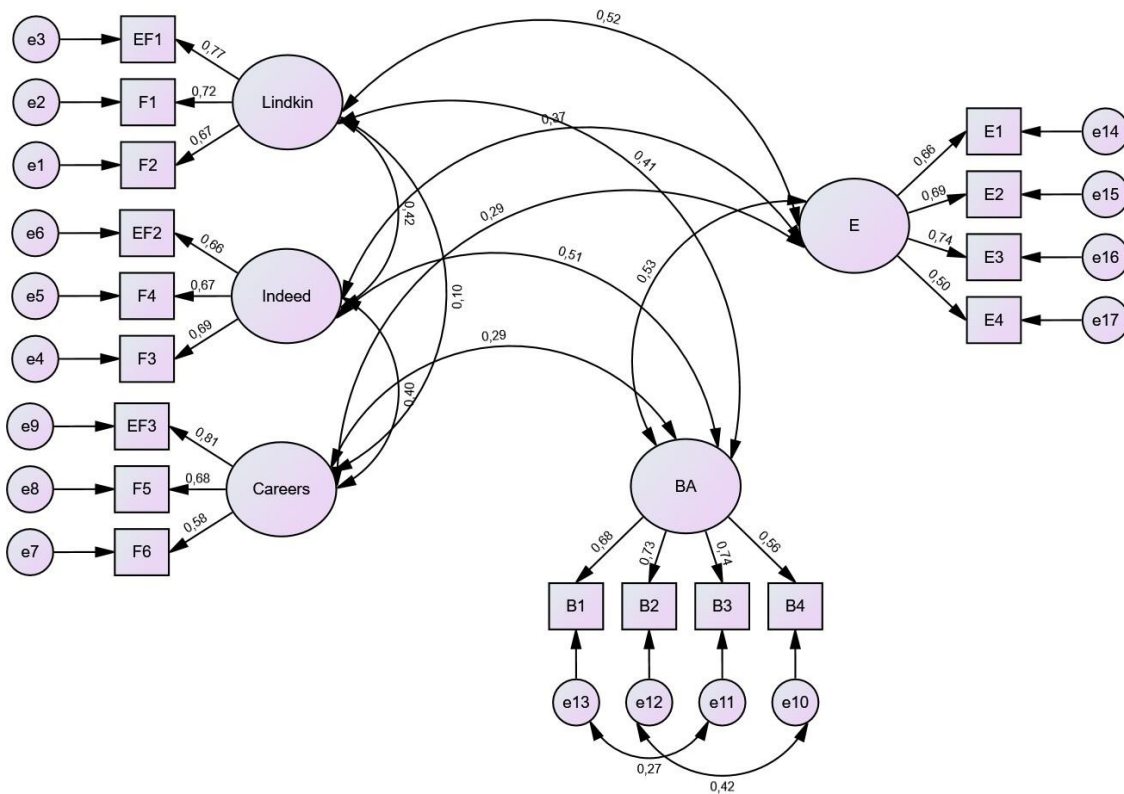
The overall fit of the model was assessed by multiple fit criteria given in Table 4. The goodness of fitness indices are as follows: chi-square = 330.768, df = 107,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 3.091$ , CFI = 0.931, GFI=0.935, IFI = 0.931, TLI=0.912, RMSEA = 0.059. The fit indices indicate that the model fits the data well. The  $\chi^2/df$  value is well below the threshold of 5, both the IFI and CFI exceed 0.9, indicating good comparative and incremental fit, and the RMSEA is below 0.08, suggesting an acceptable level of error in the model's approximation In line with Hu and Bentler (1999), these indices collectively suggest that the model is a good fit for the data.

The model's overall fit was evaluated using several fit criteria, as presented in Table 5.33. The goodness-of-fit indices are as follows: chi-square = 330.768, df = 107,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 3.091$ , CFI = 0.931, GFI=0.935, IFI = 0.931, TLI=0.912, RMSEA = 0.059. These results indicate that the model fits the data well. The  $\chi^2/df$  value is well within the acceptable limit of 5, while both the IFI and CFI exceed 0.9, demonstrating good comparative and incremental fit. Additionally, the RMSEA is below 0.08, reflecting an acceptable level of error in the model's approximation. According to Hu and Bentler (1999), these indices together suggest that the model provides a good fit for the data, as further illustrated in Figure 5.5.

**Table 4.21: Model fitness indices for the MM**

Fit Indices	Fit values	Criteria
-------------	------------	----------

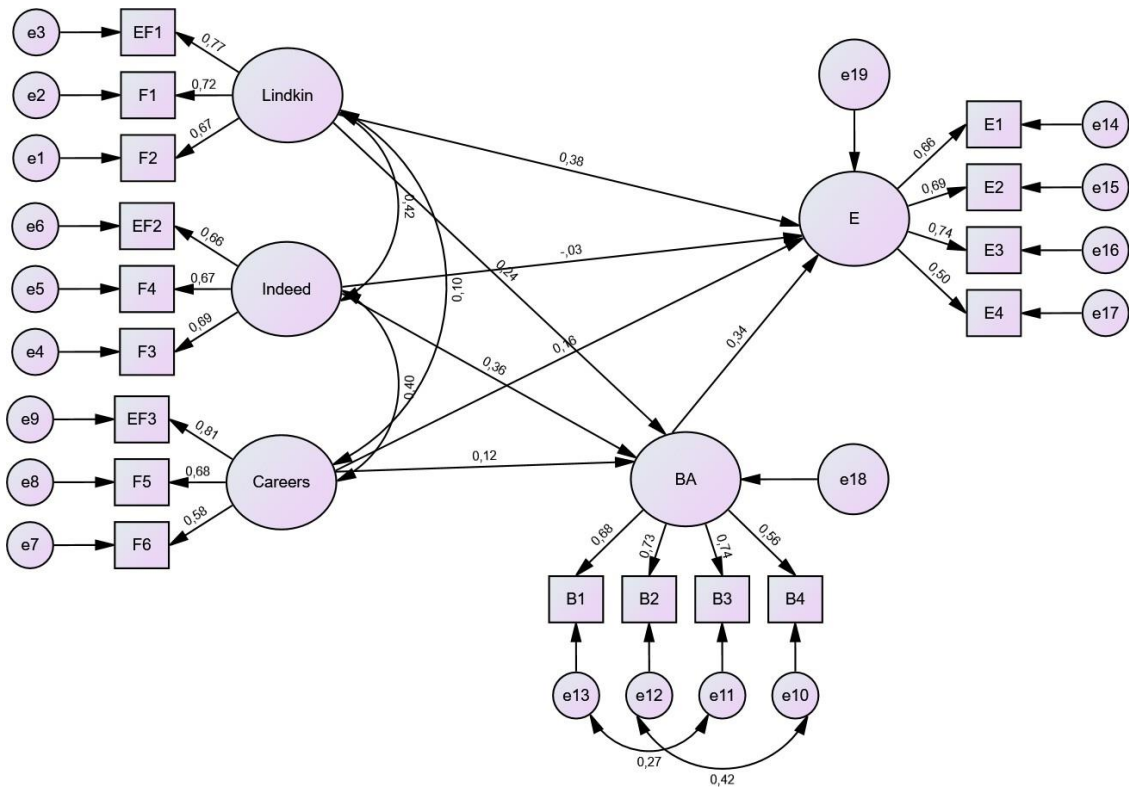
$\chi^2 / df$ (p-value)	3.091(<.001)	<.05
GFI	0.935	>.9
IFI	0.931	>.9
CFI	0.931	>.9
TLI	0.912	>.9
RMSEA	0.059	<.08



**Figure 4.7: Fitness of the model**

#### 4.4 Structural Equation Model (Hypotheses Testing)

The MM model was then converted into a path model that shows the relationship between the latent variables. An SEM was applied to test all the hypothesized relationships that exist among the latent variables. The resulting SEM with estimated standardized relationships is given in Figure 1. The goodness of fitness indices are as follows: chi-square =  $\chi^2 = 560.342$ ,  $df = 123$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 4.556$ , GFI=0.956, CFI = 0.973, TLI=0.967, IFI = 0.974, RMSEA = 0.050, which suggests that the measurement model is acceptable. It was thus concluded that the model was consistent with real data.



**Figure 4.8: Finalised SEM model**

Note:  $\chi^2 = 330, 768$ ,  $df = 107$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\chi^2 / df = 3.091$ ,  $GFI=0.935$ ,  $CFI = 0.931$ ,  $TLI=0.912$ ,  $IFI = 0.931$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.059$

The standardized coefficient of 0.204 suggests a between LinkedIn and perceived barriers, meaning that as LinkedIn use increases, barriers to seeking employment reduces. The CR value of 3.975, which is greater than the critical value for significance, and the P-value of 0.001 (which is less than the conventional alpha level of 0.05), indicate that this relationship is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.204$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis H1 is supported that LinkedIn effectiveness has a significant positive effect on perceived barriers.

Likewise, the standardized coefficient of 0.361 indicates a positive relationship between Indeed use and a reduction in perceived barriers. The CR value of 4.831 and the P-value of 0.001 confirm that this effect is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.361$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H2 is supported that Indeed significantly reduces barriers to employment.

The standardized coefficient of 0.124 indicates a strong positive but smaller effect is observed between Careers24 use and barriers. The CR value of 2.151 the P-value of 0.031 confirm that this effect is statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.124$ ;  $P = 0.031$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H3 is supported—Careers24 has a significant, albeit weaker, effect on reducing employment barriers.

Similarly, the standardized coefficient of 0.333 indicates a positive effect is seen, meaning that as barriers decrease, employment opportunities increase. The CR value of 4.867 suggests that this effect is statistically significant. ( $\beta = 0.338$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H4 is accepted that barriers significantly influence employment outcomes.

In contrast, the negative standardized coefficient of -0.026 suggests no meaningful effect of Indeed on employment opportunities. The CR value of -0.368 suggests that this effect is not statistically significant. This non-significant relationship means that Indeed is not associated with employment opportunities ( $\beta = -0.026$ ;  $P = 0.713$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H5 is rejected as Indeed does not significantly impact employment outcomes.

On the other hand, the standardized coefficient of 0.378 indicates LinkedIn has a strong positive effect on employment, suggesting that its use significantly enhances employment outcomes. The CR value of 6.046 suggests that this effect is statistically significant. ( $\beta = 0.378$ ;  $P < 0.001$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H6 is accepted that LinkedIn significantly improves employment opportunities.

Equally, the standardized coefficient of 0.162 indicates a positive relationship is observed between Careers24 use and employment outcomes. The CR value of 2.921 suggests that this effect is statistically significant. ( $\beta = 0.162$ ;  $P = 0.003$ ). Thus, Hypothesis H7 is accepted that Careers24 has a significant positive effect on employment opportunities.

Overall, the analyses reveal that LinkedIn, Indeed, and Careers24 significantly reduce barriers to seeking employment, with Indeed showing the strongest impact. Reduced barriers lead to improved employment outcomes (H4). While LinkedIn and Careers24 positively influence employment opportunities, Indeed does not have a significant effect on employment outcomes (H5). The strongest predictors of employment opportunities through social media is LinkedIn.

## **SECTION B: QUALITATIVE RESULTS**

As indicated in the previous chapter, interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used in the analysis of qualitative data. After data collection, two sets of qualitative data were obtained. Data was collected from seven recruitment agencies focusing on their own experiences with the phenomenon under study. Four interviews were also conducted with representatives from the Department of Public Services and Administration (DPSA). Therefore, this section is comprised of two sub-sections that highlight the perspectives and experiences of recruitment agencies and the DPSA, respectively.

### **4.9 RECRUITMENT AGENCIES**

Analysis of the interview data provided by recruitment agencies led to the identification of six major themes/issues, concerning millennials' use of social networking sites (SNSs) to find employment opportunities. These are:

#### **4.9.1 SNSs ARE APPROPRIATE FOR ADVERTISING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO MILLENNIALS**

The literature reviewed in the second chapter of this thesis highlighted numerous times that millennials are internet and social media natives. The results obtained in this study were able to substantiate this. One of the participants indicated that, *“most millennials spend most of their time on SNSs. That is how they come across opportunities”*. Another stated that, *“social media is where millennials mainly spend their time”*. Therefore, to a great extent, there was consensus among respondents on the appropriateness of SNSs for advertising employment opportunities to millennials. Apart from the notion that millennials spend most of their time on the internet, there was also a strong argument that SNSs have gained prominence; hence, they are effective. One respondent cited that, *“social networking sites are lately the only way to find a new position. If you are not active on them, you will battle to find a role”*. Another indicated that, *“social media platforms are effective, for example, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn”*. There was only the exception of one participant, who was of the opinion that SNSs are not effective for advertising employment opportunities to millennials, citing that, *“they use social media for their own entertainment, gossip and latest trends. Millennials do not like to go through job posts”*.

#### **4.9.2 ORGANISATIONS ADVERTISE JOBS ON SNSs**

In line with arguments in support of the use of SNSs to advertise employment opportunities to millennials, recruitment agencies also revealed that this is a recruitment method that most organisations utilise. *“Most employment opportunities are being advertised on social networking sites,”* were the words of one recruiter, based on experience in the field. Another said, *“most organisations, be it directly or through third parties like myself utilise social networking sites. Most opportunities are promoted through them”*. Furthermore, results revealed that the opportunities that are available on SNSs are not just for specific kinds of jobs, but they cover all kinds of roles and employment levels. To this effect, a participant reported that, *“most organisations and agencies are using SNSs, and opportunities will vary from graduate to senior level”*.

Even though the results revealed that organisations make use of SNSs to advertise vacancies, there were also resounding sentiments that South African organisations need to fully maximise their use of social media for recruitment purposes. One of the issues highlighted herein is that millennials prefer certain sites while employers advertise on others. In addition, one participant indicated that, *“most organisations are not taking advantage of the opportunities to advertise. Apart from LinkedIn, there are sites where millennials spend most of their time”*. The other issue that was identified is that the country is lagging behind, as there are many organisations do not make use of SNSs entirely. *“South Africa relies on the old system of advertising jobs,”* was the argument of one recruitment agent. Another said, *“organisations do not make use of those sites. The industry has not adopted or evolved in recruitment”*. The final issue that was noted is that organisations need to offer the right incentives to millennials to motivate them to apply for the vacancies. This is why one participant cited that, *“if you want millennials to get jobs through SNSs, you as an employer can attract them using competitive salaries, building trust, offering flexibility, remote work and supporting diversity”*. There is therefore a need for organisations in South Africa to develop strategies that can allow them to not just maximise the benefits of using SNSs for recruitment purposes but also to reach target audiences.

#### **4.9.3 LINKEDIN IS THE MOST USED SNS FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

The data was gathered from the participants who work as recruitment agencies showed unanimous agreement that LinkedIn is the most used SNS for job recruitment. The data revealed that millennials who wish to access job advertisements and increase their prospects of finding employment need to be on LinkedIn. To this effect, one participant recommended that,

*“most organisations and agencies are very active on LinkedIn. They need to be active on LinkedIn, connect with influencers and the organisations where they [would] like to work. They should spend at least an hour a day on LinkedIn”*. LinkedIn thus provides a platform where millennials can network in a space that is solely premised on employment and career development. This is why another participant said, *“Facebook and Instagram are generally not the source, even though that is where you find millennials. I regularly have to remind them about LinkedIn”*. This further cements an argument in the section above that there is an incongruence between where millennials spend their time and where they can access employment opportunities. Yet another participant also recommended that millennials go *“straight to LinkedIn because it is a job search portal”*.

Despite the reputation of LinkedIn as *“the best and most utilised by organisations”* and as the *“most advanced social networking site for job search”* as was alluded to by one participant, employment opportunities are still available through other social networking sites. Facebook is one of the prominent sites for job advertisements and this was revealed by the results. A participant indicated that, *“also Facebook; it is just a matter of going through the search log”*. The results further revealed that, among other sites, vacancies are posted on Instagram, Twitter, Job Indeed, Pnet, Indeed, Google Careers and Career Junction. What the researcher was able to identify during the process of conducting IPA is that different job opportunities are posted on different SNSs. Concerning this, one participant said, *“there is however a gap when it comes to artisans. For example, that is not advertised on LinkedIn, but will be advertised through job sites like Pnet and Career Junction”*. Another indicated in the same vein that, *“but different employment opportunities are being advertised on SNSs. For example, LinkedIn advertises professional roles, while Facebook may opt for less skilled professionals to reach a different group of candidates”*. The consensus from the results was therefore that, while LinkedIn is the most popular and most effective SNS for advertising and seeking employment opportunities, it focuses mainly on professional roles. As such blue-collar jobs are thus available on other sites. This does not mean however that professional positions are not advertised on sites other than LinkedIn.

#### **4.9.4 MILLENNIALS LACK JOB SEEKING SKILLS**

Through the data that was provided by the respondents, the researcher was also able to identify challenges/barriers that inhibit millennials from attaining employment opportunities. The biggest of which is that they lack job-seeking skills. This has emerged as a multi-faceted

challenge that needs to be addressed. One of the issues that was raised is that millennials do not read; this is, to a greater or lesser extent, a proven issue in literature. In this instance, millennials do not read job requirements and just apply for vacancies randomly. Concerning this, one participant said, *“they do not read the requirements and they are not a match. They must read what is required from that opportunity”* On the same issue, such applicants tend to become what recruiters call serial job seekers, which ends up becoming a disadvantage to them. This was identified through the words of one participant who explained that *“we block serial job seekers. Those are people who apply for jobs they are not suited for. But one day there might be a job they are suited for and they cannot apply”*. It is thus evident that millennials’ inability to commit to reading places them at a disadvantage in the job market.

On a related note, another issue that was identified is that millennials are struggling to acquire employment because educational curriculums do not intentionally focus on equipping students with job-seeking skills. One participant cited this by saying, *“students do not get taught how to find a job”*. The resulting effect of this is that millennials do not know how to market themselves effectively by showing how they qualify for advertised positions. This is why another participant said, *“they must look at their CV and bring out their skills or relevant experience. They need to match their CV to the job requirements”*. On the same trajectory, it was also identified that millennials lack professionalism when communicating with potential employers. The effect of SNSs on language among millennials is also another notable issue that has been proven through research. Again, this is disadvantaging them in the labour market as they are regarded as lacking professional etiquette. One participant alluded to this and said, *“basic etiquette and manners. I know there is a lot of abbreviated speech. There is[a] need for professionalism. Millennials need to understand that from the time they apply, professionalism does pay off”*.

Another issue that was revealed by the results is that millennials do not know or are not aware of the SNSs where they can find job advertisements. While they spend much of their time active on the internet, they do not know exactly where to go if they are looking for employment. One participant indicated that *“they are not aware of sites where opportunities are available”*. Incumbent on this issue is the notion that there are organisations that tend to use their own websites, social media pages or job portals to post vacancies. Millennials seemingly lack adequate knowledge on these as well. Hence the comment by a participant that *“some organisations have their own pages or sites like Facebook”*.

The final issue that was identified from the interviews with recruitment agencies is that even when millennials are aware of job-posting SNSs, they lack the proper attitude of job seekers. One participant indicated that *“they lack dedication to source platforms,”* while another indicated that *“they get despondent if they do not receive any feedback. I think they get bored”*. Millennials thus lack the perseverance that is required when job seeking.

#### **4.9.5 LACK OF ACCESS TO SNSs**

South Africa is a country that is riddled with socio-economic disparities due to its separatist nature. As a result, there are many youths who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus, it was not a surprise to discover during data analysis that one of the major reasons why millennials are unable to apply for employment opportunities that are posted on SNSs is because of a lack of access. This issue emerged as twofold. On one end, it was determined that millennials do not have adequate resources. Thus, one participant indicated that, *“not all millennials have data to access SNSs”*. This sentiment was echoed by another participant, who said that the *“cost of data”* was a problem. On the other hand, it was also determined that some millennials also lack the necessary skills to be able to competently navigate social media. To this effect, one participant explained that *“due to lack of access for less sophisticated job seekers”*, they are unable to apply for jobs. Another participant cited that *“millennials really need to network with other job seekers and gain insight on how these sites operate”*. It was thus evident that millennials’ lack of access to SNSs where they can discover employment opportunities is due to a lack of resources like data, which in turn leaves them without the skills they need to participate competently on those sites.

#### **4.9.6 LACK OF TRUST IN ADVERTISED OFFERS**

The internet is full of scams and information that is meant to deceive others. Apart from employment opportunities, it is a general rule of thumb not to trust information that is found on SNSs or the internet in general. This is the reason why millennials were found to lack trust in job advertisements on SNSs. One participant explained that *“they sometimes question the validity of the offers on hand. They much prefer referrals”*. Another participant added that *“there are organisations that advertise false jobs; there are scams. All organisations need to have social media [sites] that are verified. This will show millennials that it is legitimate”*.

#### **4.10 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION (DPSA)**

The data gathered from DPSA concurred with the themes that emerged from the data that was gathered from recruiters. It also alluded to the importance of SNSs, the challenges facing millennials when seeking employment, as well as the dominance of LinkedIn as the leading job seeking site. Apart from these, there are other themes that emerged from the data, which are covered in this section.

##### **4.10.1 GOVERNMENT/PUBLIC SERVICE VACANCIES ARE NOT POSTED ON SNSs**

Interviews conducted with representatives from DPSA revealed most importantly that government or public service employment opportunities are not found on SNSs. They are rather posted on designated government entities. Firstly, public service vacancies are posted on departmental websites. One participant cited that, *“most of our vacancies are advertised on our official government sites”*. A second participant indicated that, *“we advertise jobs through the DPSA website and not through third party websites”*. On this issue, the responses of the participants all boiled down to the same answer. Another participant echoed the same thing and indicated that, *“we only advertise vacancies through our website”*.

Apart from websites, it was also identified that there are government circulars that are also used to advertise employment opportunities. These are used in conjunction with government websites. Hence the response that, *“we do advertise our vacancies. Not through social networking sites, but through government vacancy circulars”*. On the same issue, another participant added that *“most of the employment opportunities are advertised through the public service circular compiled weekly by the Department of Public Service and Administration”*.

##### **4.10.2 DPSA IS RELUCTANT TO USE SNSs BECAUSE THEY ARE INFILTRATED WITH UNRELIABLE INFORMATION**

Having discovered that DPSA, which is part of the South African government, was not making use of SNSs to advertise employment opportunities, it became necessary to find out why. Results were thus able to provide an answer, which is that they are discouraged from using SNSs because of the prevalence of false information. One employee who participated in the study indicated that, *“we want to go to SNSs, but we are still trying to sort out the minimisation of scams”*. Another employee who was interviewed said that *“social media platforms are unreliable and there is poor representation of candidates”*. At some point during the interviews

that were conducted with DPSA employees, they all alluded to the lack of reliable information on SNSs and how this makes the recruitment process harder to complete. For that reason, a participant explained that *“on SNSs there is a high volume of unqualified applicants, so it is very time consuming”*.

#### **4.10.3 DPSA CAN BENEFIT FROM SNS PRESENCE**

Regardless of not using social media to recruit candidates and the reluctance to do so, the results revealed resounding acknowledgements on how DPSA could benefit from using SNSs. *“Our department can create their own social media page and have someone to manage it to avoid scams,”* were the sentiments of one participant. This participant saw the benefits of using these widely used tools with an audience that has mastered their use, leading to a wider reach. Another participant with the same vision commented that SNSs could be used *“to post verified jobs and be clear on what we are looking for”*. In turn, this would yield applications that matched the advertised posts. This is why another participant cited that *“it can be used to get the best-matching candidates and CVs with the best-matching skills. It can also be used for some form of training relating to the jobs”*.

#### **4.10.4 DPSA HAS INITIATIVES TO HELP THE YOUTH TO GET EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Participants in the study were able to reveal that DPSA is taking conscious strides for the purpose of improving employment prospects among South African youths. This is all part of the national fight against rising unemployment in the country. Participants gave some examples of the projects that DPSA has undertaken to that effect. One participant said, *“currently, we are working with Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs) in providing learnerships and internships for youth, where they get to engage with some of the learning careers and they get stipends”*. Another participant said, *“yes because of the youth unemployment challenge, especially with youth from rural areas. We do this especially in High Schools because that is where we find them”*. Similarly, another participant said, *“we go to universities and high schools. This helps them to take their first steps in their careers”*. Aside from assisting learners, DPSA also actively assists organisations and active job seekers with placements. Hence, a participant indicated that they have a programme where they help organisations register their vacancies. The participant further indicated that, *“we also place employees with available employment seekers. We have a database where we encourage graduates to post their qualifications and we match these qualifications with any employment opportunities available on the website”*.

#### **4.10.5 MILLENNIALS NEED TO BE PROACTIVE EMPLOYMENT SEEKERS**

DPSA is playing a role in improving employment prospects for millennials. However, the sentiments of the participants were that the millennials also have a role to play, which is to be proactive job seekers. One of the participants was of the opinion that *“most people do get information on advertisements, but they do not apply”*. Another reported that *“most people do not take advantage of the employment opportunities that are available”*. These comments show that millennials are not being proactive on the job market. To this effect, another participant reported that in most cases they received *“a minimal number of candidates who were interested in advertised positions”*. These sentiments speak to the same issues that were cited by job recruiters who were also interviewed on how millennials can be incompetent at seeking employment. They need to become competitive at job seeking and eager to attain available positions. This is the reason why one participant said that *“most millennials are on social media platforms. They do go there to update their stories and their pictures. Why not take that time to take the opportunities from employment opportunities that are available because they are using the platforms”*.

#### **4.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In summary, the above chapter has extensively explored the perceptions of students in three selected universities on employment opportunities through social networking platforms. It was uncovered that the overwhelming majority of the respondents use social media and they spend on average two hours on it. It emerged that Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp emerged as the most common social networking platforms, while Google+, LinkedIn and Facebook were considered the most effective social media networking platforms for job searching.

Furthermore, the analysis of the data indicates that respondents agreed on the employment opportunities available through social media. It was however established that affordability and accessibility constitute a barrier to employment search through social media platforms. Nevertheless, the respondents believed that LinkedIn is more effective than Indeed and Careers 24 when job searching. Moreover, the analysis shows that many respondents believed that LinkedIn is more user-friendly than Indeed and Careers 24.

Of particular interest, the analysis indicates that barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media were significantly different between males and females, with females

agreeing more to the concerns of affordability and accessibility. The age group showed no difference, while Coloured respondents believed more in the user-friendliness and popularity of the job-search websites. It was also uncovered that MUT respondents were significantly more in agreement on employment opportunities through social media, barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media, the most effective job-search websites, and user-friendliness and popularity of job-search websites. The chapter conclusively shows that the barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media were the strongest predictor of employment opportunities through social media.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to conclude this study which explored employment opportunities through social networking platforms for Black South African millennials at selected universities in Kwazulu-Natal. This aim was further broken down into five objectives which guided the study. These were:

- (i) To identify the exchange rewards or benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees.
- (ii) To evaluate how feasible social networking platforms are for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities.
- (iii) To determine how accessible and user-friendly these social networking platforms are to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.
- (iv) To identify the barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.
- (v) To create a model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media.

The study was also guided by the following hypotheses:

H<sub>0</sub>: The benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees are not statistically significant.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are statistically significant benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees

H<sub>0</sub>: Social networking platforms are not feasible for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities.

H<sub>1</sub>: Social networking platforms are feasible for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>: Social networking platforms are not accessible and user-friendly to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.

H<sub>1</sub>: Social networking platforms are accessible and user-friendly to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.

H<sub>0</sub>: There are no statistically significant barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.

H<sub>1</sub>: There are statistically significant barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.

H<sub>0</sub>: The model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media does not significantly improve their abilities in this regard.

H<sub>1</sub>: The model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media significantly improves their abilities in this regard.

The results that were obtained from students, recruitment agencies and DPSA were presented in the previous chapter. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a discussion of those results in relation to the literature review and the theoretical framework. Finally, it summarises the researcher's conclusions based on the objectives, highlighting how they were addressed together with recommendations for millennials, employers and future studies.

## **5.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **5.2.1 GENERAL FINDINGS IN RELATION TO SOCIAL EXCHANGE THEORY**

Social exchange theory is a theoretical framework used to understand the social interactions and relationships between individuals. In this study, the theory was applied to the social interactions of Black South African millennials through SNSs. On the premise of this theory, the presence of millennials on social networking sites is based on a system of rewards and costs, and they engage in these relationships because they believe that the rewards that they receive outweigh the costs (Stafford & Kuiper 2021; Ahmad *et al.* 2023). Results in the study confirmed the findings of Mdletshe (2017) as they showed that almost all (n = 605) the millennials who participated were present on social media, with their preferred sites being

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. These sites are not for professional networking, but rather mostly for social networking. Therefore, the findings also confirm the assertions of Vozab (2019) that the millennial generation mostly uses SNSs for social networking. The results thus show that millennials find rewards in using these sites. Because millennials do not particularly use these sites to seek employment, the rewards they seek and therefore receive are positive relationships, connections with family and friends as well as entertainment from these sites.

A closer look at the theory reveals that individuals seek to maximize their rewards and minimise their costs in their social interactions. Rewards can take many forms, such as love, companionship, respect and material possessions, while costs can include time, energy, and emotional investment. This is critical information that allows one to glean in on the lack of interest in job advertisements that are posted on social networks or the lack of participation thereof on sites that are primarily for work-related purposes, like LinkedIn. According to Kim and Feng (2021), reciprocity is expected in social media transactions. Therefore, when millennials apply for positions and do so repeatedly without receiving feedback, they begin to consider the entire process of seeking employment as a cost that continues to waste their time and energy. This may be the crux of the issue of millennials reported failure to take employment opportunities seriously; hence, they would rather use their time and energy participating in interactions that are reciprocal and rewarding to them.

Concerning following and connecting with potential employers on social media, social exchange theory further proposes that people make rational calculations about the potential rewards and costs of social relationships, and that they will only engage in reciprocal relationships that they believe will provide a net gain (Ham, *et al.* 2019; Ahmad *et al.* 2023). This is a point that reiterates the source of the behaviour that millennials exhibit on social networks. When the rewards outweigh the costs, individuals are more likely to maintain the relationship, while when the costs outweigh the rewards, individuals are more likely to end the relationship (Stafford & Kuiper 2021). Again, the pith of the issue is that the quality of any social exchange relationship depends on the degree of reciprocity between the parties involved. In other words, if one person feels that they are giving more than they are receiving, they are likely to feel dissatisfied with the relationship. This may lead them to withdraw from the relationship and this is how millennials may be feeling towards potential employers. They are interested in two-way communication that acknowledges their presence and participation.

## 5.2.2 THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO WILSON'S INFORMATION MODEL

Wilson's information behaviour model, also known as the "uncertainty principle," describes how people seek and use information to reduce uncertainty in decision-making (Wilson 1981; 2005). The model proposes that individuals engage in information behaviour when they perceive a gap between what they know and what they need to know to make a decision. While the model was discussed in the theoretical framework on the basis of millennials' employment needs, the realisation in the study that they also lacked valuable information on securing employment provided another avenue for the application of this theory. This is confirmed in studies conducted in various contexts on the information seeking behaviour of millennials, such as Lucero-Romero and Arias-Bolzmann (2020) and González-Teruel *et al.* (2020). All this is in line with the last objective that guided the study, which was to create a model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media. Wilson's information behaviour model thus provides valuable guidelines for the model, which is presented in the following section.

Wilson's (1981; 2005) model consists of four stages. which can guide information initiatives that are aimed at empowering South African millennials with the knowledge and skills they need so they can use social networking sites to enhance their employability. These stages are:

**Need recognition:** In this stage, an individual recognises a need for information to fill a knowledge gap. This could be triggered by an event, a problem, or a desire for personal development. In this instance, it is the desire for personal development that can be used to make millennials realise that there is a gap between what they know about social media and what they need to know for it to be of employment benefit to them. This is the first stage of educating and training millennials to be competent participants in the labour market.

**Information seeking:** Once the need is recognised, the next step is for millennials to begin searching for relevant information from a variety of sources, including personal experience, social networks, and formal information sources such as books, journals, and online databases. Information that is important in this case includes how to use certain social media sites, CV writing, matching one's skills to what is being sought after, professionalism and interview information, among many other issues.

Information use: Millennials then need to make use of the information obtained in the previous stage to their advantage. When they do so, they can become appealing candidates to recruiters.

Information sharing: Finally, millennials would need to be encouraged to share the information and experience gained from the process with others, which can lead to new knowledge, insights, and decision-making.

It is imperative to note that Wilson's (1981; 2005) model also recognises that the process of information behaviour is affected by various factors, such as the individual's knowledge and experience, their beliefs and attitudes, the nature of the information need, and the availability and accessibility of information sources. This is where the theory connects with the social exchange theory; thus, the experiences of millennials, be they positive or negative, can affect their information behaviour. These experiences include the notion of reciprocity, which is important in social media communication, and this is the key to keeping millennials engaged.

### **5.2.3 CRITICAL DISCUSSION IN RELATION TO SOCIAL MARKETING AND THE MAIN CONSTRUCTS OF THE STUDY**

#### **The feasibility of SNSs for information seeking**

During the literature review, it was determined that the use of social media and social networking sites is an important aspect for people of all ages around the world. Statistics provided by Poushter (2016) helped to substantiate that view. Likewise, social media has become an integral part of the daily lives of millennials, and this was determined both during the literature review and through the data that was obtained in this study. With the proliferation of smartphones and the internet, social media usage has exploded in recent years, with an estimated 3.6 billion people worldwide using social media in 2020 (Statista 2021). Studies conducted by researchers like Fietkiewicz *et al.* (2016) and Bocanegra Ochoa (2018) prove that social media usage among millennials is very high. According to a 2021 report by the Pew Research Center, approximately 91% of millennials use social media, making them the most active generation on these platforms (Perrin 2021). The findings of this study revealed the same in the case of Black South African millennials; thus, they indicated that nearly all (99.3%) of the students who participated in the study maintained a social media presence. Results further revealed that over 70% of all the participants spent between two and six hours actively on social media each day. Hence, the general consensus among both recruitment agencies and employees

of DPSA is that social networking sites are effective for not only for information seeking specifically, but also for recruiting Black South African millennials.

### **Accessibility among Black South African millennials to enhance reciprocity**

Based on the 99.3% level of use among study respondents, the results confirm that SNSs are accessible to Black South African millennials. However, given the proven use of social media and social networks among Black South African millennials, one wonders why they are unable to reciprocate to social marketing strategies from potential employers to take advantage of employment opportunities that are constantly posted on social networks. According to the results, the answer is double-barreled. Firstly, there is a mismatch between what millennials use social networking sites for and their use for recruitment purposes. Consequently, the efforts of recruiters do not reach the target audience. Millennials in the study identified Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as the most commonly used sites. The report by Perrin (2021) also shows that Facebook is the most popular social media platform among this age group, with 86% of millennials using it. Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter are also popular among millennials, with 72%, 69%, and 67% of them using these platforms, respectively. This was consistent with the findings in the literature review and previous studies; for example, the study conducted by Statcounter (2020) also identified these as among the most commonly used social media networks in South Africa.

The purpose of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram can be seen from various perspectives, but generally, they are social media platforms that allow individuals and organisations to connect and share information. These platforms provide a wide range of services that enable users to create and share content, communicate with other users, and consume information. Facebook, founded in 2004, is a social networking site that enables users to connect with friends and family, share information, and join interest groups. According to Ngussa *et al.* (2021), Facebook's primary purpose is to enable users to create and maintain social relationships. The site's features, such as the ability to share personal information and communicate with others, help users maintain and strengthen their social ties.

Twitter, established in 2006, is a micro-blogging site that allows users to post short messages called tweets. The purpose of Twitter is to facilitate real-time communication and information sharing (Lemke *et al.* 2021). Twitter is a platform for "ambient journalism" (Esa *et al.* 2022:101), which refers to the way in which users can engage with news and information in a

decentralised manner. Twitter is also a tool for promoting political activism and social movements (Brünker *et al.* 2020). Instagram, created in 2010, is a photo and video-sharing app that enables users to share visual content with others. Instagram's as a third largest social network platform its purpose is to enable users to express themselves visually and connect with others through shared interests (Kocak *et al.* 2020). As argued by Dhir *et al.* (2018), Instagram is a platform for self-presentation, where users can create and curate their online identities through visual storytelling. Therefore, one reason for the popularity of social media among millennials is the ability to connect with friends and family across the globe. As individuals increasingly move away from their hometowns and families, social media platforms provide a way to stay connected and engaged with loved ones. A study by the American Psychological Association found that social media use was positively associated with social support and connectedness (Frison & Eggermont 2016). Furthermore, social media platforms allow users to join groups and communities centered around shared interests, hobbies, and beliefs. These online communities provide a sense of belonging and social validation that can be difficult to find in offline environments (Smith *et al.* 2021).

Even through Facebook, Twitter and other SNSs are mainly for other purposes, literature suggests that there are organisations that utilise them for recruitment purposes to reach target audiences. Facebook in particular serves as a platform for sharing news and information, creating awareness of events, and promoting products and services, which fits the purpose of social marketing (Williamson *et al.* 2017). Facebook is one of the most popular social media platforms, with over 2.8 billion monthly active users as of December 2020 (Statista 2021), thus recruiters are increasingly realising its potential for recruitment purposes, though it is not primarily a professional networking platform. Organisations can post job advertisements on Facebook in a number of ways, including by creating a post on their company page, promoting their job opening as an ad, or using Facebook's job posting feature (Duffy & Schwartz 2018; Golovko & Schumann 2019; Sultana *et al.* 2018). With the job posting feature, organisations can post jobs for free and reach a larger audience, as Facebook automatically suggests job openings to users based on their location and interests (Duffy & Schwartz 2018; Golovko & Schumann 2019; Sultana *et al.* 2018). Additionally, organisations can target their job advertisements to specific demographics or locations, ensuring that their advertisements are seen by the most relevant job seekers (Duffy & Schwartz 2018; Golovko & Schumann 2019; Sultana *et al.* 2018).

Twitter and Instagram also serve as marketing tools for businesses and individuals, as they allow them to promote their products, services, and personal brand, as well as recruit dynamic young personnel capable of using social media for profit (Wolfe 2015). Twitter is a very popular social media platform for job advertising, with over 192 million daily active users as of 2021 (Ellington *et al.* 2022). Organisations can post job advertisements on Twitter by creating a tweet that includes the job title, a brief description of the job, and a link to the full job posting. Organisations can also use Twitter's advertising platform to promote their job openings to a larger audience or target specific demographics or locations (Ellington *et al.* 2022). On Instagram organisations can post job advertisements by creating a post on their company page that includes a visually appealing image or video, the job title, a brief description of the job, and a link to the full job posting. Organisations can also use Instagram's ad platform to reach a larger audience or target specific demographics or locations (Fagundes, Marot & Natividade 2021).

Essentially, organisations can use social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to advertise job openings and reach potential candidates. By posting job advertisements on these platforms, organisations can increase their visibility and reach a wider audience, as well as target specific demographics or locations. Most importantly, the use of these platforms can enhance reciprocity from Black South African millennials. However, it appears that many Black South African millennials do not take advantage of these due to their preference to use these platforms for entertainment and communication with friends and loved ones.

Secondly, through the results, the researcher was able to determine that there is a mismatch between the social networking sites that millennials prefer to use and the ones that recruiters use. Again, this also affects reciprocity between the two groups because recruiters' ability to reach the target audience. While Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are being used for job recruitment, millennials, employment agencies and DPSA all identified LinkedIn as the most preferred site for job advertisements. LinkedIn is one of the most popular and widely used social networking platforms for professionals (Pinho *et al.* 2019). It was founded in 2003 and has since grown to become a powerful tool for recruitment, job hunting, and professional networking. In recent years, LinkedIn has also become a popular job advertisement tool, allowing employers to reach a vast pool of potential candidates with targeted job postings (Koch, Gerber & De Klerk 2018).

LinkedIn job advertisements provide a number of benefits to employers. One of the most significant advantages is the ability to target specific job seekers based on their skills, experience and interests. LinkedIn's advanced targeting options allow employers to narrow down their job postings to the most relevant candidates, reducing the time and cost associated with traditional recruitment methods (Pinho *et al.* 2019). Additionally, LinkedIn job postings are highly visible, appearing on candidates' home pages, in their job search results, and on relevant company pages.

LinkedIn's job advertising platform also provides employers with valuable data and analytics. Employers can track the performance of their job postings, including the number of views, applications and hires. This data can be used to optimise job postings and recruitment strategies, ensuring that employers are reaching the right candidates and making the most of their advertising budgets (Haar & Brink 2019). Moreover, LinkedIn provides a range of tools to help employers manage the recruitment process efficiently. LinkedIn Recruiter, for example, is a premium service that allows employers to search for and contact potential candidates directly. This service is particularly useful for organisations that are recruiting for multiple positions or that have a high volume of candidates to review (Koch *et al.* 2020).

For job seekers, LinkedIn is an essential social networking site to make use of and there are studies that have proven that. In a study that was conducted by Chung and Kim (2017), they examined the impact of LinkedIn use on job search outcomes, including job search self-efficacy, job search behaviours and employment status. The results showed that LinkedIn use was positively associated with job search self-efficacy and job search behaviours, which in turn were positively related to employment status. In another study conducted by Aichner *et al.* 2021 the authors discussed the use of social media in job searching, including LinkedIn as a valuable tool for networking and job search. The authors highlight that through SM platforms such as LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter, recruiters can post job advertisements to lure potential applicants whether they are actively or not actively looking for a job. It also showed that users, of LinkedIn used their profiles to create an ideal portrait to display their skills to recruiters. Again, another study was conducted by O'Brien and Ali-Knight (2019), hence this study focused on the use of LinkedIn as a job search and career management tool in the hospitality and tourism industry. The findings showed that LinkedIn was used extensively by industry professionals for job search, networking, and career development. The study also

highlighted the importance of having a well-crafted LinkedIn profile and engaging with other professionals on the platform.

Based on these studies, it was established that these are some of the ways in which LinkedIn can be used as a job search tool for employment seekers:

- **Networking:** LinkedIn is an excellent platform for networking with other professionals in your industry. By connecting with others and joining relevant groups, you can build relationships, learn about new opportunities, and gain insights into the job market.
- **Job Search:** LinkedIn has a powerful job search function that allows you to search for job openings based on keywords, location and other filters. You can also set up job alerts to receive notifications when new jobs that match your criteria are posted.
- **Showcasing Skills and Experience:** Employment seekers can use their LinkedIn profile as a digital resumé, showcasing their skills, experience, and achievements. This can help them stand out to potential employers and increase their chances of being contacted about job opportunities.

**Researching Organisations:** LinkedIn provides valuable information about organisations, including their size, industry and employee reviews. Employment seekers can use this information to research potential employers, learn about their culture, and make informed decisions about where to apply.

**Connecting with Recruiters:** Many recruiters use LinkedIn to find potential candidates for job openings. By optimising your LinkedIn profile and actively engaging with recruiters, you can increase your visibility and improve your chances of being contacted about job opportunities.

LinkedIn is thus a valuable job search tool for employment seekers. By networking, searching for jobs, showcasing skills and experience, researching organisations, and connecting with recruiters, millennials in South Africa can increase their visibility, find new opportunities, and take control of their job search. However, this is currently not the case and there are deeper issues that were determined to be the cause of this. These are discussed in the following section.

### **Barriers to behavioural intention (BI) in seeking employment opportunities**

Through this study, the researcher was able to identify some glaring barriers that job specific BI and exacerbate the unemployment challenge among South African millennials. These

barriers make it increasingly difficult for them to secure employment opportunities and leaving them in a perpetual cycle of need. One of the things that was realised through the data is that South African millennials are not taking vacancies on social media seriously. To begin with, recruitment agents reported that millennials do not have the correct attitude for job seeking; thus, they do not engage with content that is related to employment opportunities. Many millennials use social media passively, only consuming content without actively engaging with others (Rahmat 2018). However, engagement is key when it comes to job searching on social media. Interestingly, while millennials are known to be one of the most active generation on social media platforms, studies concur that despite this high usage rate, many millennials fail to effectively use social media for job searching due to a lack of engagement with employment opportunities and potential employers.

One study conducted by Karaoglu *et al.* (2021) found that sociodemographic factors like age, race, and education, were important factors in explaining who searches for jobs online. The results showed that African Americans and Asian Americans engaged more in online job searches than whites. This highlights that racial minorities preferred to use online job searches in the hope of mitigating discrimination. Although the study found that African Americans were more likely to engage in online job searching, this was not the case in reality and on the ground. In addition, lower educational levels meant lower possibility of online job search (Karaoglu *et al.* 2021). This study represents the status quo in South Africa where the Black African millennials ought to search for job opportunities, but they do not. South African millennials thus need to be intentional, as well as proactive employment seekers and their presence on social media should neither be limited to social interactions nor passive.

It was found that millennials who engage with work-related content on social networking sites have poor reading skills. During the literature review, studies by Rahmat (2018) and Larioque (2019) gave credence to the notion that millennials are poor readers. Hence the reports by recruiters in this study that they do not read employment advertisements sufficiently. Consequently, they apply for employment opportunities for which they are not suited. Millennials' reading skills are therefore influenced by their use of social media. While social media can be a valuable tool for communication and connection, it may also have negative effects on reading, comprehension and critical thinking skills. A study conducted by Segev-Miller and Nachmias (2017) found that millennials tend to skim-read content on social media

rather than read deeply and critically. They attributed this to the fact that social media content is often presented in a fragmented and disjointed way.

In the study, participants also highlighted that, apart from poor reading skills, millennials lack professional conduct when they apply for employment opportunities. This lack of professionalism is a consequence of excessive use of social networking sites, which affects interpersonal communication skills. In a study conducted by Shrivastava (2020:261), it was identified that there are important employability standards that millennials are seemingly not ready to meet. Millennials have “been described as impatient, bold, honest, and frank, independent, overconfident, opinionated, high minded, aggressive, and uncomfortable with criticism” (Shrivastava 2020: 261). Professional conduct during the job application process is essential to presenting oneself as a suitable candidate for the job. Inappropriate behaviour or communication during the job application process can negatively impact a candidate’s chances of being selected for the position. In an article ‘When face-to-face interviews are not possible: tips and tricks for video, telephone, online chat, and email interviews in qualitative research’, Saarijärvi and Bratt (2021) stresses the importance of maintaining professional conduct during digital interviews, including dress code, body language, and communication etiquette. It highlights also the advantages of using online platforms. Thus, video, telephone, and online interviews are a valid method that can be used as an alternative to face-to-face interviews (Saarijärvi & Bratt 2021).

Another challenge that was noted as an inhibitor is the case of millennials failing to secure employment due to too much reliance on social media for opportunities. The study revealed that while millennials need to capitalise on opportunities that arise through social media, they cannot neglect other sources of communication that are used to advertise employment opportunities. Interviews conducted with participants from DPSA provide an essential example for this line of argument. During those interviews, it became apparent that DPSA, together with other government entities, does not use social media to advertise employment; hence, they use their websites and circulars for that. Therefore, those who only use social media to look for vacancies would never encounter government employment opportunities, which, in statistical terms, decreases their probability of success. It is therefore imperative for millennials not to rely solely on social media for job search activities. They need to use job search engines, company websites, and other job search tools, including traditional media like newspapers, to expand their job search efforts.

During the study, recruitment agents who were interviewed cited that the root cause of millennials' incompetencies when seeking employment is the country's educational system. According to them, the educational system in South Africa does not place emphasis on teaching students to apply for employment opportunities. The transition from education to employment can be challenging for students, particularly if they lack the necessary employability skills to succeed in the job market. One such skill is the ability to apply for jobs effectively. Teaching students how to apply for jobs should be an essential part of any teaching curriculum, as it can help students develop the necessary skills to succeed in the workforce. Several studies have highlighted the importance of teaching job search skills to students. For example, a study by Coles and Hall (2019) surveyed employers and found that the ability to apply for jobs effectively was a key employability skill that was often lacking in new graduates. Similarly, Green, et al (2020) argued that career adaptability, which includes skills such as job search skills and networking skills, should be taught in schools to help students successfully transition from education to employment.

The benefits of teaching job search skills to students extend beyond the immediate goal of finding employment. Blair and Hoyt (2018) tested an intervention designed to improve students' self-efficacy and job search behaviour, including their ability to apply for jobs effectively. The intervention was found to be effective in increasing job search efficacy and behaviour, which can help students feel more confident and prepared as they enter the job market. Furthermore, teaching students how to apply for jobs can also help them develop other important skills. There are benefits to using online internships to teach students employability skills, including the ability to apply for jobs and communicate effectively with employers (Predovic *et al.* 2022). These skills can be transferred to other areas of life, such as networking or communicating with colleagues in a workplace setting.

Incorporating job search skills into teaching curriculums can take various forms. For example, teachers can provide students with guidance on creating resumés and cover letters or provide them with opportunities to practice job interviews. Students can also be encouraged to explore job-search websites and learn how to navigate the job market. By teaching these skills, teachers can help prepare students for the realities of the workforce and equip them with the tools they need to succeed. Teaching students how to apply for jobs and develop other employability skills is an important part of preparing them for the workforce. Including job search skills in

teaching curriculums can help students successfully transition from education to employment and meet the expectations of employers.

Even though millennials were found to have many behavioural traits that hinder their employment acquisition efforts in various ways, social media and the internet at large are not without fault in this matter. Participant after participant during the interviews raised concerns regarding false advertising and scams on social networking sites. This has resulted in a lack of trust in advertised offers among millennials. The proliferation of employment scams on social media has become a major concern for job seekers and recruitment professionals. With the increasing use of social media platforms for job postings and networking, scammers have taken advantage of the platform's reach and anonymity to defraud unsuspecting victims. Research studies have shown that these scams take different forms and are executed in various ways, but they share some common features. For example, scammers often use false job descriptions to lure job seekers into applying for non-existent jobs or jobs that do not match the advertised descriptions. They also use fake company profiles and impersonate legitimate recruiters to gain trust and access to personal information from job seekers. In some cases, scammers may request money or sensitive information from job seekers under the pretext of a job application process. One study by Xie *et al.* (2019) shows that social media-enabled phishing is a common technique used by scammers to collect personal information from job seekers. The study found that social media users are more likely to disclose sensitive information to fraudulent job postings compared to traditional email phishing scams. This is because social media platforms offer a sense of trust and familiarity that email phishing scams lack.

The impact of employment scams on social media is significant, not only for individual victims but also for the broader recruitment industry. Job seekers who fall victim to these scams lose money and sensitive information, which can lead to identity theft and other fraudulent activities. Additionally, these scams can damage the reputation of legitimate recruiters and organisations, which may be associated with fraudulent job postings. To address this problem, scholars and practitioners have proposed different strategies for detecting and preventing employment scams on social media. One approach is to use machine learning and natural language processing techniques to analyse job postings and identify suspicious patterns. Huang *et al.* (2021) propose a model that combines text classification and network analysis to detect fraudulent recruitment advertisements on social media. Another approach is to raise awareness among job seekers about the dangers of employment scams and educate them on how to

identify and report fraudulent job postings. Nevertheless, scams on social media were found to be a major barrier for millennials, as they ignore offers because of a lack of trust in online information.

Apart from a lack of trust, there were also reports among millennials that some social networking sites are not user friendly. As such, millennials tend to avoid such sites in favour of the ones they have identified as user friendly. These experiences among millennials have culminated in a lack of knowledge and technical skills that are necessary to maneuver social networking sites that are specifically for work-related purposes. The lack of user friendliness of social networking sites is a topic that has been extensively studied by scholars in the fields of human-computer interaction and social media. Therefore, this is not a problem that is not unique to South African millennials but is nevertheless affecting their employment prospects. Lewis and Sauro (2021) identified usability as a key factor in establishing computer credibility. They argue that websites that are difficult to use or have poor design can harm the credibility of the information presented on those websites. This is especially relevant for social networking sites, where users are often sharing personal information. In the same manner, Ang *et al.* (2021) found that one reason people especially adults may avoid using social networking sites is because they perceive them as difficult to use. This is particularly true for older users and those with lower levels of education. She argues that social networking sites could be made more user-friendly by simplifying their interfaces and providing better documentation and support. These studies bear testament to the notion that ease of use is a factor that millennials look for and that it will determine their willingness to use a specific site, be it for entertainment or to seek employment offers.

There are also socioeconomic circumstances in South Africa that have placed some millennials at a disadvantage in the matter of securing employment using social media. The findings in the study revealed that there are many millennials who are unable to afford data for internet usage. This tends to be a double-barreled challenge, because in addition to not affording data to use the internet, they also tend to lack gadgets that are compatible with internet usage, including smartphones and computers. This is the reason participants emphasised that this was a major barrier that left millennials without any other options but to rely on traditional media.

There are thus many barriers to seeking employment that were identified in the study. Some are inherent in the behaviour of millennials; some relate to the dangers of social media usage, and some are caused by socioeconomic circumstances.

#### 5.2.4 THE INFLUENCE OF DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Various demographic variables were assessed, but only two produced statistically significant results. Gender is one of the demographic variables and it showed that there was a difference between male and female participants on the assessment of barriers to seeking employment. To be specific, the results identified that more female participants were affected compared to their male counterparts. The challenge with analysing this particular result is that it emanated from the quantitative analysis on SPSS and does not specifically allude to any cause for this result. Therefore, a plausible explanation could be historical gender stereotypes, which continue to affect women's prospects for employment, together with their prospects for promotions within organisations. Studies conducted by Forsyth *et al.* (2019), Jayachandran (2020) and Blau and Kahn (2017) show that gender can play a significant role in the barriers that individuals face when seeking employment.

Historically, women have faced more barriers than men in accessing and advancing in the workforce, such as gender stereotypes, discrimination, and the disproportionate burden of unpaid care work. While women have made significant progress in the workforce over the past few decades, they still face a range of barriers that limit their access to opportunities and hinder their career advancement (Jayachandran 2020). It is imperative to note that gender stereotypes play a significant role in shaping the types of jobs and career paths that women are encouraged to pursue and the ones they are considered for, irrespective of their qualifications. Women are often expected to prioritise their roles as caregivers and homemakers over their careers, which can limit their access to fields that are perceived as less compatible with these roles, such as STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) fields (Cech & Blair-Loy 2019). Moreover, women often encounter gender bias and negative assumptions about their abilities in male-dominated fields. For instance, women in STEM fields may be perceived as less competent or committed than their male counterparts, which can lead to their underrepresentation in these fields. When women apply for available positions in those fields, those long-held stereotypes thus become barriers that diminish their capacity to secure employment compared to their male counterparts.

Discrimination is another significant barrier that women face when seeking employment and in the workforce. Women may be subjected to bias in hiring, promotion, and pay decisions, as well as harassment and other forms of mistreatment on the job (Blau & Kahn 2017; Williams 2014). Discrimination can be particularly acute for women who belong to multiple

marginalised groups, such as women of colour, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, plus other (LGBTQ+), or women with disabilities (Blau & Kahn 2017; Matheson *et al.* 2019). This bias not only limits women's opportunities but also negatively affects their mental and physical health, well-being, and overall job satisfaction.

The disproportionate burden of unpaid care work is yet another barrier that women encounter when seeking employment. Despite the manner in which the world has evolved to accommodate women as equal counterparts to men, they still perform the majority of unpaid care work, such as childcare, eldercare, and housework, which can limit their ability to pursue education, training, and employment opportunities (Maume 2016; Aloe 2020). In addition, women who work outside the home often face challenges balancing their caregiving responsibilities with their professional commitments, which can lead to them being penalised or overlooked for advancement opportunities (Bravo *et al.* 2018; Rossin-Slater 2018). These challenges are exacerbated by the lack of affordable and accessible childcare, eldercare, and other care services that would enable women to balance their professional and caregiving roles. All these are employment barriers that are unique to women; thus, they are abstract issues that explain why women in the study reported that they were more affected by barriers to seeking employment compared to men who participated in the study.

Addressing gender barriers that affect women requires a multi-faceted approach that involves changing societal attitudes and norms, addressing discrimination and bias, and supporting policies that promote work-family balance and support women's career advancement (Bleiweis & Brescoll 2018; Heymann *et al.* 2019; Ruhm 2018). Education and awareness-raising campaigns can help to challenge gender stereotypes and promote women's representation in non-traditional fields. Diversity and inclusion initiatives can help to mitigate discrimination and bias in the workplace, such as providing unconscious bias training for managers, implementing equitable promotion and hiring practices, and establishing clear reporting and accountability mechanisms for addressing harassment and other forms of mistreatment of women.

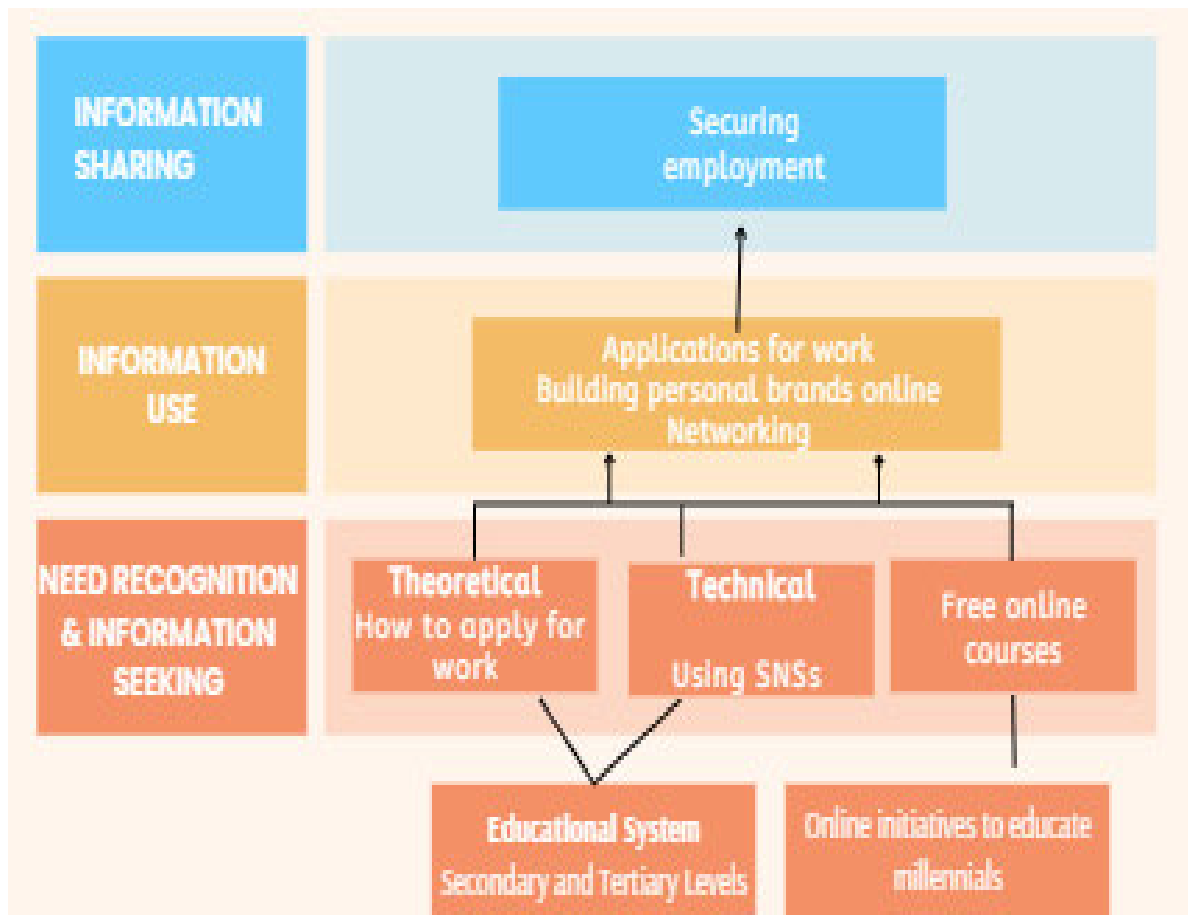
The other demographic variable that produced significant results is the institution of study. According to the results, millennials studying at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) agreed more with barriers to seeking employment than their counterparts from both UKZN and DUT. Without further investigation, it is difficult to determine the exact reason for these results. Despite this, the geographical location of MUT, coupled with the socio-economic status of the

majority of the students, provides a baseline for plausible inferences. MUT is a university of technology located in Umlazi, a township in the city of Durban in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Umlazi was established in the 1960s as a segregated area for black South Africans under the apartheid regime. Today, it remains a predominantly black township, although it has become more diverse over time. The background of the township points towards a populace from a disadvantaged background. Consequently, Umlazi has faced a number of socio-economic challenges over the years, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, and crime. All these issues are bound to affect the lives of the students at MUT, many of whom may be from the township of Umlazi.

The socio-economic status of students who study at MUT varies, as the university serves a diverse student population from different backgrounds and socio-economic circumstances. However, many of the students who attend MUT come from disadvantaged communities and may face socio-economic challenges such as poverty, lack of access to resources and opportunities and limited educational opportunities. These students are thus more prone to experiencing barriers to employment, such as a lack of access to the internet to a greater degree than millennials who are from middle class and upper-class backgrounds. It is, however, imperative to note that this is a matter that needs to be investigated through further studies.

### **5.3 MODEL FOR EDUCATING MILLENNIALS ON SEEKING EMPLOYMENT USING SOCIAL MEDIA.**

One of the fundamental reasons why millennials are experiencing high unemployment, as identified by participants in the qualitative component of the study, is that they are not being taught sufficiently about the matter while in school. In this section, therefore, a model is presented that addresses this issue that is encapsulated in the last objective of the study. The model shows how students can be taught to apply for jobs from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This can begin as part of the mainstream curriculum from secondary school all the way up to tertiary level. With an acknowledgement that learning is an ongoing process, the model also advocates for a government initiative aimed at delivering knowledge to millennials via their favourite social media platforms on how they can use the same platforms as effective tools for securing employment. The interesting aspect of the model is that it highlights the various stages of Wilson's model together with the expected results of the entire initiative. The model is presented in the figure below.



**Figure 5.2: Model for educating millennials on seeking employment using social media.**

Initiatives to educate millennials on seeking employment using social media need to make them understand that social media can be a powerful tool for job searching. It is imperative for millennials to be taught the following:

**Understand the job market:** The first step for any job seeker is to understand the job market. This includes researching the job opportunities available in their field, the qualifications required for those positions, and the hiring process.

**Optimise your social media profiles:** Social media profiles can be a valuable tool for job seekers, so it is important to ensure that they are professional and optimised for the job search. This includes using a professional profile picture, creating a strong headline, and optimising your profile for relevant keywords.

Network on SNSs: SNSs provide a great opportunity to network with professionals in your field. This can include following industry influencers, joining relevant groups, and engaging in conversations with other professionals.

Use SNSs to research potential employers: SNSs can be a great tool for researching potential employers. This includes following the company's social media accounts, researching their company culture, and learning about their hiring process.

Leverage SNSs to find job openings: SNSs can be a great resource for finding job openings. This includes following job boards and industry-specific accounts, using hashtags to search for relevant job openings, and connecting with recruiters on social media.

Use SNSs to showcase your skills and experience: SNSs can be a powerful tool for showcasing your skills and experience. This includes sharing relevant content, creating a portfolio of your work, and engaging with others in your field.

Be professional and authentic: It is important to be professional and authentic on social media. This includes being respectful of others, avoiding controversial topics, and presenting yourself in a positive light.

By understanding these things, coupled with the technical skills to use social networking sites, millennials can effectively use social media to find job opportunities and connect with potential employers.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results that were obtained in the study, the following conclusions were reached by the researcher regarding the objectives on which it was premised and the developed hypotheses thereof:

*To identify the exchange rewards or benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees.*

The rewards of using social networking platforms are undeniable, considering that we are now in a technological age in which everything is driven by the internet. Though South Africa, like the rest of Africa, is still lagging behind in its recruitment practices compared to Western

countries, a significant amount of employment recruitment is being done through social media, especially by private organisations. For Black South African millennials, social networking sites provide an easy and convenient way to access a wide range of employment opportunities. Furthermore, social networking sites are platforms where they can build personal brands or self-market, connect with potential employers, as well as conduct research on organisations to determine if they are good to work for. For South African organisations seeking employees, social networking sites allow them to reach a wide range of candidates, including passive social media users. Advertising vacancies on social media is also cost-effective and a way of marketing their brands. Consequently, the null hypothesis which indicated that the benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees are not statistically significant was rejected. However, the alternative hypothesis that there are statistically significant benefits of using social networking platforms for both Black millennials and South African organisations seeking employees was retained.

*To evaluate how feasible these social networking platforms are for information seeking and in helping Black South African millennials in getting employment opportunities.*

Given that South African millennials are true to the nature of millennials worldwide and digital natives, social networking sites provide a digital meeting place for Black millennials seeking employment and recruiters. These platforms, particularly LinkedIn are important for job-related information seeking, because recruiters are increasingly focusing on them to attract millennials and subsequent generations. During the interviews that were conducted with employees from recruitment agencies and employees from DPSA, there was consensus that social networking platforms are the best platforms for advertising employment opportunities to South African millennials. However, challenges that were noted would need to be addressed. These include millennials' lack of employment seeking attitudes and lack of trust in information shared on social media because of the proliferation of scams and the mismatch between the social networking sites that millennials and employers prefer to use. This can be addressed through proposed educational initiatives to help millennials take advantage of employment opportunities that are available on online platforms. Therefore, the null hypothesis that social networking platforms are not feasible for information seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities was rejected, while the alternative hypothesis indicating that social networking platforms are feasible for information

seeking or in enabling Black South African millennials to access employment opportunities was proven.

*To determine how accessible and user friendly these social networking platforms are to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities.*

While social networking sites are meant to be easily accessible, to some extent they are not to a segment of Black South African millennials which negatively impacts reciprocity. This lack of access to social networking sites is a socio-economic challenge that continues to plague people from disadvantaged backgrounds. These are people who cannot afford the data charges and are sometimes without the necessary cell phones and computers to access the internet and social networking sites. It was also determined in the study that many Black South African millennials are of the opinion that social networking sites are not user friendly. This is an indication of the lack of digital skills that are linked to socio-economic challenges. The critical matter is that this lack of digital skills again impacts Black South African millennials' ability to be reciprocal to potential employers. This provided a plausible explanation why millennials tend to favour specific sites; hence, user-friendliness could be a deterrent that is affecting their employment opportunities. Based on these findings in this study the null hypothesis that social networking platforms are not accessible and user-friendly to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities was retained. Consequently, the alternative hypothesis that social networking platforms are accessible and user-friendly to enhance reciprocity among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities was rejected.

*To identify the barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms.*

The study was able to reveal various barriers to behavioural intention and to seeking employment among Black South African millennials. On an abstract level, some barriers related to the behaviour and attitude of millennials which is not intentional towards seeking employment opportunities, resulting in the use of SNSs for other purposes. Others emanated from social networking sites, which some participants deemed to be difficult to navigate, resulting in negative attitudes and lack of intention in actually using them to access employment opportunities. Others were rooted in the socio-economic backgrounds of Black South African millennials which place them in positions of disadvantage. Being cognisant of

these disadvantages thus affects intention and purpose among Black South African millennials who instead of being motivated or ready to take advantage of SNSs rather become reclusive. These barriers continue to affect the careers of millennials in South Africa. Based on these findings in this study the null hypothesis that there are no statistically significant barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms was rejected. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis that there are statistically significant barriers to behavioural intention among Black South African millennials seeking employment opportunities through social networking platforms was retained.

*To create a model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media.*

The model that was created and presented in the section above is premised on the findings of the study and the recommendations of the theoretical framework that guided the study. Essentially, the model addresses the realisation in the study that competently applying for employment opportunities should be taught and harnessed, firstly at the school curriculum level. This is a recommendation that was made by representatives of recruitment agencies in the study, who argued that South African students are not being taught how to apply for vacancies, which is why they struggle to showcase themselves effectively and attract recruiters. This model led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that indicating that the model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media does not significantly improve their abilities in this regard and the retainment of the alternative hypothesis indicating that the model to educate millennials on how to seek job opportunities through social media significantly improves their abilities in this regard.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.5.1 FOR MILLENNIALS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

The following recommendations are made to Black South African millennials in line with the findings of this study.

#### **Recognising the exchange rewards of engaging potential employers through SNSs**

Black South African millennials need to begin to realise that in this digital age, recruiters are increasingly using SNSs to reach them as a target audience. Therefore, they need to recognise that by engaging organisations and recruiters mainly on platforms like LinkedIn can have exponential benefits for them professionally.

### **Being reciprocal**

Black South African millennials need to be reciprocal to the marketing strategies of organisations and recruiters. Through reciprocity, they enhance their chances of being noticed and being called to attend interviews. By being reciprocal, they also show their intention to work and be productive, compared to Black South African millennials who remain passive.

### **Showing behavioural intention**

Millennials need to become proactive employment seekers. Past studies, recruiters and millennials themselves all agree that millennials are digital natives who thrive on social media. Regardless of this, they have a tendency to ignore job advertisements or to just apply without putting any significant thought into the application. This has been found to be a major reason why many millennials are failing to secure employment; hence, it is recommended that they change their attitudes entirely. For both millennials who are passive social media users and those that merely enjoy connecting with friends and family, they need to build a social media presence on platforms that are work-related like LinkedIn.

Millennials need to improve their reading skills. In this study, representatives of both recruitment agencies and DPSA cited millennials' poor reading skills as a problem, which is why they tend to apply for positions they are not suited for. This is also the reason why they fail to provide CVs that showcase their skills in accordance with the required job skills. Therefore, millennials need to improve their reading skills, particularly when they are seeking employment.

The last recommendation for millennials is that they need to improve their professional etiquette to communicate effectively with potential employers. This is particularly true in the area of language, where they need to use professional jargon. This gives a good impression to recruiters and increases the likelihood of securing employment.

### **5.5.2 FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA**

One of the major goals of educational institutions, especially higher education institutions, is to develop students who will be able to thrive in the labour market and showcase the institutions themselves. Interviews conducted for this study revealed that recruiters were of the opinion that educational curriculums need to include courses that specifically teach students how to apply for employment opportunities and market themselves effectively. To this effect, it is recommended that educational institutions in South Africa include courses to assist graduates to apply for vacancies within their curriculums so that they can be able to equip students with the knowledge and skills they need to secure employment upon the completion of their courses.

### **5.5.3 FOR FUTURE STUDIES**

During data analysis, it was determined that students from MUT experience barriers to employment to a greater degree than their counterparts from UKZN and DUT. Because these results were gathered through quantitative methods, it was difficult to determine the exact reasons why this was so. Consequently, socio-economic conditions were regarded as the most plausible answer. However, through further research, particularly qualitative research which would yield details based on experience, comprehensive answers can be obtained on the matter.

Likewise, there is need to further investigate the barriers to employment and how they affect men and women. In the study, results revealed that women experienced such barriers more than men, but this was not an issue that was part of the primary objectives; hence, the lack of definitive explanations. Studies that specifically investigate or explore that phenomenon will most likely yield greater insight on the issue.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



#### Interview Schedule for Recruitment Agencies

I am a Doctoral candidate at the Department of Marketing and Retail, at the Durban University of Technology.

My research is titled **Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This Interview is intended to collect data from specific personnel from the Recruitment Agencies. The study aims to examine the phenomenon of unemployment among Black South African Millennials. Participant's personal details and data collected in this study will remain anonymous, while ensuring confidentiality of the participants.

1. **What employment opportunities are available through social networking sites?** *(Can be from any companie(s) you work closely with)*

---

2. **Are millennials taking advantage of social networking sites for employment opportunities?**

---

3. **In your view, why are millennials not optimally seeking employment opportunities through social networking websites?**

---

4.

**Please advise on how millennials could find employment opportunities through Social Networking Sites.**

---

**5. Do you consider social media platforms as an effective medium for advertising employment opportunities amongst millennials?**

---

**6. Which Social Networking Sites platforms are most effective in job searching?**

---

**7. What possible barriers do you envisage/see in advertising employment opportunities through the social media platforms?**

---

**8. Identify the main challenges millennials have in seeking employment opportunities through Social Networking Sites.**

---

**9. In your view, how can social networking sites be used to advertise employment vacancies for millennials?**

---

***Thank you!***

## APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



### Interview Schedule for (DPSA)

I am a Doctoral candidate at the Department of Marketing and Retail, at the Durban University of Technology.

My research is titled **Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This Interview is intended to collect data from specific personnel from the Recruitment Agencies. The study aims to examine the phenomenon of unemployment among Black South African Millennials. Participant's personal details and data collected in this study will remain anonymous, while ensuring confidentiality of the participants.

4. **What employment opportunities are available through social networking sites?** *(Can be from any companie(s) you work closely with)*

---

5. **Are millennials taking advantage of the social networking sites for employment opportunities?**

---

6. **In your view, why are millennials not optimally seeking employment opportunities through social networking website?**

---

4.  
**Please advise on how millennials could find employment opportunities through Social Networking Sites.**

---

10. Do you consider social media platforms as an effective medium for advertising employment opportunities amongst millennials?

---

11. Which Social Networking Sites platforms are most effective in job searching?

---

12. What possible barriers do you envisage/see in advertising employment opportunities through the social media platforms?

---

13. Identify the main challenges millennials have in seeking employment opportunities through Social Networking Sites.

---

14. In your view, how can social networking sites be used to advertise employment vacancies for millennials?

---

*Thank you!*

## APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE



### Interviews for Personnel at the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

I am a Doctoral candidate at the Department of Marketing and Retail, at the Durban University of Technology.

My research is titled: **Exploring Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal.**

This Interview is intended to collect data from specific personnel from the **Department of Public service and Administration (DPSA)**. The study aims to examine the phenomenon of unemployment among Black.

South African Millennials. Participant's personal details and data collected in this study will remain anonymous, while ensuring confidentiality of the participants.

#### 1. Do you advertise employment vacancies through social networking sites?

No/ Yes?

Yes  No

If yes, please Explain.

---

If no, why?

---

#### 2. Has your department used any of the LinkedIn, Careers or indeed to advertise a job vacancy?

Yes  No

Briefly explain.

---

**3. Does the Department of (DPSA) have an employment opportunity drive /initiative for young black millennials?**

Yes  No

**If yes please, briefly discuss?** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. How are most of your employment opportunities being advertised?**

---

**5. What obstacles do you see in communicating job openings?**

---

**6. What possible barriers do you envisage/see in advertising employment opportunities through the social media platforms?**

---

**7. In your view, how can social networking sites be used to advertise employment vacancies for millennials?**

---

**8. Do you consider social media platforms as an effective medium for advertising employment opportunities amongst millennials?**

Yes  No

**If yes, please explain further?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Kindly explain how social media platforms can be used to advertise employment opportunities within the Department (DPSA)?**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

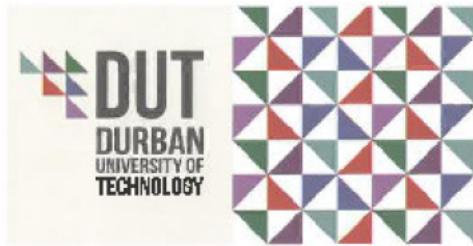
**10. In your view, which network site do you think is more user-friendly and popular for Job searching**

Briefly explain.

\_\_\_\_\_

***Thank you!***

## APPENDIX D: PROVISIONAL ETHICS LETTER FROM DUT



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
1st Floor, Nelson Mandela  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology

P.O. Box 1324 Durban, South Africa 400

Tel: 031 379 1375

Email: [irsec@dut.ac.za](mailto:irsec@dut.ac.za)

[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)

[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

13 February 2020

Ms T S Mdletshe  
J2 1803 Nsozi Street  
Esikhawini  
3887

Dear Ms Mdletshe

### Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal

I am pleased to inform you that **PROVISIONAL APPROVAL** has been granted to your proposal subject to:

- Piloting of the data collection tool. *Please note that should there be any changes to the data collection tool, in a letter signed by the researcher and supervisor, list the changes to the document and submit to IREC with the final data collection tool. Even when there are no changes to the data collection tool, IREC has to be notified.*
- Obtaining and submitting the necessary gatekeeper permission/s to Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT A FINAL APPROVAL LETTER. KINDLY SUBMIT THE ABOVE MENTIONED DOCUMENTS WITHIN THREE MONTHS TO THE IREC OFFICE. DATA COLLECTION CAN ONLY COMMENCE WHEN IREC ISSUES FULL APPROVAL

The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 082/19**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

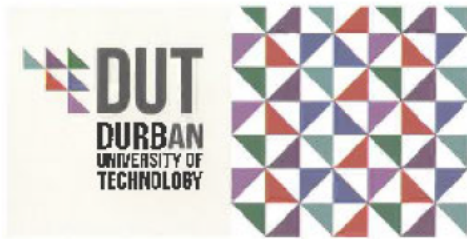
Approval has been granted for a period of **ONE YEAR**, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the IREC. This form must be submitted to the IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Yours Sincerely

Professor J.K. Adam  
Chairperson: IREC



## APPENDIX E: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM DUT



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2nd Floor, Breyers Centre  
Glenelg, 1, Sisonke Bldg Campus  
Durban University of Technology  
P.O. Box 1334, 113, Stanger, KwaZulu-Natal, 400  
Tel: 031 373 2273  
Email: [irec@dut.ac.za](mailto:irec@dut.ac.za)  
<http://www.dut.ac.za/research/ethics>  
[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

20 November 2020

Ms T S Mdeleshe  
J2 1803 Nsezi Street  
Esikhawini  
3887

Dear Ms Mdeleshe

**Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal**  
Ethical Clearance number IREC 082/19

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your notification regarding the piloting of your data collection tool.

Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

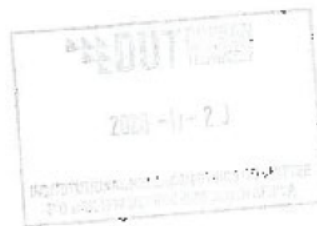
Please note that FULL APPROVAL is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

Professor J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC



## APENDIX F: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM MUT



Research Directorate

UMLAZI KWAZULU-NATAL  
PO Box 12283 Jubbos 4026 Durban  
Tel: 031 857 7450

05 October 2020

REF: RDO/03/2020

Ms T.S Mdletshe  
Durban University of Technology

Dear Ms Mdletshe

**PROTOCOL: Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal**

The MUT Research Ethics Committee considered your application at their meeting held on 21 September 2020. It is my pleasure to inform you that permission to conduct the research project above was granted.

The approval is valid for two years from 01 October 2020. Any changes to the project must immediately be brought to the attention of the MUT Research Ethics Committee.

Your acceptance of this approval denotes your compliance with South African National Research Ethics guidelines (2004) and the MUT Research Ethics Policy, Procedures and Guidelines.

Good luck with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Dr A Mienie  
Director: Research

## APPENDIX G: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM UKZN



26 August 2020

Thenjiwe Slindile Mdletshe  
Durban University of Technology  
Email: [Mdletshe.slindile@gmail.com](mailto:Mdletshe.slindile@gmail.com)

Dear Ms Mdletshe

### RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) towards your postgraduate studies, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained. We note the title of your research project is:

*"Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal."*

It is noted that you will be constituting your sample by handing out questionnaires and/or conducting interviews with students from UKZN. (Taking in account the regulations imposed during the lockdown ie restrictions on gatherings, travel, social distancing etc. ZOOM, Skype or telephone surveys recommended).

Please ensure that the following appears on your questionnaire/attached to your notice:

- Ethical clearance approval letter;
- Research title and details of the research, the researcher and the supervisor;
- Consent form is attached to the notice/questionnaire and to be signed by user before he/she fills in questionnaire;
- gatekeepers approval by the Registrar.

You are not authorized to contact staff and students using the 'Microsoft Outlook' address book. Identity numbers and email addresses of individuals are not a matter of public record and are protected according to Section 14 of the South African Constitution, as well as the PAIA and POPI Act. For the release of such information over to yourself for research purposes, the University of KwaZulu-Natal will need express consent from the relevant data subjects. Data collected must be treated with due confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely

**DR KE CLELAND: REGISTRAR (ACTING)**

---

#### Office of the Registrar

Poetal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, South Africa  
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 8005/2206 Email: [registrar@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:registrar@ukzn.ac.za)  
Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)



INSPIRING GREATNESS

## APPENDIX H: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM RECRUITMENT AGENCY

A



www.helenlucres.co.za  
P O BOX 37151, Durban, 4017  
Telephone: 082 699 4925

28 July 2022.

OUT:

Re: Research being conducted by Thenjwe Sindile Mdeletshe (Student number 20911650)

As owner of a recruitment company, Helen Lucre Resourcing, I am comfortable answering questions and assisting Sindile with input, wherever appropriate.

Please come back to me should you have any queries.

Regards

Helen Lucre  
Managing Director

## APPENDIX I: LETTER OF AUTHORISATION FROM RECRUITMENT AGENCY

B



P.O. BOX 1524  
GARSFONTEIN EAST  
0064

TEL : (012) 807-2121  
CELL : 082 904 2104  
E-MAIL : mc@tacrec.co.za  
Date : 28 July 2022

**RE: Research Project Thenjiwe Slindile Mdletshe**

Dear Thenjiwe,

I herewith agree that the recruitment consultants of TAC Recruitment can be interviewed by you for your research project.

Regards,

Marika Craig  
Director  
TAC Recruitment

## APPENDIX J: CONFIDENTIALITY FORM FROM DPSA



**the dpsa**

Department:  
Public Service and Administration  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

### CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I,  **Slindile Mchese** \_\_\_\_\_ (First names and Surname)  
having been granted  \_\_\_\_\_ to do research in the Department of Public Service and Administration  
agree to:

- + Use any data and information obtained during my research in the DPSA with the strictest confidentiality and only for the purposes stated in my application, and
- ❖ Submit a copy of my research report to the DPSA library, addressed to THE DIRECTOR - GENERAL: DPSA, attention Director: **URA**.

### RESEARCHER

Therijwe Slindile Mchese  
**NAME AND SURNAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**DAIE:** 03 Aug 2022 \_\_\_\_\_

Durban University of Technology  
**EMPLOYER:** \_\_\_\_\_

**006-** \_\_\_\_\_  
03 Aug 2022  
**DAIE-** \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX L: LETTER OF INFORMATION

### LETTER OF INFORMATION



#### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the study:** Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:**

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:**

Dr Hawkins-Mofokeng – Lecturer, Department of Marketing and Retail Management)

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

The study will examine the phenomena of unemployment among Black South African Millennials. It will equally explore employment opportunities through social networking platforms - LinkedIn'. The research will elaborate upon barriers attributed to seeking employment opportunities through social networking sites. Based on responses from selected participants of this study, relevant stakeholders and literature, the researcher intends to formulate a model aimed at educating Millennials on how to seek employment opportunities through the social networking platforms.

#### **Outline of the Procedures:**

The respondents of this study are expected to fill in questionnaires while some other participants will be expected to partake in interviews about employment opportunities through social networking platforms. The questionnaires will be distributed among students of selected tertiary institutions within the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

It will take each of the respondents about 15-20 minutes to fill a questionnaire.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** None

**Benefits:** To create an awareness on how social networking platforms can be used to seek employment

**Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study:**

Participants may be withdrawn from participating if they are non-compliant, ill or as a result of an adverse reaction. Participants may withdraw from participating if they so wish.

**Remuneration:** None

**Costs of the Study:** R 15 000

**Confidentiality:** Names of participants would not be mentioned, and if for any reasons names are mentioned, permission will be requested from participant(s) first.

**Research-related Injury:** Possibility of research – related injury not feasible.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:**

**IREC – 031 373 2900 (lavish@dut.ac.za)**

**Research office – 031 373 2577 (zanelep@dut.ac.za)**

## APPENDIX M: LETTER OF CONSENT



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

*Faculty of Management Sciences  
Department of Marketing and Retail Management  
Durban University of Technology  
E-mail: [Mdletshe.slindile@gmail.com](mailto:Mdletshe.slindile@gmail.com)*

22 February 2022

Dear Sir/ Madam

I am a registered Doctoral student at the Department of Marketing and Retail Management, at the Durban University of Technology (student number 20911659). I am currently undertaking a research project as part of my studies towards a Doctorate Degree at the afore-mentioned Department. The aim of the study is to explore employment opportunities for Black South African Millennials through the LinkedIn. The study will be a case comparison research, where the focus will be on Black South African Millennials at Selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal. Would you agree to complete an Interview for the study? The Interview will take approximately 10 minutes. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving reasons, and without prejudice or any adverse consequences. The information you give will only be used for research purposes and will be aggregated with other responses and only the overall or average information will be used. Your identity and individual answers will be kept totally confidential. Should you wish to discuss this further please feel free to contact me or my supervisor, Dr Raymond Hilary Hawkins-Mofokeng on, **031 373 5389** or at [raymondh@dut.ac.za](mailto:raymondh@dut.ac.za).

Your assistance will be much appreciated,

Yours faithfully

---

Student – Thenjiwe S Mdletshe

Contact Details – +2778 304 7015

Email- [mdletshe.slindile@gmail.com](mailto:mdletshe.slindile@gmail.com)

Supervisor / Promoter- Dr Raymond Hawkins-Mofokeng

Contact Details- +27(31)375389

## APPENDIX N: GATEKEEPERS LETTER



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### GATEKEEPER LETTER

12A Colbrela Court,  
22 Young's Avenue  
Botanic  
Gardens  
4001

03 May 2022

P.O. BOX 37131

Overport

Durban

4067

**Dear Mr Biyase**

I am a registered Doctoral student at the Department of Marketing and Retail Management, at the Durban University of Technology (student number 20911659). I hereby wish to solicit the permission to conduct a study concerning employment opportunities through social networking platforms.

My study is titled: **Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal**

The overall aim of this study is to explore employment opportunities for black South African Millennials through the LinkedIn.

Participants will have to fill in a questionnaire, **while some other stakeholders will be interviewed**. No personal information is sought, and no questions relate to staff members or the management of your institution. The questionnaires will be administered among students from selected tertiary institutions within the KwaZulu-Natal Province, as well as interviews amongst personnel from the **recruitment agencies**.

The details regarding the participants' responses will be kept anonymous and confidential. Should you desire, the final report will be made available to you.

If you have any queries about this research project, I can be reached telephonically on or through email. If you require further clarification or would you like to share concerns regarding the research do not hesitate to contact my supervisor, Dr Raymond Hilary Hawkins-Mofokeng on 0313735389/ [raymondh@dut.ac.za](mailto:raymondh@dut.ac.za)

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

---

Thenjiwe Slindile Mdletshe

## APPENDIX O: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE



### Questionnaire

I am Doctoral candidate at the Department Marketing and Retail, at the Durban University of Technology.

My academic research study that I am conducting is titled as: **Exploring the Employment Opportunities through Social Networking Platforms for Black South African Millennials at selected Universities in KwaZulu-Natal**

This questionnaire is intended to collect data from students of the Durban University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology and University of KwaZulu-Natal. The purpose of this study is to examine the phenomenon of unemployment among Black South African Millennials. Participant’s personal details and data collected in this study will remain anonymous, while ensuring confidentiality of the participants.

#### Section A: Biodata

Please indicate with ‘x’ where applicable

##### 1. Gender

Male  Female

##### 2. Age

18 - 20	
21 – 24	
25 – 28	
29 – 34	
35 and above	

##### 3. Race/Ethnicity

African	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coloured	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>
White	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Please specify:

##### 4. Institution

MUT	
DUT	
UKZN	



9	Google+	
10	Reddit	

**Section C – Employment opportunities through social media (LinkedIn)**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11	Social media (LinkedIn) is a good platform for employment opportunities					
12	There are several employment opportunities on Social media (LinkedIn)?					
13	The millennials do not take advantage of the social networking sites in job search?					
14	Social Networking sites platforms are effective in job searching?					

**Section D – Barriers to seeking employment opportunities through social media**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
15	Affordability is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms.					
16	Accessibility is a barrier to employment search through social media platforms.					
17	User-friendliness of the social media platforms can be a barrier to seeking for employment.					
18	Vacancies on social networking sites are not taken seriously.					

**Section E: Most effective job-search websites**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
19	LinkedIn is considered more effective than Indeed and Careers 24 (when job searching)?					
20	Indeed, is considered more effective than					

	LinkedIn and Careers 24 (when job searching)?					
21	Career 24 is considered more effective than Indeed and LinkedIn (when job searching)?					

**Section F: User-friendliness and popularity among Job search websites**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
22	LinkedIn is more user-friendly than Indeed and Careers 24					
23	LinkedIn is more popular than Indeed and Careers 24					
24	Indeed, is more user-friendly than LinkedIn and Careers 24					
25	Indeed, is more popular than LinkedIn and Careers 24					
26	Careers 24 is more user-friendly than LinkedIn and Indeed					
27	Careers 24 is more popular than LinkedIn and Indeed					

*Thank you!!*