



Masters research report

“A comparative investigation of the criteria prioritized by employers in a regulated (Engineering) and unregulated (Finance) sector during the hiring process”

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Introduction

This study employs a qualitative research paradigm to better understand the hiring practices of employers in a regulated and an unregulated sector in the South African labour market. While much is said about the skills and competencies that South African work candidates require as they enter jobs in different industrial sectors, little is known about the thinking behind the processes that employers – in both regulated and unregulated- follow when hiring. Various variables influence hiring criteria however, for the purpose of this research I was looking at three criteria, degrees and qualifications, work experience, and social categorisation. Through engaging with HCT and its critiques, I chose these three criteria as they characterise the ways in which employers prioritise their preferences in hiring criteria. In this research project I have decided to investigate how these three criteria are prioritized in hiring criteria.

Priorities during hiring processes and their intersections with broader challenges tied to historically-bounded socially differentiated labour markets, how different hiring processes and criteria that employers use to include or exclude people from opportunities to access work in the context of overall youth unemployment patterns are under-researched topics in the South African context. As such, this study explores the following research question: what are the key hiring criteria mentioned by employers within a regulated (engineering) and unregulated (finance) sector within the South African economy that offer insights into employer thinking and preferences? In so doing, it utilises the following three sub-questions to collect insights by which to address the bigger research question. These include:

1. Which criteria do employers refer to when discussing hiring new employees?
2. Do social factors like race, age, and gender play a role in hiring criteria? If so, to what extent?
3. What are the similarities and differences in hiring criteria mentioned by employers in regulated and unregulated sectors?

Furthermore, in seeking to better understand hiring criteria within the South African economy this study adopts a comparative perspective at two levels, namely it compares the hiring practices and criteria utilised in two very different industries (engineering and finance). It chooses the engineering sector because it has license practices and regulations in hiring processes; and the finance sector which has fewer formal licenses to practice regulations in their hiring processes. With the former (a regulated sector) hiring practices are expected to be

controlled and are mainly managed by external organizations such as governmental departments and professional bodies. And required qualifications are clearly outlined, which makes it difficult to get work in that sector without qualifications that relate specifically to that field. With the latter (an unregulated sector), hiring processes are less bound by a particular organization or set of rules. It is argued that perspectives at these comparative levels offered important insights for research on employer hiring processes and criteria.

Notably, this study uses in-depth interviews with participants, human resources managers, and hiring experts from various firms to collect data.

Some of the key concepts that form part of this research are:

- Hiring criteria
- Social factors
- Work experience
- Education and work
- Credentialism
- Knowledge and skills

In the literature review, I discuss various studies that have investigated hiring criteria tied to different industries within the labour market and explore these in relation to studies that show the importance of degrees and qualifications, work experience, and social factors in shaping hiring criteria. Through my analysis of HCT and its critiques, I have selected these three criteria. I aim to understand the specific meaning attributed by the employers I have interviewed. In doing so, I wish to understand which of the three criteria matter most and how the responses I got from interviews have emphasised what is not addressed in the current literature.

The literature review begins with a discussion of HCT's main assumptions and some critiques of HCT. I then move onto analyse studies concerned with broader macro issues tied to economies in the Global South and the predominant prevalence of unemployment. It unpacks the issue in relation to youth unemployment in Africa specifically (African Development Bank Group, 2019). This section discussion resurfaces in the theoretical review, where issues tied to education and work, human capital theory (Becker, 1962; Schultz, 1961), and the importance given to credentialism (Brown, 2001; Collins, 1979) in neoliberal economies when employers

make hiring decisions, is explored. It is further tied to what *knowledge and skills* are deemed important in contemporary labour markets. The section is also connected in important ways to the study's main problem statement, its main aims, and the overall rationale for the research.

By providing this background the literature review reveals influential elements within hiring processes linked to understandings of *skill deficiencies*, *skills shortages*, and *skills gaps* within contemporary labour market debates (Cappelli, 2015; Dhingra, 2018). This section confirms the importance of the study, namely exploring *hiring criteria* within different labour market sectors (Rozario et al., 2019). I then examine the importance attached to degrees and qualifications, work experience (Humburg et al., 2013), and internships as a form of informal work experience (Hodges & Burchell, 2003) within contemporary labour markets, followed by a discussion of different social categorisation that are given preference by different employers when hiring (Fernandez & Mors, 2008; Undurraga, 2019; Wilson et al., 2007). In examining the importance of each of the three criteria, I show how these criteria were chosen through engaging with HCT. The goal is to show employer thinking and preferences (around selection, screening and interviewing), especially within human resource department practices, when making hiring decisions.

Problem statement

Whilst employment opportunities have generally increased in South Africa over the past 27 years, the increase in employment opportunities was not large enough to absorb the number of new job seekers (Mncayi & Shuping, 2021). This created one of the highest unemployment rates in the world. South Africa's unemployment statistics have been a chronic issue in the country, one which government continuously attempts to remedy through various strategies (Mncayi & Shuping, 2021). This has motivated many researchers to investigate the root of this complex problem and suggest possible solutions.

When looking for explanations for the problem of unemployment, people often turn to the education system. In a study conducted by Festus et al. (2015), it is stated that "recent surveys have shown that South African students on average are among the worst-performing groups when compared to their peers globally. In particular, the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2011 results showed South African was the second worst-performing country in Mathematics and the worst-performing country in Science, out of the 63 participating countries" (Festus et al., 2015, p. 2). This suggests that education systems are the main reason

for unemployment as they are said to be producing insufficiently educated labour market entrants and thus, many new job seekers struggle to find employment.

In South Africa and in other parts of the developing world, education systems are often blamed for widespread unemployment by government. In discussions of unemployment and labour market mismatches, education systems are often criticized for not producing the required skills (Allais, 2015). Employers contribute to this narrative when they report that they cannot find the skilled workers that they need. Subsequently, this narrative suggests that education systems and job-seeking graduates are entirely responsible for instilling and acquiring the skills needed by employers (Allais, 2015). Attributing blame to education systems for being unable to meet the needs of employers can undermine educators and students. This narrative dominates public debate about the state of labour markets and the performance of schools and universities (for critique of this view see Allais, 2015).

This creates a contradiction. While employers emphasise the importance of qualifications, employment statistics suggest that those who possess relevant qualifications are not necessarily at an advantage when job-seeking. This contradiction creates the context in which this research has taken place. While employers emphasise the need for certain competencies and skills, having these competencies and skills doesn't seem to help candidates when they seek jobs in different sectors. This suggests that there is a disconnect between how education systems relate to work.

The most pessimistic, yet wildly popular, position taken within the debate of how education relates to the world of work is that of the *skills gap* (Cappelli, 2015). Within this paradigm, the shortfalls found in the basic skills of future employees is attributed to the failure of the education system (Cappelli, 2015). The skills gap position is commonly taken by South African employers and politicians. Politicians often speak about skills gaps, skills shortages, the inability of the current education curriculum to impart adequate knowledge and skills to work candidates, which implies a mismatch between what education provides and what employers require. However, in many cases the problem lies with employers and their hiring criteria and practices, and their expectations of an education system that they have no interest in supporting or investing in. The skills gaps then speak to a mismatch in the discourses of skills development amongst providers and the discourse of skills absorption in the labour market.

In a press release by the African Development Bank Group in 2019 regarding the skills mismatch in jobs for the youth, senior researcher Adamon Mukassa states that there is a large

disparity between the number of enrolments in secondary and the number of enrolments in tertiary education, and that this disparity has resulted in a shortfall in the skills of youth and an overall skills gap in African economies. To close this skills gap and remedy skill shortages, mechanisms to facilitate a smooth school-to-work transition need to be implemented (African Development Bank Group, 2019).

This links to my previous discussion regarding unemployment as, yet again, a result of inadequate education systems. Although education is commonly seen as the explanation for skills gaps, this is not the focus of my research. My research tackles the assumption that education is the main factor that is prioritized in the hiring process and that it is instead, hidden social factors that are prioritized. This research aimed to understand what it is that employers read into qualifications and how other factors influence the hiring process.

In conclusion, unemployment in South Africa continues to be a major problem. Education is often blamed for contributing to this problem by creating insufficiently skill job seekers. While employers emphasise the importance of qualifications and the need for certain skills, possessing qualifications and skills may not increase a person's chances of employment. When considering the apparent disconnect between education and work and the emphasis on the need for certain competencies and skills, it becomes clear that there are various factors that influence hiring decisions and different things are valued by different employers. What is less clear is the order of preference of these factors. This lack of clarity leads makes it difficult for people to understand hiring processes and decisions. This lack of clarity also creates ambiguity and inconsistency, and this is the problem which this research aimed to investigate. This problem, within the context of the current explanations of the relationship between education and work, led me to this research and informed my approach to this area of study.

Aim in studying hiring criteria

I aim to determine which criteria (degrees and qualifications, work experience, and social categorisation) selected from the literature are prioritized by employers in regulated and unregulated sectors when reviewing resumes and choosing suitable candidates during the hiring process. I aim to investigate how firms read into qualifications and subsequently pick up on the nuances of employers' social factors in hiring criteria. Further, I aim to understand the specific meaning attributed to the three criteria by the participants I interview. I am intrigued by what hides behind filtering techniques and screening and the role that prejudice may play in hiring decisions.

Theoretical framework

Within HCT, education is perceived as an investment in one's human capital which is then directly linked to one's productivity and prospective labour market rewards (Schultz, 1961). Furthermore, HCT's main assumptions imply that the individual is responsible for the choices they make. This implies that if an individual chooses to invest in education, thereby increasing their future productivity and prospective labour market rewards, it is their choice. Conversely, if they choose not to pursue education, it is entirely their conscious choice (Schultz, 1961). Although HCT has not spoken directly to the three criteria I identified in the literature review, it has suggested that what is common among most employers is that they are looking for indicators of knowledge and skills that will make workers more productive to some extent.

In this theoretical framework, I framed my three chosen criteria (degrees and qualifications, work experience, and social categorisations) within the theory of *credentialism* (Brown, 2001; Collins, 1979). I begin by discussing the origins of the theory and its main assumptions. I will then discuss how this theory sheds light on each of my criteria. In this discussion I will highlight how credentialism will guide my data analysis process.

Credentialism originated out of educational Sociology and was famously developed by American sociologist Randall Collins (1979) who drew on Max Weber's stratification analyses which highlights education-based status-group domination (Brown, 2001). The main premise of credentialism is that "formal schooling leads to socio-economic success not because of the superior skills and knowledge of the more highly educated, but rather because of the ability of the highly educated to control access to elite positions" (Bills, 2003, p. 452). This quote speaks to a key assumption of credentialism which states that, when looking at the content of the actual

degrees, institutions and employers are less concerned with the technical skills possessed by an individual and more concerned with the cultural capital that the degree is associated with such as occupational status group (Brown, 2001, p. 20).

Within the credentialism framework, the relationship between education and work is fundamentally shaped by power relations between job candidates and those in positions of power in places of work. According to Brown, Weber emphasised that because of this, throughout history, education has been inextricably linked to the political relations of employment (Brown, 2001, p. 21). This emphasis provides insight into the relationship between two of my main criteria: degrees and qualifications and work experience. The emphasis placed on the relationship between these criteria guided my data analysis process as I considered how power relations between hiring managers and candidates are unequal in the hiring process, especially during the stage of reviewing resumes.

The theory of credentialism sheds light on my concept of degrees and qualifications in that they are treated as an example of cultural capital as it is a social asset that promotes social mobility (Brown, 2001). Brown discusses Weber's definition of educational credentials as "cultural-political constructions of competence and organizational loyalty that bore little relationship to the technical demands of modern work" (Brown, 2001, p. 21). Credentials, or degrees and qualifications, are therefore analysed, from the credentialism perspective, as tools of social exclusion (Brown, 2001). This conceptualisation of credentials as cultural-political constructions provided by credentialism is more adept to my research because it speaks to the ulterior motives that lie behind job descriptions as was discussed in the literature review (Undurraga, 2019).

The theory of credentialism's perception of degrees and qualifications contradicts HCT's perception of education overall and shows that formal schooling and education more broadly is embedded in issues of social class and educational access. Brown (2001) unpacks this premise and contrasts it to HCT in the context of the expansion of education. While Brown (2001) writes in the American context, the expansion of education is evident in the African context as primary and secondary schooling has become widespread and is perceived as a compulsory element of a child's life.

Is the expansion of education really a reflection of the ever-growing needs of the labour market for skilled workers? According to credentialism theory, the expansion of education is no more

than an indicator of the prevalence of the creation of barriers to employment and the culturally-based stratification that operates in the labour market (Brown, 2001, pp. 19-20).

In elaborating on degrees and qualifications, according to the theory of credentialism these credentials as apparent measures of a candidate's competence and skills allow for unspoken rules, hidden behind human resources policies, to control access and progression in the labour market. This relates to Dhingra's (2018) section in the literature review, which states that the likelihood of being considered for a job position largely depends on skills and abilities that are not school-taught. Subsequently, credentialism considers the overwhelming importance placed on non-technical aspects of a candidate's abilities such as loyalty and trustworthiness (Brown, 2001).

Regarding work experience, I have shown that the lack of work experience significantly decreasing a candidate's chances of getting an interview. The theory of credentialism then provides an emphasis on work experience in that it can be viewed as another benchmark used to create barriers to employment (Brown, 2001b). This emphasis helped me analyse the data I collect regarding work experience.

Another example of the creation of barriers to employment are social factors such as race, age, and gender being used in filtering techniques. 'Labour queues' (Fernandez & Mors, 2008) for example, is a type of social stratification that operates in the labour market. HCT does not explicitly consider social factors when analysing a worker's productivity and prospective labour market rewards. In contrast, the theory of credentialism enables a more in-depth explanation of the social aspects of employer decision making behaviour because it includes cultural and political perspectives. While degrees and qualifications are considered by HCT, competition between status groups, for example, is not considered by HCT and forms the basis of credentialism's analysis. Thus, the theory of credentialism sheds light on my concept of social factors and can assist in my data analysis process.

Regarding social factors, I aimed to understand the ways in which criteria are used by employers to, in some cases, include and/or exclude people from opportunities to access work. In this case, credentialism's conceptualization of credentials as a representation of cultural capital or social assets—and not technical skills or knowledge—shows how organizations are able to restrict access to employment.

In relation to my research, this shows how my criteria of degrees and qualifications and social factors are related as it implies that cultural and social stratification manifests through

perceived prestige of universities by employers. This perspective presented by the theory of credentialism provides a lens through which I can analyse the data I collect regarding degrees and qualifications and social categorisations.

In summary, my understanding of credentialism theory's main claims is that not all criteria play an equal role in the hiring process. The theory of credentialism has shown me that my criteria of social factors is related to my two other criteria of degrees and qualifications and work experience in that social factors underpin other elements in hiring criteria. Social factors underpin other elements in hiring criteria in many ways. This theory has shown how formal schooling is associated with socio-economic success and is regarded highly not for the superior skills and knowledge contained within education but rather the cultural capital associated with an occupational status group that is able to obtain formal education. This is relevant to the South African context. For example, race is often associated with a particular socio-economic class in the South Africa and one's socio-economic status is a significant determinant in the quality of education they can access. The quality of education received can also influence the type of work they are able to do. Therefore, it is evident that the social factor of race can impact a person's qualifications and work experience.

After reviewing the theory of credentialism, I believe that social factors may play a more significant role than is specified in job descriptions. Credentialism's lens is especially appropriate for my research due to the emphasis on socio-political factors that can influence hiring criteria such as the power relations that operate in the labour market. Thus, the lens provided by this theory allows me to critically analyse the data collected in interviews.

Research design

Overall methodological approach

This research project is qualitative in nature as it focuses on meaning, perceptions and understandings of participants from their points of view (Janesick, 2000). By placing the voices of the research participants at the centre of my methodology, I was able to capture the nuances and intricacies of the hiring process. By adopting a qualitative approach, my research was able to gain insights into the individual ideas of employers and hiring members in a familiar, comfortable setting: an interview.

Context of this research

This research took place between 2020-2021 in accordance with the timeline of a full-time MEd degree. As this research was conducted through online platforms, the location of participants was broadened to all parts of South Africa, not just Johannesburg as I had previously expected.

The study population for my research consists of human resources managers from finance firms and engineering firms as well as hiring experts within these firms. I selected participants based on pre-determined requirements using a non-probability purposive sampling technique to collect theoretically meaningful data to assist in answering my research question. This involved deliberately selecting participants based on their experience, knowledge, and field of expertise which is hiring and recruitment. The pre-determined requirements were:

- a) firms that do not outsource their human resources operation.
- b) finance related firms that are currently operating.
- c) engineering related firms that are currently operating.

I chose firms that did not outsource their human resources function because I wanted to research hiring managers and hiring experts within firms. Those who outsource hiring functions would not have hiring managers and experts within their staff members. I made use of my personal networks in the finance sector and engineering sector to select companies that meet my criteria. I contacted the HR departments of the companies I have selected via email regarding my research. Once I received confirmation from these companies, I arranged the interviews.

Research method

I chose to collect my data in a form of an interview because of the ability of interviews to assist the researcher in understanding and explaining the opinions and experiences of the participants. I used an innovative tool of hypothetical resumes to assist in collecting data. The participant viewed each resume and I then asked them to rank the resumes from most suitable to least suitable. I probed the participants rankings and this enabled me to source interesting perceptions from the participants as well as gain insight into how they may work with resumes in the hiring process.

Due to the status of the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant health risks imposed by the virus, the interviews took place on Zoom. In the interviews, I used two sets of four resumes

that were designed based on my relatives and friends' resumes who work in the industries of interest. Four were used in the interviews with hiring members from finance firms and four were used in interviews with hiring members from engineering firms. The hypothetical resumes contained relevant qualifications for the industry and varied according to the three main criteria: degrees and qualifications; work experience; and social categorisation like race, gender, and age. This method was chosen to mimic elements of the hiring process, namely presenting hiring members with resumes for evaluation of which one would be most suitable thus exploring employers' preferences regarding the criteria contained on the resumes. These were then analysed with the view to unpack employers' hiring criteria.

The focus on the occupational fields of engineering and finance was motivated by the need to compare two sectors that are perceived to be different and are regulated differently and by different professional bodies. For example, the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) is a statutory body that regulates the engineering profession in South Africa. With the goal of regulating the engineering industry in South Africa, ECSA has established registrations systems to ensure competence and accreditation of all qualified engineers.

In the finance sector, there are several regulating bodies as opposed to one all-encompassing body. The South African Reserve Bank (SARB), the Financial Intelligence Centre, the Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) among many others are responsible for overseeing banks and other financial services industries in South Africa. In comparison to ECSA, these regulating bodies are more concerned with ensuring the legal functioning and performance of companies and less concerned with registration of financial workers and the accreditation of commerce-related degrees and qualifications.

As stated in my introduction, my research aimed to unpack the similarities and differences between the hiring criteria used by employers in regulated and unregulated sectors, understand how the three criteria can be used to understand employers' decisions in hiring criteria. A regulated sector is one in which qualifications, accreditation and hiring processes are controlled and managed by external organizations such as governmental departments. In a regulated sector, qualifications are clearly outlined, and it is difficult to get work in that sector without qualifications relating specifically to that field. An unregulated sector on the other hand is one in which hiring qualifications and accreditation processes are not bound by any particular organization or set of rules.

Drawing from the findings of Humburg, van der Velden and Verhagen (2013) who used a similar approach in collecting data for their research, the occupational fields of engineering and finance are said to be areas in which employers experience difficulty when recruiting and hiring appropriately skilled employees (Humburg, van der Velden, et al., 2013).

The method of in-depth interviews provided a platform in which I could address issues that could not be addressed in the same level of detail as in a Likert-scale questionnaire for example. The focus of the in-depth interviews was the set of opinions of the participants and their attitudes toward the hypothetical resumes (see more below).

In the first part of the interviews I conducted, I asked questions directly from the interview guide I created which investigated the participants' idea of an appropriate candidate, the important factors considered when reviewing resumes, and the method commonly used to decide between two similar candidates. After asking these questions and probing participants' responses to get a fuller picture of the hiring criteria of the organization, I presented the participants with the hypothetical resumes (See Appendix B). I shared my screen and allowed the participants to view each resume. Some participants took notes on each resume and spend quite a bit of time reviewing each one. Others did not take notes and went through the resumes quickly. After having reviewed the resumes, I asked the participants to rank them from most suitable to least suitable and explain some of the major differences between the most suitable resume and the least suitable resume. I then asked what information of the most suitable resume was of most value to each participant as well as what information was most striking on the least suitable resume (See Appendix B). After discussing the resumes in detail, I questioned the participants about their personal hiring experiences, the successful ones and the unsuccessful ones to find some similarities between the way they ranked their resumes and their real-life experiences of hiring. In the final part of the interviews, I asked questions that were directly linked to my literature and aimed to gain insight into the participants' perspectives on various topics.

Sample

I conducted in-depth interviews with five firms in the engineering industry and five firms in the finance industry. I chose to conduct five interviews with each sector (ten interviews in total) because of the nature of this research. This is a Masters research report so the scale at which research can be conducted is not large. I chose this number of interviews because I believed that I would be able to conduct these interviews within the time constraints of a full-time

Masters research project and that I would be able to gain sufficient findings to answer my research questions.

I interviewed people who worked in HR such as HR managers and HR experts in the chosen firms because I believe they would be able to give me meaningful insights into the hiring process. By interviewing people within HR, I was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of their experiences in hiring.

Hypothetical resumes

I created eight hypothetical resumes to use as innovative tools of discussion to gain concrete information during the interviews with participants (See Appendix B). The point of using these hypothetical resumes was to use a tool with which to gain insight into the participants' sorting process when reviewing resumes during the hiring process. Each resume varied in terms of age, race and gender in order to represent a variety of social categorisations. The degrees and qualifications and work experience on each resume was informed by the resumes of friends and family who are currently working in the relevant industries. I altered the duration of degrees and qualifications and work experience to suit the ages I had created for each resume. I formatted each resume's font and design according to the typical resume templates on Microsoft Word however, I made sure that each resume looked noticeably different. I reviewed and edited each resume several times to avoid any spelling errors and grammar errors to prevent any of the resumes being ranked poorly because of these errors and not because of their content.

I used these resumes as an innovative tool for discussion and investigation of the preferences of employers. By asking employers to order and compare the resumes and by probing their responses, I explored what they read into qualifications and found out the finer details of what they are really looking for (in their hiring criteria). All three criteria identified in the literature review, degrees and qualifications, work experience, and social factors, were represented on the resumes. The third concept, social categorisation, will be probed further through interview questions. All eight resumes can be found in Appendix B (see pages 57-72).

In-depth interviews

An in-depth interview can be referred to as a conversation with a clear purpose (Legard et al., 2003). I have chosen this method because it provided a combination of structure and flexibility that allowed me to explore my research question in an unrestricted way (Legard et al., 2003). Another advantage of this method that I benefited from the ability to probe participants' responses to be probed where necessary.

Due to the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and the significant health risks imposed by the virus, I conducted the interviews through Zoom. Despite not being physically face-to-face, online interviews allowed me to explore non-verbal elements of the participants responses such as tone of voice and facial expressions, in addition to their verbal responses.

Each interview was audio recorded, with the participants' full consent, and I took brief notes where necessary. The interviews were between 1 hour and 1 hour and 30 minutes long.

Validity and reliability

I aimed to achieve validity in this research by ensuring truthfulness and authenticity throughout the process of data analysis (Neuman, 2006). I have done so by giving a fair and honest account of the responses accounting for the perspective of the participants in my research. I aimed to achieve reliability in this research by ensuring the consistent recording of my observations throughout the data collection process. This was done through audio recording, with the participants' permission and note taking throughout the interviews.

Ethical considerations

I received ethics clearance from the faculty prior to conducting my interviews. During my research, I ensured ethical practice through acquiring the informed consent of my participants using a participant information sheet detailing the purpose of my research and the role of the participant in my research in addition to a participant consent form. The participant information sheet can be found in Appendix C (see page 73-74) and the participant consent form can be found in Appendix D (see page 75). To protect the identity of the participants, I used pseudonyms when transcribing the interviews and analysing the data. The nature of this research did not pose any physical or psychological harm nor did the content of the interview questions infringe on any human rights.

Data analysis method: Classification and Coding

In examining the raw data from the interviews, I used coding methods to sift through the data on the interview transcripts. This was done by classifying interview transcripts into categories to analyse employers' perceptions and preferences hiring criteria. In this process of separating the data into categories and sub-categories, I was able to represent the participants' perceptions of hiring criteria.

I began by breaking up the data into the different categories and sub-categories. Once I had separated the data, I extracted key words, concepts, and phrases from the responses. I then grouped categories and assigned codes to each category in the form of upper-case letters. In the final stage of coding, I created links between the relevant codes (my three main criteria) and the theoretical ideas discussed in previous sections of my research. I also analysed data related to other codes such as Personality, Hobbies, Appearance and Performance during the interview. The table below shows how I separated the key words extracted from responses into sub-categories and broad categories, and then how categories were grouped into codes:

TABLE 1 – CODING OF KEY WORDS AND CRITERIA

Key words	Sub-category	Category	Code
Character	Personality traits	Personality	P
Personal connection	Connection with HR	Performance during interview	PI
Self-starter	Personality traits	Personality	P
Interpersonal skills	Personality traits	Personality	P
Organizational fit	Personality traits	Personality	P
Personal goals for career	Personal aspirations	Personality	P
Individual development	Personal aspirations	Personality	P
Performance during interview	Connection with HR	Performance during interview	PI
Life achievements	Personal aspirations	Personality	P
Personal interests	Hobbies and interests	Hobbies and interests	H
Ability to innovate	Personality traits	Personality	P
Potential to grow	Personal aspirations	Personality	P
Openness	Personality traits	Personality	P
Independent	Personality traits	Personality	P
Team-player	Personality traits	Personality	P
Soft skills	Personality traits	Personality	P
Situational judgement	Personality traits	Personality	P
Experience	Work experience	Work experience	W
Freelance	Type of work experience	Work experience	W
Employment history	Work experience	Work experience	W
Track-record	Work experience	Work experience	W
Experience in the field	Practical experience	Work experience	W
Well-seasoned	Familiarity with the workplace	Work experience	W
Education	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Degree	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Bachelor's	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Master's	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Honours	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q

PhD	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Studies	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Modules	Content of qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Courses	Content of qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Credentials	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Expertise	Engagement with content of qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Knowledge	Content of qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Technical knowledge	Content of qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Practical knowledge	Knowledge of the workplace	Work experience	W
Ability to function in the workplace	Knowledge of the workplace	Work experience	W
Internationally recognized	Type of qualification	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Qualified	Degrees and qualifications	Degrees and qualifications	Q
Proficiency in English	Language ability	Literacy	L
Literate	Language ability	Literacy	L
First language English speaker	Language ability	Literacy	L
BEE requirements	Equity	Social categorizations	S
Employment Equity	Equity	Social categorizations	S
Race	Equity	Social categorizations	S
Gender	Equity	Social categorizations	S
Age	Equity	Social categorizations	S
People of colour	Race	Social categorizations	S
Gender bias	Gender	Social categorizations	S
Quota	Equity	Social categorizations	S
Young	Age	Social categorizations	S
Transformation within the organization	Diversity	Social categorizations	S
Willing to relocate	Location	Location	LO
Beards, tattoos, ponytails	Physical appearance	Appearance	A
Well-put together	Physical appearance	Appearance	A
Well-spoken	Language ability	Literacy	L
Dresses like a slob	Physical appearance	Appearance	A
Casual	Physical appearance	Appearance	A
Needs to be micro-managed	Personality trait	Personality	P
Maturity	Age	Social categorizations	S
Getting along with the team	Personality trait	Personality	P
Cultural fit	Personality trait	Personality	P
Conduct interviews	Interviewer	Interview Process	IP
Python and Autocad	Coding languages	Coding skills	CS

It is evident that there are numerous ideas (shown in the Table in the ‘key words’ column) that were important to participants when discussing hiring criteria. While all the categories listed

on the Table can be used to analyse participants' responses and can offer valuable insight into the key words listed above, I focused on three criteria of Degrees and Qualifications, Work Experience and Social Factors to analyse the participants responses. This means that I used these criteria to identify hiring criteria embedded in participants' responses. Utterances that point to hiring criteria that are not explicitly associated with the three criteria was discussed and analysed separately.

I identified patterns, similarities and differences between the finance and engineering industries in the discussion section (see page 45) of this paper which will follow my analysis of the findings.

In analysing the participants' responses, each participant is classified according to their job position. The table below shows how participants have been coded according to their job position:

TABLE 2 – JOB POSITION CODES

Job position	Code
Human resources worker	HR
Manager	M
Hiring expert	HE

In the following section of this research report, I provide a detailed account of my findings from both industries. Each quote contains brackets indicating the code it corresponds to (codes created in Table 1), the job position of the participant (codes created in Table 2), a pseudonym and the date of the interview.

Research findings

Finance industry

Overview

I found a high degree of similarity in the responses across all five finance firms when describing an ideal candidate. The participants described an ideal candidate as 1) someone who does not prioritize their personal life over their work life; 2) someone who presents as a self-starter and 3) someone who makes a real connection with the hiring manager. The buzzword “self-starter” was mentioned a lot. I found that the participants placed a lot of value on the idea of someone

who is self-motivated, independent and someone who goes the extra mile without having to be asked or told. One of the participants mentioned the importance of learning potential in a candidate and explained how willingness to learn and openness to criticism is key for a new candidate. All interviews varied in terms of duration. In general, each interview I conducted took about 1 hour to 1 hour 45 minutes.

Analysis of responses – All three criteria

Regarding Employment Equity (which is an aspect of social categorisation), a middle-aged Indian female participant from one of South Africa's most prominent financial services groups, explained:

When we advertise a new vacancy, our pool of candidates is often quite large as we advertise to the whole country and sometime to the whole of Africa. So, we have the luxury of using employment equity as the primary sorting tool when reviewing CVs. I can imagine that in smaller companies this is not doable, but we are lucky that way. (S, HE, Rachel, January 2021)

On diversity in the workplace, this participant said:

Transformation in the workplace is a huge deal to us and especially now. So, sometimes if a candidate doesn't have the years of experience that we want or... something like that but is the right colour and gender then they will be considered for the position. (S, HE, Rachel, January 2021)

This was enlightening and paints a positive picture for jobseekers from previously disadvantaged groups. Regarding the concept of social categorisation, 'employment equity' and 'diversity' appear to be important criteria in this sector. This participant seemed to be genuine about transformation of their organization however, it is possible they were trying to make an effort to appear socially aware.

A common thread that ran through all five interviews in the finance industry was that an ideal candidate would be 'career-driven' and not money-driven. A coloured female participants aged 35-40 years old emphasized:

An ideal candidate wants more than just money to pay the bills. They are looking to develop themselves as an individual and really have a job, or a career actually, that is closely tied to their personal goals and life purpose. (P, M, Monica, February 2021).

When discussing the importance of work experience, a few of the participants expressed that they are wary of many gaps between jobs as it is a sign of *job-hopping*. This is perceived in a negative way as it is associated with a criterion of loyalty to the organization (in this case lack of).

A middle-aged Indian female participant explained:

Any job position held for less than like 6 months is an immediate red flag and can be a deal breaker sometimes. We aren't looking someone who is just going to pack up and go after a few months. (W, HE, Rachel, January 2021)

When discussing the importance of education (re the concept of degrees and qualifications), I found that having a relevant qualification was not necessarily a determining factor (or criterion) of getting an interview or being hired once interviewed. I also found that when job descriptions specify a Bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement, having an Honours or Masters degree does not put a candidate at a special advantage. This was disheartening to hear as young people today are often urged to obtain the highest degree possible. One participant expressed:

Having an Honour's or Masters won't get you further than the others who have Bachelor's degrees who applied. You're all placed at the same starting line. (Q, HR, Phoebe, February 2021)

Another participant, Indian female in their early 30s, expressed their strong dislike for candidates with postgraduate qualifications as they are perceived as not being familiar with the work environment, not being able to work under pressure and not being loyal to an organization due to a constant search for new opportunities. This was perplexing because I would've thought that studying to the postgraduate level would show a candidate's hardworking nature and their ability to work with several deadlines for an extended period of time. These are criteria which I did not expect to be connected with the concept of degrees and qualifications. A participant said:

I might bring them in for an interview, sure. If they're doing a Masters or PhD it would be cool just to chat to them about their studies and see if their research is interesting but I wouldn't necessarily call them after the interview. (Q, HR, Ross, February 2021)

Regarding PhD students in particular, a middle-aged coloured female participant said:

There is no use in hiring a PhD student. What's the use of hiring someone who knows a lot a about a little bit and a little about a lot? PhD students have been studying for too long and are used to working according to their own deadlines. They won't cope well in a pressurized work environment. (Q, HE, Chandler, January 2021)

Due to the nature of their organization, one of the participants said that they are looking for candidates with qualifications and experience that relate to the field of data analytics and data science in general. This participant, black African female in their mid-30s went on to explain:

Being skilled in Python and R gives you a really a strong advantage. Knowing how to work with these coding languages is a huge advantage even if they don't have a lot of work experience. (W, HE, Chandler, January 2021)

I found that in the finance industry, there is a commitment to the provision of formal training and on-the-job training for newly hired candidates. This shows a genuine investment in improving the individual and improving the quality of their outputs.

One of the participants mentioned physical appearance as a criterion that can influence a candidate's chances of being hired although this was not one of my key criteria. This participant said:

Your appearance on the day of the interview plays a major role in how the HR manager sees you. (A, HR, Joey, January 2021)

Another participant expressed a firm dislike for tattoos and said that:

If they are covered in tattoos and beards and ponytails ... no, no, this is not a gin bar (A, HE, Chandler, January 2021)

This was shocking to hear as I did not think that organizations were so concerned with the hairstyles and facial hair decisions of potential employees. Regarding personality traits and soft skills, I was overwhelmed by the importance placed on aspects of a candidate's personality as a new selection criterion that is unrelated to my three criteria. A participant said:

Ideally, we're looking for a self-starter mentality. Someone who takes ownership for their own develop. Someone who doesn't wait around to be asked to do something or to take responsibility. (P, HR, Ross, February 2021)

This participant emphasised the performative aspects of a candidate's resume and behaviour during the interview as an important criterion in the hiring process:

They must really sell themselves through their CV and obviously it's about who shines the most – confidence, being bold, if you can build a connection with an HR manager. (PI, HR, Ross, February 2021)

Performance during an interview seemed to be extremely important criterion to other participants as well:

Personal connections are often used as a deciding factor in interviews... you really have to bring you're A-game. The HR manager ultimately has decision-making power so making a connection with them is crucial. (PI, HR, Joey, January 2021)

I was further surprised to learn the importance participants placed on the criterion of doing more than what is expected:

Working long hours is sort of an unspoken rule. So, you kind of have to be dedicated. You can't be the newest employee there and then leave at 5 'o' clock on the dot while the execs are still in the office. You shouldn't have to be asked or told, it's just the way it is. (P, HR, Ross, February 2021)

Participants' responses during the ranking of resumes – Finance industry

Common to all participants in the finance industry was the disregard of resumes with spelling or grammar errors. This was mentioned explicitly before I showed the participants the resumes I had created which were thoroughly checked and so they did not have any errors and were formatted well. When the participants were asked to rank their hypothetical resumes that I presented to them, there were striking similarities between all five participants in the order that the resumes were ranked. The black male resume, Neo Gumede (See page 63-64), was ranked first by three of the five participants. When probed, a participant said:

Okay yes, black male is a very good candidate. Always a good addition to a team and contributes to our transformation mission. He's also young so that's great. (S, HE, Rachel, January 2021)

The other two participants ranked the coloured female resume first, Maha Azhar (See page 57-58), purely because of her previous work experience with a leading global provider of audit and assurance, consulting, and financial advisory.

Oh yes, we like her because she comes from Delloitte. Because we can trust that she's had proper training and knows how things work (W, HE, Chandler, January 2021)

As this organization is well-known and highly respected in this industry, candidates with work experience from this organization are given the same level of esteem. This organization is also trusted by the industry and so it is expected that candidates with work experience from this organization have had excellent training. This works to the hiring organizations' benefit as it implies an already competent candidate and a saving on the cost of training.

Regarding work experience as a selection criterion, it is evident that these participants read into work experience and use it to gain an idea of the training the candidate would've received previously. It is evident that a level of trust is also read into work experience.

Regarding qualifications as criteria, Neo Gumede's resume ranked highly across interviews because he obtained this qualification from a school in the UK.

It's always good to see that there's an international qualification because internationally recognized qualifications are always beneficial. It also shows that they have travelled and lived abroad so they have some life experience. (Q, M, Monica, February 2021)

Regarding hobbies as a criterion, Vanessa King's resume ranked highly by one of the participants, black African female in their mid-40s, because the resume included a brief section of her hobbies:

It's nice to see someone's interest, photography is a good hobby to have because it's creative and it shows that they have interests outside of work which is good. Your job shouldn't be the only thing in your life. (H, HE, Chandler, January 2021)

Although this participant expressed a strong liking for Vanessa's resume, another participant expressed the opposite regarding work experience as criteria:

I would put this CV last because, although they are a woman, their work experience doesn't make sense. she's been in all these different roles and it's like her aspirations are unclear (W, P, Phoebe, February 2021)

It is evident that employers look for consistency or some sort of coherence when looking at work experience. This adds to the elements that employers read into work experience.

One participant ranked Maha and Vanessa's resumes in the same position and said that they were equally ideal for different reasons:

These two CVs are similar. Both female, both of colour. Maha seems quite laid-back and her accounting background is cool. And then Vanessa has more experience in

different roles and included her hobbies which is also quite cool. You get a sense of what type of person she is before actually meeting her. (W, H, P, HR, Ross, February 2021)

Not all participants enjoyed getting to know the candidate through their resume. One participant said, in response to the introductory paragraph on Sandiso Dhlomo's resume (see page 61-62):

This CV would be tossed immediately because it is informal. On your resume you should always be professional, the person reading your application is not your friend (P, HE, Chandler, January 2021)

Engineering industry

Overview

The participants in the engineering industry placed a great deal of importance on qualifications and the content of qualifications. In addition, achieving high grades in qualifications work to a candidate's advantage as hiring managers perceive this as a sign of a hard-working person who engaged with the content of their degrees. When discussing work experience, one of the participants said that while work experience is advantageous, its absence can be compensated with high grades. According to the participants, achieving highly in university also shows genuine interest in the field which also presents well. Participants in the engineering industry described an ideal candidate as 1) someone who can work in a team; 2) someone whose personality is compatible with existing team members; 3) someone who goes above and beyond what is required; 4) someone who is naturally innovative and 4) someone who will not need to be trained.

Analysis of responses – All three criteria

Regarding work experience as criteria, or a lack thereof, a young black African female participant said:

If they have to be trained and they have no work experience whatsoever, it's like a waste of training (W, HE, Analise, March 2021)

The participants perceived having to train someone as an unnecessary burden for the organization and would rather hire someone who already has the relevant training. When probed, this participant said:

Engineering qualifications have a large practical component anyway and so even graduates entering the workplace on an entry level with no work experience should be equipped with the basics of their field of engineering. (Q, HE, Analise, March 2021)

Another participant said:

Work experience does play a big role of course, being able to talk to our job spec and give examples of where you've been familiar with what we're looking for is a bonus. (W, HR, Michaela, March 2021)

This participant went on to explain that while work experience is a crucial part of hiring criteria, the personality of the candidate can be equally important:

At the end of the day, we know our team, we know our employees, we know who the tough cookies are and we need to know whether they are going to fit with the existing team, we need to know that they won't clash with the line manager and things like that can determine whether we consider the applicant or not. (P, HR, Michaela, March 2021)

Regarding degrees and qualifications as criteria, one participant said:

A high average in a qualification is a good sign. So, for an entry level or lower-level type position it doesn't matter if they don't have practical experience. If they did very well in varsity that's a very strong advantage. (Q, W, HR, Michaela, March 2021)

Another participant said that:

When the minimum requirement is a degree it doesn't matter if they have a Masters or an Honours. Because what you'll find happens is that those who have Masters are just as qualified as an undergrad. (Q, HR, Oliver, February 2021)

Another participant said:

If we are looking for an engineering degree but they have a BCom for example and can talk to their field and show a good understanding of the technical aspects, we may be able to overlook the degree requirement in some cases. (Q, HE, Analise, March 2021)

Another participant had a different take to the others:

We look at NQF level and if our minimum requirement is NQF level 7 then that's all we look at. It doesn't necessarily matter where they get the qualification or degree either. (Q, HR, Laurel, February 2021)

This participant's perception of degrees and qualifications was different to the other participants and I found it interesting that this participant did not read too much into the level of prestige associated with the institution from which the qualification may be obtained. This is quite different to the finance industry.

Regarding personality as separate criteria, another participant said:

Even if the candidate tells you everything you want to hear but the way in which their personality comes across is off, then unfortunately personality has to come first. (P, HR, Oliver, February 2021)

Another difference between the finance industry and the engineering industry was evident when discussing the concept of social categorisations. I was shocked to learn that employment equity does not play a major role in the hiring process for four out of five of the participants. One said:

It does not matter if they are pink, purple or blue. If they are young or 77. As long as they can do the job, I am happy. (S, M, Connor, March 2021)

Another participant, middle-aged white male, said:

Listen, our organization is so small that those sorts of things don't matter, we just need someone who can do the job. (S, HR, Oliver, February 2021)

When probed regarding the diversity of their employees, they admitted:

Well yah, most of our staff are white males but it's not about that. These are the people who could do the job well, not because of their race. (S, HR, Oliver, February 2021)

A participant from one of South Africa's largest sugar producing companies said that:

We are a larger company so we can factor in Employment Equity but only to some extent. We definitely don't prioritize it. It's more about what they can do than what they look like. (S, HR, Michaela, March 2021)

A major similarity I found between the finance industry and the engineering industry is that their idea of an ideal candidate is one who is not just looking for a job or a salary but rather someone who wants a career. A participant in the engineering industry stressed:

It is very important to have people who have a genuine personal interest in innovation and can channel that interest through their career. So that, bettering themselves becomes

one and the same thing as bettering the company and vice versa. (P, M, Connor, March 2021)

I was surprised to learn that in the engineering industry, members of the human resources departments often do not sit in on face-to-face interviews:

Managers usually conduct the interviews because they are better equipped to get a sense of the candidate's technical abilities. They can ask the technical questions that we don't know how to ask and can discuss the details of the position in question. (IP, HR, Laurel February 2021)

I found this peculiar as it implies a disconnect between the people creating the job descriptions, reviewing resumes, and shortlisting candidates and the people carrying out the interviews. When probed regarding this disconnect, the participant said:

Yeah, we're just there to find the candidates, the rest is up to them (IP, HR, Laurel February 2021)

One of the participants said that when looking at a potential candidate's resumes they like to see evidence of hobbies and participation in athletic events:

It's nice to see that they like to do something else besides watching TV. Things like, running the Comrades Marathon and things like that shows that they keep busy outside of work. (H, HR, Oliver, February 2021)

For this participant, being involved in athletic activities served as criteria that indicates the sort of hard work and commitment that is appreciated at their company.

One of the participants mentioned that they are looking for candidates who are proficient in coding languages:

Being skilled in Python, Autocad and stuff like that is really a big deal now in the industry. (CS, HE, Analise, March 2021)

This participant elaborated that these coding languages that allow for the design of 3D objects and new design tools such as these are becoming more popular in the engineering field. As these skills aren't commonly learned within engineering qualifications, the candidate would have to acquire these skills through their own interest in the coding world.

Participants' responses during the ranking of resumes – Engineering industry

I observed a clear pattern in the ranking of the resumes across all interviews. The resume of Donavan John (see page 69-70) was ranked last, or least suitable, by all participants. This resume was the only one with a postgraduate degree and work experience at a university. One participant expressed:

This resume is way too academic. This person would be more suited to an academic position and not a practical position. The real engineering world is very different to teaching people things. (W, HE, Analise, March 2021)

Another participant explained:

Someone with that much academic experience will lack the practical knowledge to survive in most engineering firms. (W, M, Connor, March 2021)

The resume of Christen Maier (see page 65-66) was ranked first, or most suitable, by two of the participants although this resume had no real work experience in the engineering field. I asked why they ranked this resume first and one of the participants said:

I expect this candidate to be highly skilled due to the quality of the degree they would've obtained from Stellenbosch University, one of the best universities in the country (Q, M, Connor, March 2021)

Another participant ranked Christen's resume last and did not spend much time looking at it:

No, this one is too young, very young. Not enough work experience at all. (S, W, HE, Analise, March 2021)

One of the participants placed Paul Christopher's resume (see page 67-68) as second to last due to their prior work experience at a competitor. The other three participants ranked Paul Christopher's resume first due to their background and technical experience. Paul was one of the older candidates and one participant perceived his age in a positive way:

You can see he's got experience. He is older so he is more mature and will be able to handle things better. He's got a lot of experience dealing with clients so he's comfortable in that regard. (W, S, Connor, March 2021)

Kammy Naidoo's resume (see page 71-72) was ranked second by two of the participants one of whom pointed out:

She obtained their qualification from Pearson, one of the best schools in the country so she is most probably highly skilled, I actually think she'd be a perfect fit for our organization. (Q, HR, Oliver, February 2021)

The other participant said:

She's got good work experience. I see she's also done some freelance work which shows that she's independent which is great. (W, M, Connor, March 2021)

None of the participants made a point of mentioning the race or gender of the resumes as they were reviewing them. This directly contrasts with the participants in the finance industry, most of whom noted the race of each resume due to their consideration of Employment Equity.

Discussion and analysis of findings

In this section, I identify several trends and discuss my findings in relation to what is consistent with the literature. I then move onto what contrasts with the literature I engaged with throughout this research. Specifically, I discuss where my findings align with or contrast to HCT and credentialism separately. Throughout this section I compare my findings from the finance industry to my findings in the engineering industry according to my three main criteria: degrees and qualifications, work experience and social categorisations. As stated in my research question, the aim of this research was to compare two sectors, one regulated and one unregulated. Engineering is a regulated sector. The engineering industry is thus bound professional councils which ensure that all firms within the industry uphold and maintain a certain standard when carrying out hiring practices. Qualification requirements when entering the engineering industry are set out by professional councils and are often strictly associated with the field of engineering. For example, if a firm is looking for an electrical engineer, they would have to hire someone which an electrical engineering degree.

The finance industry is regulated by a multitude of professional councils and sub-professional councils and there a wider variety of qualifications are accepted when it comes to the hiring process. This means that different firms may be regulated by different professional councils and that different firms may be given varying degrees of freedom when making hiring decisions.

I begin by discussing *work experience*. I found that it was only partially true that relevant work experience was important in the finance sector because it is associated with professional knowledge and familiarity with the workplace (Humburg, Van Der Velden, et al., 2013). While

some of the participants I interviewed believed that work experience was an important part of the hiring criteria, others placed a lot of value on soft skills like self-motivated, independent and going the extra mile without having to be asked or told. One of the participants mentioned the importance of learning potential in a candidate and explained how willingness to learn and openness to criticism is key for a new candidate.

In the engineering industry, I found that while work experience was considered advantageous, its absence can be compensated with high grades. According to the participants, achieving highly in university also shows genuine interest in the field which can, in some cases, be a more important criterion than the criterion of familiarity with the workplace. This finding aligns with the findings of Humburg et al. (2013).

In some cases, I found that work experience was seen as important because it implied less training on the organization's part. The participants perceived having to train someone as an unnecessary burden for the organization and would rather hire someone who already has the relevant training. This points to how employers read into work experience.

I now move on to *degrees and qualifications*. Regarding the importance of education, my findings from both industries directly contrasted with the core assumption of HCT: more education leads to greater labour market rewards. In the finance industry, having a relevant qualification was not necessarily a key part of the criteria used to determine hiring decisions. Within HCT's framework, years of schooling is commonly used as a measure of level of education (Schultz, 1961). However, I found that when job descriptions specify a Bachelor's degree as a minimum requirement, having an Honours or Masters degree does not put a candidate at an advantage. This contrasts with the theory of credentialism which suggests that employers prefer the highest available qualification when hiring.

One participant expressed their dislike for candidates with postgraduate qualifications as they are perceived as not being familiar with the work environment, not being able to work under pressure and not being loyal to an organization due to a constant search for new opportunities. This directly contrasts with HCT which suggests that employers associate degrees and qualifications with the knowledge they possess. This was not the case for this participant because they used degrees and qualifications to gain an idea of a person's loyalty to the organization.

I found that parts of Humburg et al.'s (2013) findings resonates with my findings in that those with postgraduate degrees were less preferred because they are perceived to be continually

seeking better opportunities and are disloyal to organizations (Humburg, van der Velden, et al., 2013, p. 32). This was true in the finance and engineering industry as several participants expressed a dislike for candidates with postgraduate qualifications.

Interactions with hiring members from various organizations showed that the hiring criteria within these organizations may not allow for the absorption of the amount of highly skilled, highly qualified graduates the higher education system is producing. More specifically, some of the participants I interviewed perceive highly educated candidates in a negative way and so, access to the labour market is restricted.

I found that responses from participants in the engineering industry resonate with HCT to some extent in that a great deal of importance was placed on qualifications and the content of qualifications. The way participants read into qualifications aligns with HCT as they perceived qualifications as indications of skill, knowledge, and overall competency. Applicants with qualifications have a greater chance of being hired than those without qualifications or those with only a matric certificate. However, there appeared to be no difference between an applicant with an undergraduate degree and one with a postgraduate degree. This means that an applicant with an Honours degree was equally likely to be hired as an applicant with a Bachelors degree.

Upon reflection, it seems that the engineering industry seems to prioritise formal education qualifications far more than the finance industry. I think this is because hiring managers use qualifications as indicators of the types of knowledge and skills possessed by candidates. Furthermore, it seems that qualifications in the engineering field are more closely tied to the theoretical and practical knowledge and skills required of an engineer. So, qualifications are prioritized more in the engineering industry because they reflect the knowledge and skills that are necessary for an engineer to have in their day-to-day activities in the workplace.

Participants in the engineering industry further read into qualifications by believing that achieving high grades in qualifications is a sign of a hard-working person who engaged with the content of their degrees. This contrasts with Humburg et al. (2013) who found that in the engineering industry, marks are less important and that those who pass will suffice. Although not directly, this finding aligns with a key tenet of HCT which states that education is linked to a worker's productivity because it is generally understood that achieving highly in a relevant qualification is indicative of a candidate's productivity which increases their chances of being interviewed, hired, and benefitting from labour market rewards.

According to Humburg et al. (2013), in the finance industry, a Bachelor's degree in commerce-related disciplines are preferred, and grades for specific modules were especially important. Managers discarded resumes of candidates who did not achieve highly because they believed that these candidates would not cope. This was not mentioned in any of my interviews.

I found that the type of universities attended by candidates was important to some of the participants in the engineering industry. The level of prestige associated with the university attended by the candidate was of great importance for participants, this was evident in responses related to Pearson and Stellenbosch University. This could be because different universities are associated with different standards of grading. In my literature review I also considered that resumes could be kept or discarded according to the university attended regardless of meeting the job description (Undurraga, 2019) and my findings from the engineering industry indicate that this could be true.

This relates to a key assumption of credentialism which states that, when looking at degrees, employers are less concerned with the technical skills possessed by an individual and more concerned with the cultural capital that the degree is associated with such as occupational status group (Brown, 2001, p. 20). So, in this case, the level of prestige associated with a university can contribute to the cultural capital the degree represents.

I now move onto *social categorisations*. Although Employment Equity is a national policy that all places of employment in South Africa must adhere to, I found significant differences in the way this policy was acknowledged in the two industries I researched. I found that there is greater consideration of employment equity in the finance industry. I note that participants from this industry could've been more inclined to show that they prioritize compliance with Employment Equity policies and thus gave more socially acceptable responses. In addition, my interpretation of their responses was that there is perhaps a higher expectation of inclusivity placed on the firms in the finance industry due to their size and visibility as prominent South African brands. However, because of their prominence their responses could've also reflected their real behaviours in hiring.

This was prevalent in the participants' ranking of the resumes. All participants noted the race and gender of the candidates and one of the participants mentioned that the race and gender of candidates is extremely important to their organization. My findings regarding social factors relate to how the theory of credentialism accounts for socio-political factors, such as Employment Equity in this case, and how they can influence hiring criteria.

This was not the case in the engineering industry. I was very surprised that none of the participants explicitly mentioned the race and gender on the resumes they were asked to rank. However, Christen Maier and Paul Christopher ranked highly in general, and this could be because they were white female and male respectively. Donovan John and Kammy Naidoo, Indian male and female, were ranked last in general. In Donovan's case, it was said that the resume was "too academic" due to the postgraduate qualifications and work experience at a university. In Kammy Naidoo's case, it was not specified why she was ranked close to last.

Unrelated to my three main criteria (degrees and qualifications, work experience and social categorisations) I found that in the finance industry, the participants placed a lot of importance on *soft skills*. Terms such as "self-starter" was mentioned, and participants greatly valued the idea of someone being a self-motivated, independent person who is willing to learn and goes the extra mile. Of course, this was mentioned in the initial interview stage, not during the ranking of the resumes. In the engineering industry, there was a significant emphasis on the importance of innovation and out-of-the-box thinking. This resonates with the study conducted by Hodges and Burchell (2003) who found that employers placed significant emphasis on soft skills such as communication and creativity (Hodges & Burchell, 2003).

I found that there are numerous factors that influence a candidate's success in the hiring process that are not stated in job descriptions. An example of this would be that a participant from the engineering industry who said that they like to see evidence of hobbies and participation in athletic events such as running the Comrades Marathon and being involved in other athletic activities. The value placed on hobbies does not fall within my three main criteria and it not directly related to any of them. Hobbies such as the one mentioned would never be specified in a job description in this organization, but involvement in these sorts of hobbies would significantly increase a candidate's chances of being hired because it would show the sort of hard work and commitment that is appreciated at this participants' company.

Through engaging with various literature and conducting interviews with participants, I found that in both industries a candidate's likelihood of being employed rests entirely in the hands of those whose preferences are for the most part hidden. This means that these preferences aren't explicitly specified on job descriptions.

In reference to my three criteria (degrees and qualifications, work experience and social categorisations) I found that while those are criteria, employers read into criteria in unexpected ways. For example, requiring experience with coding languages, having a "self-starter"

mentality, and being interested in athletic hobbies are just a few examples from the interviews that stood out for me. My findings in this regard were not what I had initially anticipated.

Another example of how my findings surprised me was how work experience was seen as important because it implied less training on the organization's part. The participants perceived having to train someone as an unnecessary burden for the organization and would rather hire someone who already has the relevant training. This also points to how employers read into work experience – a potential saving on training costs.

Regarding degrees and qualifications, employers used them to gain an idea of a person's loyalty to the organization and perceived achieving high grades in qualifications is a sign of a hard-working person who engaged with the content of their degrees. In summary, degrees and qualifications were important criteria for employers but not solely for the knowledge and skills they represent but also for the other traits they represent like loyalty and dedication.

Other preferences of appearance, personality and the value placed on a candidate's performance during the interview arose as new criteria that I had not initially built into my research question but played a significant role in my investigation of hiring criteria. In addition, several participants expressed that they often follow their gut feeling when it comes to making hiring decisions. All of these new criteria that arose during interviews shed light on different aspects of hiring criteria that I had not previously considered.

A major finding that was not consistent with the literature I engaged with is the importance of personality and performance during the interview. The literature I engaged with hinted at personality and performance during the interview being important in hiring criteria as separate criteria, but I was surprised to learn the extent to which these two criteria influence an employer's thought process. Every single participant alluded to the fact that making a personal connecting with the HR member or the person conducting the interview significantly influenced their chances of being hired. In addition, things like organizational and cultural fit – things directly related to personality traits – were of great importance to some participants. Not clashing with the existing team of employees or the line manager for example, were mentioned as important things to consider when interviewing candidates by a participant. I had not initially accounted for personality and performance during the interview as main criteria in my research and after conducting interviews and analysing interviews, I realize that these two criteria are extremely important in hiring criteria and that I should have integrated them into

my criteria. I believe that these concepts are used as criteria by employers in a less explicit way than my initial criteria.

Upon reflection of my methodological approach, I found that conducting in-depth interviews enabled me to understand the opinions of the participants and their attitudes towards hiring criteria. In-depth interviews provided a platform in which I could address issues that could not be addressed in the same level of detail as in a Likert-scale questionnaire or survey for example. Asking open-ended questions, enabled an investigation of participants' ideas of an appropriate candidate, what factors are important to them when reviewing resumes, and the method they use to decide between two similar candidates. The open-ended questions also allowed me to gain insight into the participants' personal experiences of hiring. These experiences alerted me to which elements of a candidate are associated with successful hires and unsuccessful hires.

A major advantage of the method I used was the ability to probe certain responses. This provided a greater level of depth that enabled me to unpack the thought processes of the participants. In addition to asking open-ended questions, I used hypothetical resumes and asked participant to rank them from most suitable to least suitable and explain their ranking process. This method was chosen to mimic elements of the hiring process, namely presenting hiring members with resumes for evaluation. I found this method was extremely valuable as it allowed me to explore participants' preferences regarding the criteria contained in the information provided by the resumes.

In relation to my research question, I found that the criteria employers use as their main instruments during the hiring process are associated with the following criteria: degrees and qualifications, work experience, social categorisations. I found that the three criteria initially chose to unpack the data and identify the hiring criteria employed by employers, degrees and qualifications, work experience, social categorisations, were suited to the data I collected during interviews however, I could have included other criteria like personality traits and performance during interviews. I found that social factors such as race, age, and gender did play a significant role in hiring and criteria in the finance industry to a large extent and to a much lesser extent in the engineering industry.

I identified several similarities in hiring criteria that characterise the priorities of employers in finance and engineering, one of which being the importance placed on the personality traits and personal aspirations of a candidate. These criteria were not used as ways of reading into degrees and qualifications of work experience but rather as separate criteria. Employers in both

industries wanted to get a sense of the personality of candidates through their resumes. In addition, wanting a job for overall career development as opposed to wanting a job for financial means was preferred by employers in both industries.

Some major differences I identified in hiring criteria that characterise the priorities of employers in finance and engineering was the importance of social categorisations. Employers in the finance industry prioritized criteria of Employment Equity and overall diversity in the workplace. This was evident in responses to open-ended questions and when ranking resumes. Employers in the engineering industry did not prioritize Employment Equity and completely disregarded it as a criterion that could influence hiring decisions.

Conclusion

I began this research journey wanting to know more about the skills and competencies that South African candidates require as they enter different jobs. I aimed to find out more about the criteria that employers use during hiring processes in a regulated sector, engineering, and an unregulated sector, finance. To reiterate, a regulated industry such as engineering is one in which hiring practices are expected to be controlled and are mainly managed by external organizations such as governmental departments and professional bodies and necessary qualifications are clearly outlined. In an unregulated industry such as finance, hiring processes are less bound by a particular organization or set of rules.

After engaging with HCT and its critiques and modern adaptations, I chose three main criteria (degrees and qualifications; work experience; and social factors like race, age and gender) that greatly influence hiring criteria. I used these criteria through which I was able to understand employer decision making in hiring criteria.

Initially, I wanted to understand if employers value degrees and qualifications, work experience and social factors individually and if so, for what reasons. After conducting interviews, I found that employers do indeed value these three things and the extent which each is valued depends on the industry and the organization.

A major finding of this research suggests significant differences between the hiring processes of the engineering and the finance industry respectively in relation to how social factors are prioritized by employers. For example, the findings from the engineering industry suggest that the race of the candidate has less influence on their chances of being hired. The participants I interviewed did not make an explicit effort to be racially inclusive when ranking hypothetical

resumes. Finance firms, in contrast, were more cognisant of Employment Equity within hiring criteria and emphasised the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace.

Regarding degrees qualifications, I found that the hiring process in engineering industry resonates strongly with the main assumptions of HCT as a great deal of importance was placed on relevant qualifications, the content of qualifications and achieving high grades overall. Those who achieved highly within their degrees and qualifications were perceived by employers as being engaged with the content of their degrees and committed to their field. This was true for all participants in the engineering industry.

In the finance industry, I found that having a relevant qualification was not necessarily a determining factor of getting an interview or being hired once interviewed. Participants placed less emphasis on the type of qualification or the level of the qualification and more emphasis on work experience and performance during the interview. A university degree was perceived to represent a baseline of literacy and competence. So candidates with university degrees would meet this baseline requirement and be considered a potential candidate.

Regarding work experience, I found that relevant work experience was partially important in the finance sector because it was associated with professional knowledge and familiarity with the workplace (Humburg, van der Velden, et al., 2013). In the engineering industry, I found that although work experience was advantageous, a lack of work experience could be overlooked if that candidate achieved high grades in certain modules. According to the participants in the engineering industry, achieving highly in qualifications shows genuine interest in the field which can, in some cases, be more important than familiarity with the workplace.

Overall, I found that preferences regarding social factors played a dominant role in the finance industry and did not play a role at all in the engineering industry. In the finance industry, strong consideration of Employment Equity and commitment to inclusivity in general was evident. In the engineering industry, the complete disregard of social factors and the absence of Employment Equity was evident. In the finance industry, social factors were explicitly addressed and discussed for their importance and in the engineering industry the opposite was true. I find that because social factors are overlooked by hiring members in the engineering industry, they are not important in hiring criteria or hiring processes.

Prior to conducting my research, I expected that the three criteria included in my literature review (qualifications, work experience, and social categorisations) would be the dominant

criteria in my interviews. Although, I began with only three criteria, I found that there were many other criteria that were prominent in the participants' responses that I had not anticipated. For example, the physical appearance of the candidate, their soft skills, their personality, performance during interview and hobbies were mentioned as important factors that could influence a candidate's chances of being hired for some of the participants. Prior to conducting the interviews, I did not consider exploring these factors as I did not think they would be as important as the initial criteria I chose to focus on.

Limitations and weaknesses

The combination of open-ended questions and hypothetical resumes as a tool of discussion yielded interesting data from which I was able gain an understanding of hiring criteria. However, after conducting interviews, I realized that I was unable to find out if hiring decisions are tied to a bias on the part of a firm or an employer or a HR person themselves, and not tied to biases inherent in regulatory policies and understandings and the application thereof.

Subsequently, I found that I struggled to juxtapose a sector that may tie hiring decisions to biases inherent in regulatory policies and understandings and the application thereof, and a sector that takes a more legalistic and open-ended approach to their hiring practices. Another limitation to this research is that it is not generalizable across industries in the South African labour market.

Implications for future research

Using the combined method of open-ended interview questions and using hypothetical resumes as a discussion tool was an interesting methodology which yielded valuable data. This method would be suited to future research conducted with a larger pool of participants. Perhaps, future research can also include more industries to provide a fuller, broader comparison.

While degrees and qualifications, work experience, and social factors were evidently important factors in hiring criteria according to the participants in this research, perhaps including different criteria, like personality and performance during the interview, and using them as criteria might yield new information and provide new insight into the minds of employers.

Social factors were important in hiring criteria in my research. Although my research briefly touched on the social category of race, future research on this topic can focus on age, gender

and sexuality and how they are perceived in hiring criteria. Focusing on other social factors can unpack further biases held by employers in different industries.

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Appendices:

Appendix A – Interview Guide

1. What is your idea of an appropriate candidate for an entry level job for your company?
2. When reviewing resumes during the hiring process, what are some of the most important factors you consider?
3. When choosing between two suitable candidates during the hiring process, what are some of the things you consider?
4. Please order these resumes from most suitable to least suitable.
5. Why have you sorted the resumes in this way? What is most effective about this sorting method? Explain why.
6. What are some major differences between the most suitable resume and the least suitable resume, according to you?
7. What element of the most suitable resume is of most value for you?
8. What element of the least suitable resume makes them unsuitable according to you?
9. Out of these resumes, which candidate appears as most employable? What sets this candidate apart from the others?
10. What are some attributes of an appropriate candidate that you, personally, have hired?
11. Studies show that credentials and degrees, work experience, performance during the hiring process and social preferences (age, gender and race) influence a candidate's chances to be hired. What do you think about that? Which of these do you consider most?
12. What does previous work experience tell you about the candidate?
13. Some studies suggest that personal attributes of graduates serve as a primary criterion or minimum requirement of being considered during the hiring process? Do you agree with that? Explain why.

Appendix B – hypothetical resumes

Here are the hypothetical resumes that were used for interviews with participants from the **finance** industry:

Resume A: - 34-year-old coloured female

MAHA AZHAR

Profile

I am a hard-working, adventurous, and friendly person. I work well in a team and I enjoy getting to know new people.

EMAIL:

Maha.azhar@gmail.com

Hobbies

Traveling
Hiking
Animals
Spending time with family and friends

EDUCATION

Wits University
2004 - 2006
BCom Accounting with distinction

Wits University
2007
BCom Honours in Accountancy

WORK EXPERIENCE

Deloitte Bookkeeping

2018–Present

- Recording transactions such as income and outgoings, and posting them to various accounts.
- Processing payments.
- Conducting daily banking activities.
- Producing various financial reports.

Deloitte Accounting clerk

2014–2018

- Producing a variety of reports including income statements and balance sheets
- Checking for accuracy in reports, figures, and postings
- Reconciling and reporting any discrepancies found in the records
- Interacting with management, customers, vendors, and customers

PWC Accounting clerk**2012–2013**

- Using bookkeeping databases, spreadsheets and software.
- Posting financial transactions in databases.
- Receiving and recording vouchers, cash and checks.
- Producing a variety of reports including income statements and balance sheets.

PWC Articles**2008–2011****SKILLS**

Time management

Highly organized

Good with people

Fluent in English

Proficient in MS Excel, Word

Resume B: - 46-year-old Indian female

VANESSA KING

082 387 3780

yking@gmail.com

Profile

I am a dedicated single mom who has a passion for business. I have years of experience in the sales and marketing field and I have excellent time-management skills. I believe that my skills and abilities can add value to your company.

SKILLS

- Hard-working
- Dedicated
- Professional
- Time management
- Excellent organizational skills

EDUCATION

- 1995 – 2002 B.Comm Marketing Degree (University of South Africa)
- 2008 – Management Development Programme (University of Stellenbosch)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Standard Bank

- 1992 – 1994 Exchange Control Clerk
- 1994 – 1996 – Installation and Training Officer

Protea Medical

- 1996 – 1997 Sales Executive (Marketing Endoscopy Products)

Interdoc

- 1998 – Area Manager (Software Solutions – Medical)

Tecmed Africa

- 1999 – 2002 Product Manager

Experian South Africa

- 2002 – 2007 Key Account Manager

Dimension Data

- 2007 – 2011 Account Manager

Internet Solutions

- 2013 – Present Key Account Manager

HOBBIES

- Musical theatre
- Photography
- Lifestyle and travel
- Reading

Resume C: - 23-year-old black male

Sandiso Dhlomo

082 463 7782

Sandiso.dhlomo@gmail.com

Sawubona!

I am a proud South African with a buoyant attitude to even the most taxing situations. Being a pedantic and clinical hard worker has come with being excited by tribulation, analysing and solving problems. I immerse myself in mastering all my tasks and I have answered all my downfalls with resilience and tenacity.

Growing up in suburban Durban and relocating to Johannesburg, I have become well acclimated to adapting to changes in environment. Growing up in a female-headed household has made me socially aware and dedicated to advocating for authentic global unity. I am well versed in executing instruction and constructive criticism while simultaneously being able to lead and constructively evaluate. Intimidation is something I very rarely yield to because I am well-rooted in what I know. Yet still, I am duly open-minded and malleable to any learning opportunities.

Academic excellence is something I have continuously steeped myself in however this has not blinded me from growing myself in other facets of my life. Maintaining core relationships and diversifying my interests has framed the person I am today.

EDUCATION

JAN 2018 –
DEC 2018 **National Senior Certificate**

Unknown



FEB 2016 –
NOV 2018 **Bachelor of Commerce**
Law

University of the Witwatersrand



EXPERIENCE

JAN 2014 -
PRESENT **Social Media and Director's Assistant**
Partly monitors company phone calls and email responses.
Co-ordinate social media uploads and monitors social media pages.

Africa Meets
Europe



APR 2016 –
FEB 2018 **Supervisor**
Sole responsibility for voids, refunds, discount and customer queries and complaints. This included crisis management and dealing with and defusing customer frustrations and queries
Overseeing store appearance and part-time staff. The included cleaning up and assigning tasks for all part-time staff.
Overseeing store management and sales over weekends and evenings during the week.
Rolling weekly, monthly and yearly sales figures.
Overseeing cash up and banking. This included counting and totaling daily and weekly cash and speed point payments.
Store opening and closure.

Exclusive Books



JUN 2014 –
JUL 2014 **Data Capturer**
Typing hand written documents and digitising other documents and minutes.
Writing and editing up documents and invoices.

PZ Consulting



ACHIEVEMENTS

Elected Class Representative for Introduction to Law

FEB 2016

After a week of meeting, my introduction to law class under Ms. Mushariwa elected me as the class representative in charge of class admin and lecturer-student liaison.

National School of the Arts Top Achiever 2015

JAN 2016

I achieved six Grade 12 distinctions, the highest performing student at the top school in its district. My district was the 5th best performing school in the Gauteng province.

INTERESTS

current affairs, Photography, Music, Chess

Wits Debating Union

Resume D: - 27-year-old black male

NEO GUMEDE

Neo.gumede@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Cass Business School, City University of London

London, UK

MSc Real Estate Candidate

2019-2020

Relevant modules: Principles of Appraisal, Applied Data Analysis, Asset and Fund Management, Economics and, Market Analysis, Applied Appraisal, Financial Modelling, Applied Valuation and Taxation, Landlord and Tenant Law, Investment Vehicles and Portfolios, Development and Planning.

University of East Anglia

Norwich, UK

BSc Business Management (2:1)

2016-2019

Relevant modules: Management Consulting and Development, Supply Chain Management, Strategic Brand Management, Project Management, International Business, Innovation Management, Spanish, Intermediate Chinese.

London School of Economics and Political Science

London, UK

Alternative Investments, Summer School

2018-2018

Relevant coursework: Real Estate & Investment Asset Analysis, Commodities & Managed Futures, Hedge Fund Investment Program.

INTO Newcastle University

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK

International Business Foundation Diploma (Final Grade: 80.5%)

2016-2016

Major courses: Accounting for Business, Math for Business, English for Academic Purposes, Study Skills.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

BNP Paribas Real Estate

London, United Kingdom

Work Experience – International Investment Group

Nov 2019–Nov 2019

- Prepared investment papers and presentations for the investor meetings.
- Maintained portfolio models, including management of feed-in from research, agents, operational managers and advisors to present return forecasts and cash flows.

Investec Bank plc

London, United Kingdom

Work Experience – Structured Property Finance

Aug 2019–Sep 2019

- Produced detailed analysis of market data using Excel and identified opportunities in new and existing markets.
- Gained an in depth insight into process of structured finance loan underwriting against commercial real estate assets from origination through to closing and syndication.

East Anglian Capital Fund

Norwich, United Kingdom

Equity Portfolio Manager – University Society

Nov 2018–Jul 2019

- Identify and pitch undervalued Energy equities to a student run fund.
- Managed a team of 8 analysts who conducted reviews for each respective stock.
- Design and present monthly updates and stock recommendations on the Energy renewables market.

Dwellworks

Shanghai, China

Property Management Intern

Jun 2018- Aug 2018

- Spearheaded the re-structuring of the internal CSM process, created standard operating procedure template.
- Produced detailed analysis of market and sales data using SPSS/Excel and identified opportunities in new and existing markets.
- Conducted industry-specific research and reported findings which were presented to CEO.

Maponya Investments

Johannesburg, South Africa

Operations, Admin, Management – Family-owned business

Jun 2017- Present

- Commercial and residential property development company with £150mn AUM.
- Consistently oversee ongoing property and lease management. UK representative for all offshore acquisitions.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Languages:** Fluent in English, Xhosa, and Zulu; Conversational in Chinese Mandarin.
- **IT Skills:** MS Office (advanced), IBM SPSS, Microsoft Excel (advanced). Bloomberg Market Concepts.
- **Societies:** Fund Manager: Investment Society; African Caribbean Society; Rugby Club; Member of Toastmasters, Entrepreneur and Business societies.
- **Awards** 2nd place at Sync the City Hackathon, Headmasters Award for Outstanding Leadership, Hilton College. Change the World MUN NYC 2020 Scholarship Recipient.
- **Tests:** IELTS Language Assessment: Listening 8.0 Reading 8.0 Writing 7.0 Speaking 9.0.
- **Volunteer:** (20 Hours) Witkoppen Welfare Clinic & SOS Children's Village. NGO providing comprehensive Primary Healthcare for Adults and Children (06/2015 – 10/2015).
- **Interests:** Cass Real Estate Club, Ironsides Rugby Club member, Cass Football team, Enactus Outreach.

Here are the hypothetical resumes that were used for interviews with participants from the **engineering** industry:

Resume E: - 23-year-old white female.

Christen Maier cmaier@gmail.com 082 345 5527
<u>About me:</u> I am a hard-worker, animal lover and an engineering enthusiast looking to expand my work experience and meet new people. I am outgoing, ambitious, rigidly organized, and excellent with time management. I consider myself a work-a-holic and I know I can add value to your company.
<u>Education</u> 2016 - 2019 BEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering (University of Stellenbosch)
<u>Work experience</u> 2016 - 2017 Waitress at Java Café Stellenbosch Through this experience I was able to contribute to paying for my studies. I also developed excellent people skill through waitressing. 2017 - 2018 Software Designer (Freelance - Die Boord Apteek) I independently designed and built a payroll system for a pharmacy. This system contributed to the pharmacy's efficiency and overall productivity. 2018 - Intern (Protoclea) I did a 6-week internship at one of the top specialist image engineering company. Through this experience, I witnessed the company's sophisticated development systems and gained familiarity with the engineering workplace.

2019 – Tutor for first years at University of Stellenbosch

Through tutoring, I was able to contribute to the engineering department at the university. This experience helped me contribute to my tuition fees and through teaching others, my understanding of the coursework in my degree was strengthened.

Resume F: - 37-year-old white male

Paul Christopher

LinkedIn: Paul Christopher | **Email:** pcrhistopher@yahoo.co.za | 087 665 6423

Open, conscientious individual. Enjoys the company of friends and family.

Education

- 2004 – 2006
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
HND in Electrical Engineering
- 2001 – 2003
Grantham College of Further Education
OND in General Engineering

Work experience

TUV Facility Management **(formerly Siemens Plessey Assessment Services)**

- 2007 – 2008
Software Engineer
Responsible for developing efficient and effective network control systems for the company.
- 2009 – 2011
Project Engineer
Responsible for schedule preparation, pre-planning and resource forecasting for various projects over the course of 3 years.
- 2011 – 2014
Technical Manager
Responsible for making key decisions for technical issues related to the company after considering everything from cost to quality of hardware or software.
- 2015 – 2017
Business Development Director

Responsible for developing and maintaining client-relationships and tracks new markets for new potential sales.

Serco Defence and Aerospace – Skynet 5 Project

- 2017 – 2018

Programme Director

Responsible for the day-to-day management of the interests of the client organisation.

Interests and hobbies

- Faith plays a huge role in my life. I like to spend my free time strengthening my connection to God.
- I enjoy staying home with my family and friends.
- I enjoy gardening as a form of relaxation.

Languages

- English (first language)
- Spanish (beginner)
- German – C1

Donavan John

072 627 7654

DJOHN@GMAIL.COM

EDUCATION

2001 – BENG CIVIL ENGINEERING, CUM LAUDE

(UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN)

2006 – PhD IN STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

(UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN)

WORK EXPERIENCE

Safran Engineering Algorithms

2005 – Consultant

Element Consulting Engineers

2007 – 2010 Structural Design Engineer

University of Stellenbosch

2010 – 2016 Senior lecturer

2017 – 2019 Associate Professor

2019 – Present Head of the division of Structural Engineering

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Excellent numeracy skills.
- Excellent analytical skills.
- Good problem-solving skills.
- Great communication and inter-personal skills

LANGUAGES

- English
- Afrikaans (conversational)
- isiZulu (conversational)

Resume H: 40-year-old Indian female

Kammy Naidoo

073 445 5378

LinkedIn: Kamantha Naidoo

About me...

Kammynaidoo@hotmail.co.za

I am a motivated individual looking to broaden my knowledge of the software world. I am a suitable candidate for your company as I am highly adaptable and work well under pressure.

Hobbies and interests...

I enjoy reading fiction and hiking. I consider myself a people-person and enjoy hosting get togethers for friends and family.

Education

2000 – 2001
Group

CTI Education

Higher Certificate in Software Development

2002 – 2004

Pearson Institute

Bachelor of Science (BSc) Information Technology

Languages: C#, HTML, Java, SQL

2005

Pearson Institute

Bachelor of Science Honours (BSc hon) Information Technology

Experience

2006 – 2014

Congress Rental South Africa

Freelance technician

- Assisted in the setting up and programming of Digital and IP based Conference and Simultaneous Interpretation System for numerous international events, the most notable being the FIFA World Cup

Opening and Closing ceremonies (Sandton) and the United Nations World Trade Organization (WTO) conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

2014 – 2019

Computer connection

Freelance technician

- Responsible for fault finding and repair of personal computers, laptops, LAN, WLAN, installation of Operating Systems, MS and OS software, Specialised software (accounting packages, etc)



Participant Information Sheet

Title of project: A comparison between criteria prioritized by employers in a regulated (Engineering) and unregulated (Finance) sectors during the hiring process

Name of researcher: Lauren Ashleigh Moollan

Dear participant,

You have been asked to take part in an interview that consists of fourteen questions. Before you continue it is important to know why the research is being done as well as how your contribution to the study will help with the research question outlined above. Please note that you are able to withdraw your contribution to the study at any time due to any possible reasons that may make you feel uncomfortable.

1. What is the study's purpose?

The purpose of this study is to determine which variables (degrees and qualifications, work experiences, social-preferences etc.) are prioritized by employers when reviewing resumes and choosing suitable candidates during the hiring process. Broader issues such as social divisions in South Africa, youth unemployment and the new and emerging economy of unpaid labour of internships and apprenticeships will form the backdrop of this study.

2. What will participation consist of?

Participation in the research will consist of answering fourteen questions regarding your views on the hiring process. This interview might take around thirty minutes to an hour.

3. What are the benefits of participating in the research?

There are no monetary benefits involved in participating in this study.

4. Will your responses remain anonymous?

The answers you provide will be used in the research however your name will not be specified in this research. What you state will remain anonymous and confidential.

5. Will you be recorded?

With your permission, I would like to record the interview using a mobile phone. This recording will assist me in analysing your responses at a later stage. The recording will not be shared publicly and will be stored on a password protected device.

6. The result of the research

The result of this research will be used as part of a mark for my Masters degree. If you have any questions afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. If you wish to receive a summary of the research, I will be happy to send it to you upon request.

7. Complaints and concerns

If you have any concerns around the research being done or if you have any complaints please feel free to contact myself or my supervisors, Professor Stephanie Allais (076 089 8621 or matseleng.allais@wits.ac.za) and Professor Yael Shalem (083 232 9066) or yael.shalem@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Lauren Moollan

Contact information:

1375258@students.wits.ac.za

082 874 4552

Thank you for your participation in the research.



Participant Consent Form

Title of project: A comparison between criteria prioritized by employers in a regulated (Engineering) and unregulated (Finance) sectors during the hiring process.

Name of researcher: Lauren Ashleigh Moollan

I agree to participate in this research project. The research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

I agree that my participation will remain anonymous YES NO (please circle)

I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes
in his research report YES NO

I agree that the interview may be audio recorded YES NO

..... (signature)
..... (name of participant)
..... (date)