

Analysis of Knowledge Level and Usage Interest in the Indofood Career Website

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the knowledge level and usage interest of society in Bitung City toward the Indofood Career website, the official digital recruitment platform of PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk. The study is motivated by a declining trend in the number of registered society in Bitung City between 2023 and 2025 from 2,382 to 1,747 and then to 1,098 alongside a preliminary survey of 25 respondents indicating that 64% had never visited the Indofood Career website despite 80% expressing willingness to access it in the future. This gap raised concern about a possible *discouraged-worker* phenomenon rather than a genuine improvement in local labor-market conditions. This research employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case-study design. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation study involving five informants selected through purposive sampling based on the criteria of being aged 18–35, residing in Bitung City, and having internet access. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification with trustworthiness established through method triangulation, member checking, and thick description. The results show that informants' knowledge of the Indofood Career website is relatively strong at the *know* and *comprehension* levels, but varies at the *application* level, with three of five informants completing the entire registration and application procedure while two remained at the login stage. Informants' perceptions and experiences were generally positive, reflected in an average usability rating of 8.6 out of 10, supported by consistent perceptions of usefulness (credible job information) and ease of use (a simple registration flow accessible via mobile devices). The main driving factors for usage interest were *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use*, while the main inhibiting factor identified consistently by all informants was the lack of socialization and promotion of the website, compounded by its limited job-vacancy coverage restricted to a single corporate group. These findings confirm a gap between the *das sein* (actual condition) of a well-regarded but under-promoted platform and the *das sollen* (ideal condition) of widespread public awareness, lending empirical support to the discouraged-worker hypothesis raised in the background of this study and indicating that the primary barrier to digital-recruitment adoption in Bitung City lies at the awareness stage rather than the technology-acceptance stage.

Keywords: Knowledge Level; Usage Interest; Digital Recruitment; Technology Acceptance Model; Case Study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed how society approaches time efficiency across many aspects of life, including access to communication that is no longer bound by space and time (Faidlatul Habibah & Irwansyah, 2021). This transformation has reshaped nearly every domain of daily life, including education, healthcare, economic transactions, and of particular relevance to this study access to employment information. Job searching, once synonymous with reading newspaper classifieds or submitting applications in person, has shifted toward a more efficient and integrated digital process. Being able to intelligently navigate various digital platforms has itself become a determining skill in how quickly and broadly a job seeker can access employment opportunities.

This shift toward digitalized job searching, however, remains uneven across Indonesia. Conventional media such as newspapers and flyers remain widely used, a habit deeply embedded in the culture of job searching, although the popularity of online platforms has gradually begun to displace this dominance as internet access expands (Roudhotul Rohmah et al., 2023). One concrete manifestation of this digital transformation in recruitment is the career website developed by PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk, a leading Indonesian consumer-goods company, known as Indofood Career (career.indofood.com). The website is designed to help society obtain vacancy information, search for positions based on specific criteria such as placement location, field of expertise, or job level, and submit applications online without visiting the company's office in person.

This phenomenon of recruitment digitalization becomes especially relevant when examined in relation to local labor conditions, such as those in Bitung City a strategic industrial city in North Sulawesi Province, driven substantially by the fisheries and marine-processing sector, with a correspondingly large workforce potential. Interestingly, data on registered job seekers in Bitung City show a marked declining trend over the past three years. According to the Bitung City Statistics Agency (BPS), the number of registered job seekers stood at 2,382 in 2023, decreased to 1,747 in 2024, and fell further to 1,098 in 2025.

Table 1. Number of Registered Job Seekers in Bitung City, 2023–2025

Year	Number of Registered Job Seekers
2023	2,382
2024	1,747
2025	1,098

Source: Bitung City Statistics Agency (BPS), 2026

At first glance, this declining trend could suggest a positive improvement in local labor conditions, indicating that more society have successfully found employment and no longer need to register as active job seekers. However, such figures alone cannot fully explain a complex social reality, and this decline may equally reflect a far more concerning phenomenon: *discouraged workers* who stop registering with the local employment office not because they have found work, but because of limited awareness of available job opportunities, including a lack of knowledge about digital recruitment platforms such as Indofood Career. The decline might also stem from society shifting toward informal channels such as social media and personal networks, or from administrative changes in data-collection mechanisms, meaning the reduction cannot be attributed to a single explanation.

To ground this concern in empirical evidence, a preliminary survey was conducted among 25 respondents residing in Bitung City, drawn from students of the Sekolah Tinggi Bisnis dan Manajemen (STBM) Dua Sudara and the surrounding general public aged 18–35. The survey, distributed via Google Forms, aimed to obtain an initial picture of public knowledge of and interest in the Indofood Career website prior to the main study. The results were striking: 64% of respondents (16 of 25) reported never having

visited the Indofood Career website at all, indicating low public awareness of the platform even among university students generally assumed to possess relatively strong digital literacy. At the same time, 80% of respondents (20 of 25) expressed willingness to access the website in the future suggesting that the core issue is not a lack of interest in digital recruitment platforms, but rather the limited dissemination of information about the platform's existence and benefits.

This gap between low awareness and high latent interest constitutes the most substantial finding of the preliminary survey and the primary rationale for adopting a qualitative approach in this study. If the issue were simply low interest, a quantitative measurement of interest levels might suffice; however, because the emerging issue is more complex high interest paired with low awareness the relevant research questions are not merely how many people are aware, but why they are unaware and how such awareness and interest are formed. Such questions demand an in-depth understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and barriers faced by society in Bitung City, which can only be captured through qualitative interviews rather than statistics alone. This gap can further be framed through the *das sein* and *das sollen* perspective: the actual condition (*das sein*) shows that many society in Bitung City remain unaware of or have not utilized the freely accessible Indofood Career website, whereas the ideal condition (*das sollen*) is one in which all society in the city are aware of and make use of the various digital recruitment platforms available to them, including Indofood Career, to broaden their access to employment opportunities.

Based on the phenomenon, urgency, and empirical grounding described above, this study seeks to explore in depth the knowledge-and-usage-interest gap surrounding the Indofood Career digital recruitment platform among the people of Bitung City, formulated under the title "Analysis of Knowledge Level and Usage Interest in the Indofood Career Website in Bitung City." Specifically, this study addresses three research questions: (1) What is the level of knowledge among society in Bitung City regarding the Indofood Career website? (2) What are the perceptions and experiences of society in Bitung City in becoming acquainted with and utilizing the Indofood Career website? and (3) What factors drive and inhibit knowledge of and interest in using the Indofood Career website among society in Bitung City?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Knowledge

Knowledge is the result of a person's effort to find out about something, or the entirety of human actions taken to understand an object one encounters (Tandio, 2016, as cited in Engko et al., 2023). Knowledge is a critical component in an individual's decision-making process, including the decision to use a digital platform, and in the digital domain, knowledge is closely tied to an individual's digital literacy the ability to find, evaluate, and use available information effectively and efficiently. Notoatmodjo, as cited in Engko et al. (2023), argues that knowledge is a critical domain in shaping an individual's actions, and identifies six hierarchical levels within the cognitive domain: *know* (recalling previously learned material), *comprehension* (the ability to correctly explain and interpret a known object), *application* (the ability to apply learned material to real situations), *analysis* (the ability to break an object down into interrelated components), *synthesis* (the ability to arrange existing elements into a new, coherent formulation), and *evaluation* (the ability to make judgments about an object based on established or self-determined criteria).

In the context of this study, knowledge is defined as the extent to which the people of Bitung City recognize, understand, and are aware of the existence, functions, and benefits of the Indofood Career website as a digital recruitment platform.

Usage Interest

Usage interest refers to the degree to which a person has consciously planned to perform or not perform a particular behavior, and is regarded as an important predictor of a system's actual use (Brezavšek, as cited in Azzatillah et al., 2024). Factors such as perception, expectation, and prior experience

with technology can influence an individual's interest in using a system. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), developed by Davis in 1989, remains a widely used framework for measuring technology acceptance, centering on two primary factors: *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use* (Sugiyono & Hidayah, 2024). The greater an individual's belief that a system is useful and easy to use, the higher their interest in using that system. In this study, usage interest is defined as the tendency and willingness of the people of Bitung City to access, utilize, and recommend the Indofood Career website as a means of searching for employment, explored through informants' subjective willingness to use the platform in the future.

Digital Recruitment Platform Utilization

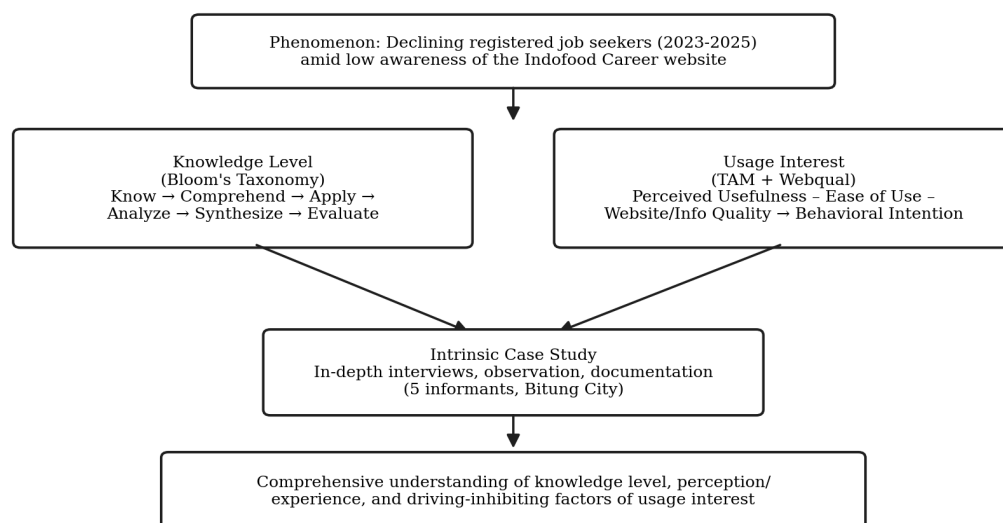
A recruitment website is an internet-based platform used by companies to announce job vacancies and receive applications from prospective employees digitally. According to Nugroho (2023), a website is a collection of interconnected pages used to display information, images, sound, or a combination thereof, whether static or dynamic. One key criterion determining a website's quality is usability encompassing ease of learning, productivity attributes in use, minimal errors, and user satisfaction (Nugroho, 2023). As a recruitment website owned by PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk, Indofood Career provides several features, including company history, news, vacancy listings, and a frequently-asked-questions section to facilitate society's access to career opportunities within the Indofood group.

Employment Context

Under Law No. 13 of 2003 on Manpower, Indonesia's working-age population is defined as those aged 15 and above, while BPS defines this population as those aged 15–64 the group most active in job searching and most vulnerable to unemployment. Prensky, as cited in Limilia (2018), classifies those born after 1980 as "digital natives" who grew up alongside digital technology and tend to adapt more readily to digital platforms. Although BPS's definition of society spans ages 15–64, this study specifically focuses on the general public aged 18–35, as this group is generally in the early-to-mid stage of their careers, more actively engaged with digital technology, and the primary target audience of various digital recruitment platforms.

Previous Relevant Research

Several prior studies inform the present research. Faidlatul Habibah and Irwansyah (2021) examined the role of digital technology in society and found that technology alone does not automatically guarantee equitable access to information without adequate dissemination efforts. Roudhotul Rohmah et al. (2023) studied the utilization of online platforms in the job-search process, providing a relevant foundation for examining digital recruitment platform use. Azzatillah et al. (2024) and Sikki et al. (2026), applying TAM to e-recruitment and e-business applications respectively, similarly examined usage interest in digital platforms among users. Sugiyono and Hidayah (2024) applied TAM to the KitaLulus job-vacancy application and found that perceived usefulness and ease of use influenced both intention and actual usage. In the international context, Kissi (2023), Prakarsa et al. (2024), and Wijaya et al. (2023) similarly explored society's acceptance of electronic recruitment platforms, generally through quantitative TAM-based approaches. Based on this body of research, most prior studies have focused on general digital recruitment platforms using quantitative approaches conducted in major cities on the island of Java; no study has yet specifically examined knowledge of and interest in a large manufacturing company's career website, such as Indofood Career, among society in Eastern Indonesia, nor has a qualitative approach been used to deeply explore the driving and inhibiting factors of platform utilization from the perspective of an industrial-city community such as Bitung. This study seeks to fill that gap.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework above illustrates the researcher's line of reasoning in understanding and analyzing the phenomenon under study. It depicts the relationship between the phenomenon, the research focus, the aspects to be examined namely knowledge level, explored through Bloom's cognitive taxonomy, and usage interest, explored through the TAM and Webqual constructs and the data collection and analysis process undertaken to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the research problem through an intrinsic case-study design.

3. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

Research Approach and Type

This study adopts a qualitative approach, selected on the basis of preliminary survey findings indicating that the majority of the Bitung City public remains unfamiliar with the Indofood Career website. This condition demands an in-depth understanding of why this knowledge gap exists and how usage interest is formed or hindered, rather than a mere numerical measurement of awareness percentages questions of "why" and "how" that can only be comprehensively answered through qualitative exploration of informants' experiences, perceptions, and contexts. Based on the nature of the research problem, this study is designed as an intrinsic case study, drawing on Stake's conceptualization, in which the aim is to gain a better understanding of a particular case because the case itself is of inherent interest (Handayani & Merdekawati, 2019). The intent is not to draw general conclusions or discuss abstract theory, but to explore the value and uniqueness of a specific case the phenomenon of Indofood Career website utilization in Bitung City, which possesses distinctive characteristics within the context of digital employment.

Research Setting and Time

This study was conducted in Bitung City, North Sulawesi Province, with data collection carried out across several locations, including the Sekolah Tinggi Bisnis dan Manajemen (STBM) Dua Sudara and residential areas where informants live. Bitung City was selected as the research site given its status as a

strategic industrial center in North Sulawesi with a significant job-seeker population, and because Indofood's operational presence in the region makes it the most relevant location for examining Indofood Career website utilization. The research was conducted over approximately five months, from April to August 2026, encompassing research-design preparation, data collection through interviews and observation, data processing and analysis, and finalization of the research report.

Data Types and Collection Methods

This study draws on two complementary categories of data: primary data, collected directly by the researcher through interviews and observation with informants related to the research variables, and secondary data, obtained indirectly through existing documentation (Sulung, 2024). To ensure data validity, this study applies methodological triangulation, combining three data-collection techniques in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation study to verify the consistency of information obtained from the same informants regarding the same phenomenon. Method triangulation was selected as the sole triangulation type given the study's focus on a single primary subject group, namely the people of Bitung City. The three techniques applied are: (1) in-depth interviews, using a semi-structured format with a set of core questions while allowing flexibility to probe interesting responses in greater depth; (2) direct observation, involving observation of informants' behavior, including their use of the Indofood Career website, to complement and reinforce interview data; and (3) documentation study, involving the collection of relevant official documents such as website displays, company documentation, and employment statistics relevant to the research problem (Danial, as cited in Ma'ruf, 2025).

Research Informants

In qualitative research, data adequacy is determined not by quantity but by the depth of information obtained until data saturation is reached. Informants in this study were members of the general public in Bitung City selected through purposive sampling based on the criteria of being aged 18–35, residing in Bitung City, and having access to internet technology. Five informants were selected, representing varied educational backgrounds and ages to enrich the resulting picture, drawn from residential neighborhoods and the Sekolah Tinggi Bisnis dan Manajemen Dua Sudara. To protect informant confidentiality in accordance with qualitative research ethics, informant identities were anonymized and coded as Informant 1 through Informant 5.

Thematic Exploration Guide

A thematic exploration guide was developed as a reference for constructing interview questions, based on the research focus and the theoretical constructs identified above, ensuring that each theme and sub-theme explored had a clear conceptual foundation.

Table 2. Thematic Exploration Guide

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Sub-Theme
Knowledge Level	Level of understanding of the existence, function, features, and usage procedure of the Indofood Career website	Awareness of the website; Understanding of usage procedure
Usage Interest	Interest and willingness of society to use the Indofood Career website as a means of obtaining vacancy information and applying for jobs	Interest; Willingness to use; Willingness to reuse; Willingness to recommend

Source: Processed data, 2026

Data Analysis and Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied three techniques in line with the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability proposed by Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Jailani, 2017): (1) method triangulation, combining in-depth interviews, observation, and

documentation to verify data consistency; (2) member checking, confirming the researcher's interpretation of the data with informants to ensure alignment with their intended meaning; and (3) thick description, providing a detailed account of the research context, informant background, and field conditions to allow readers to assess the transferability of the findings to similar contexts. Data were processed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (as cited in Fajri et al., 2023), comprising three continuous stages: (1) data condensation selecting, summarizing, and transforming raw field data to focus on the utilization of the Indofood Career website; (2) data display systematically organizing condensed data to facilitate comprehension and conclusion drawing; and (3) conclusion drawing and verification formulating provisional conclusions that are continuously strengthened as additional data are incorporated.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Informant Profile

This study involved five informants selected through purposive sampling in accordance with the established criteria. The five informants represented the two data-collection locations set out in the research design: university students/graduates in Bitung City and the surrounding residential community, representing independent society outside educational institutions.

Table 3. General Overview of Research Informants

Informant Code	Prior Job-Search Platform Experience	Stage of Interaction with Indofood Career
Informant 1	LinkedIn application	Already understands the registration flow through job application
Informant 2	Kemnaker Internship website (synced with PDDikti)	Has registered and applied for a vacancy
Informant 3	Social media (TikTok, Facebook), Kemnaker	Has created an account and applied according to education level
Informant 4	Social media (Facebook)	Reached the login/access-code stage; has not yet applied
Informant 5	Social media/third-party channels	Has only opened the website; has not yet applied

Source: Interview data, 2026

The variation in informants' stages of interaction with the Indofood Career website, ranging from merely opening the site to having already applied for a vacancy, provides a rich picture of user experience across different points in the platform-adoption process, consistent with the aim of an intrinsic case study to understand the uniqueness of a phenomenon in depth rather than to measure a single, uniform point of experience.

Knowledge Level of Society Toward the Indofood Career Website

At the most basic level of knowledge, all informants demonstrated familiarity with and recall of the general appearance and content of the Indofood Career website, albeit with varying depth. Informant 1 recalled the available content in reasonable detail:

"The profile on the website is good and easy to remember, the website display is not too crowded; the content available is not too much, only what is most needed, such as job vacancies and the FAQ section, which I think are the most important parts of the content on this website." (Informant 1)

A similar impression regarding the simplicity of the website's display was echoed by Informants 2 and 3, both emphasizing that the minimalist design made the website easy to remember. Informant 4 offered a more feature-oriented description, referring to the variety of job positions and placement-location

information, while Informant 5 recalled only the most general elements, such as company profile and vacancy listings. This variation in recall depth suggests that informants' initial knowledge of the website was shaped more by first visual impressions (a simple, uncluttered display) than by an in-depth understanding of all available features.

At the comprehension level, all informants were able to explain the difference between searching for jobs through an official company website and other platforms they had previously used, such as job-search applications, government-agency websites, or social media. A common thread across all five responses was the perception that an official company website is more trustworthy and procedurally simpler. Informant 3 described their experience searching for vacancies via social media as follows:

"Searching for jobs through an official company website is more secure, and the information is more accurate compared to other job-vacancy platforms, such as through promotions on social media or links; for example, when I searched for job vacancies on TikTok and Facebook, I had to go through a link first, and then the company would direct me to open a Telegram account, which I found very complicated." (Informant 3)

Informants 1 and 2 similarly compared their experience with job-aggregator platforms (LinkedIn and the Kemnaker Internship website), which they found to involve a more complicated data-synchronization process compared to Indofood Career's direct, single-company, single-registration-flow structure. At the application level, however, a significant variation emerged: Informants 1, 2, and 3 were able to describe the full usage flow in sequence from finding the website, creating an account, entering personal data, to applying for a vacancy whereas Informants 4 and 5 admitted only reaching the login or website-opening stage without proceeding to submit an application, as Informant 5 explained:

"For now, I have only opened the website; I haven't applied for any job vacancies." (Informant 5)

This finding indicates that procedural knowledge (know-how) does not always align with declarative knowledge (know-what). An informant may be well acquainted with and understand a website's existence without necessarily having completed its full usage procedure through to the functional stage of applying for a job.

Perception and Experience in Using the Website

When asked to compare Indofood Career with previously used platforms, all informants consistently identified similarities in basic function as a job-search tool, while differing on scope and ease of access. Informants 1 and 4 specifically highlighted that Indofood Career's single-company focus was a key distinguishing feature compared to aggregator platforms that compile vacancies from multiple companies simultaneously a perception consistent with this study's scope, which specifically examines a corporate career website rather than a general job portal.

At the synthesis level, all informants demonstrated the ability to formulate new strategies for tailoring their applications (CVs) to the criteria of available vacancies on the website. Informant 4 offered a relatively complex example, describing a strategy for adjusting a CV for two positions simultaneously:

"I might want to apply for both the HR and Accounting positions at the same time, so in my CV I would include skills relevant to both positions." (Informant 4)

This synthesis capability indicates that informants' knowledge of the website did not remain passive but was transformed into an active job-search strategy, even among informants (4 and 5) who had not yet completed the process on the website itself. At the evaluation level, all informants regarded the Indofood Career website as effective and worth using, citing ease of access, clarity of information, and credibility as it is managed directly by the company. All five informants rated the website on a 1–10 scale.

Table 4. Recap of Informant Ratings of the Indofood Career Website

Informant	Rating	Primary Reason
1	8/10	Easy to access and use; trustworthy as it belongs to an official company
2	9/10	Registration requirements are not complicated
3	10/10	Easy to access; vacancies match education level
4	8/10	Detailed and official display; clear, easy-to-understand features
5	8/10	Simplifies job searching, though some issues remain with information and update speed

Source: Interview data, 2026

The average rating of 8.6 out of 10 indicates a high level of acceptance of the website's quality itself (usability). However, as observed in the knowledge sub-theme, this high acceptance of website quality did not correspond to broad public awareness of its existence, as explicitly noted by Informants 1 and 2 in their evaluations.

Driving and Inhibiting Factors of Knowledge and Usage Interest

All informants associated website use with concrete benefits, whether trust in vacancy information (Informant 1), an increased volume of job information obtained (Informant 2), knowledge of varied placement locations within the Indofood group (Informant 3), or added experience in the broader job-search process (Informants 4 and 5). This consistent perception of usefulness constitutes one of the main driving factors of usage interest. All informants also stated that the website was easy to understand and use, although Informant 1 noted that new users likely require some time to fully grasp the registration flow; ease of access via mobile devices (noted by Informant 4) further reinforced this perception of ease of use.

Four of the five informants (1, 2, 3, 4) expressed willingness to recommend the Indofood Career website to friends or acquaintances searching for jobs, citing its lack of application cost as well as its credibility and ease of access. Notably, Informant 5 offered a more conditional response, positioning the website as a "third option" due to a mismatch between available vacancies and their career interests, along with concerns about information-update speed:

"I think it would become a third option because the vacancies offered don't match the passion I'm pursuing; and for access, the updates might take too long and so on, but for accessing it again, maybe as a third option." (Informant 5)

When asked for suggestions for improvement, all informants without exception converged on a single, consistent conclusion: minimal socialization, rather than the website's technical quality, was the primary barrier. Informant 2 stated this explicitly:

"I think there should be more socialization about this website, because the website is very good, but the very limited utilization is unfortunate given how the website itself was built." (Informant 2)

Informants 3 and 4 specifically proposed optimizing social media and offline activities (events/career fairs) as socialization channels, while Informant 5 proposed synchronizing information updates between the website and the company's social media accounts, as new information is often available on social media before it appears on the official website. Beyond socialization, the limited scope of vacancies covering only a single corporate group compared to aggregator platforms that list vacancies from many companies was also cited as a factor potentially reducing the website's appeal for individuals with more specific or varied career interests.

Observation and Documentation Findings

Beyond in-depth interviews, direct observation was conducted during an internship period at PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk, focusing on how the Indofood Career website was utilized as part of the company's e-recruitment system. The observation found that although the company has an established

website-based e-recruitment system displaying various open positions, the company's own utilization of the system particularly in actively disseminating information about the website's existence to prospective applicants remained suboptimal. Documentation study, encompassing website screenshots, official company documents, and vacancy searches filtered by the nearest available location (Manado, as no specific Bitung City filter option exists), found only a single active vacancy (a Sales position) with no listing specifically designated for Bitung City during the research period findings that reinforce informants' complaints regarding limited vacancy coverage and update speed, and lend further support to the discouraged-worker interpretation discussed below.

Discussion: Knowledge Level and the Awareness-Availability Gap

The findings show that informants' knowledge of the Indofood Career website is relatively strong at the *know* and *comprehension* levels, but varies at the *application* level. Referring to Notoatmodjo's hierarchy of knowledge (as cited in Engko et al., 2023), this variation is reasonable, given that procedural knowledge (application) requires direct experience not universally shared by every individual, unlike declarative knowledge (knowing and understanding), which can form from brief exposure to a website's display alone. This finding reinforces the argument raised in the study's background that the low knowledge of digital recruitment platforms among society in Bitung City is not primarily a matter of technical capability, but of limited exposure and socialization since all five informants who had been exposed to the website demonstrated meaningful cognitive capacity to understand and, ultimately, apply it.

Discussion: Perception and Experience Within the Intrinsic Case Study Frame

As an intrinsic case study drawing on Stake's conceptualization (as cited in Handayani & Merdekawati, 2019), this research does not seek to generalize the experiences of five informants but rather to understand the depth and uniqueness of the case itself. This uniqueness is reflected in the variation of informants' interaction stages (from merely opening the website to having already applied) and the adaptive strategies they developed, such as tailoring a CV to multiple positions simultaneously. The comparative judgments informants made regarding other platforms (LinkedIn, the Kemnaker Internship website, social media) further support the argument that evaluations of Indofood Career are rational, shaped by prior experience with other job-information channels, consistent with the findings of Roudhotul Rohmah et al. (2023) on online platform utilization in the digital-era job search.

Discussion: Driving and Inhibiting Factors Through the Technology Acceptance Model

Consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model developed by Davis (1989) and applied as the analytical lens in the interview guide, this study's findings show that *perceived usefulness* and *perceived ease of use* were both rated positively by all informants, which should conceptually drive high usage interest, consistent with Sugiyono and Hidayah's (2024) TAM study of the KitaLulus application. Nevertheless, these findings also point to factors beyond TAM's two core constructs that influence interest, namely the alignment of vacancy content with individual career preferences (as noted by Informant 5) and perceptions of information timeliness. This finding enriches the discussion in Azzatillah et al. (2024) and Prakarsa et al. (2024) on e-recruitment platform acceptance, demonstrating qualitatively that high perceived usefulness and ease of use do not automatically translate into uniform usage interest when a platform's content does not align with users' specific needs.

Meanwhile, the finding that minimal socialization is the primary barrier raised consistently by all informants falls outside TAM's core constructs, yet aligns with Faidlatul Habibah and Irwansyah's (2021) argument that the mere existence of technology does not automatically guarantee equitable access to information without adequate dissemination efforts. In other words, the main barrier to Indofood Career utilization in Bitung City lies at the initial stage of technology adoption the awareness stage rather than at the acceptance stage that follows once users have become familiar with and tried the platform.

Discussion: The Das Sein–Das Sollen Gap and the Discouraged-Worker Phenomenon

These findings can be traced back to the *das sein* and *das sollen* framework proposed in the study's background. The actual condition (*das sein*) found in the field shows that the quality and usefulness of the Indofood Career website are already regarded favorably by those who are familiar with it, as reflected in the average rating of 8.6 out of 10. However, the ideal condition (*das sollen*) in which the public is able to recognize and utilize the platform has not yet been achieved due to minimal socialization. This finding reinforces the study's initial hypothesis regarding the discouraged-worker phenomenon: the declining number of registered society in Bitung City during 2023–2025 potentially does not solely reflect an improvement in local employment conditions, but may also reflect a segment of society who remain unaware of digital vacancy information channels such as Indofood Career, and who therefore continue searching for work without being officially registered or without utilizing the full range of opportunities genuinely available to them.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion above, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the knowledge level of society in Bitung City regarding the Indofood Career website is fairly strong at the *know* and *comprehension* levels but varies at the *application* level; all informants could recall the website's general appearance and content and understood its advantages (credibility and procedural simplicity) relative to other job-search platforms they had used, yet not all informants had completed the usage procedure through to the job-application stage indicating that the primary issue lies not in society' cognitive capacity to operate the digital platform, but in their limited initial exposure to the website's existence.

Second, society' perceptions and experiences in becoming acquainted with and utilizing the Indofood Career website are generally positive, with the website regarded as effective and worth using, evidenced by an average rating of 8.6 out of 10, underpinned by consistent perceptions of usefulness (credible vacancy information) and ease of use (a simple, mobile-accessible registration flow). Informants' experiences also shaped adaptive strategies in the job-application process, such as tailoring CV content to available vacancy criteria, indicating that acquired knowledge had been translated into concrete action rather than remaining passive understanding.

Third, the primary driving factors for knowledge of and interest in using the Indofood Career website are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use, both rated positively by all informants, together with the absence of any application cost. Conversely, the primary inhibiting factor identified consistently across all informants is minimal socialization and promotion of the website, compounded by limited vacancy coverage restricted to a single corporate group and concerns regarding information-update speed. The main barrier to Indofood Career utilization in Bitung City therefore lies at the awareness stage rather than the technology-acceptance stage. Overall, these findings confirm a gap between the *das sein* and *das sollen* conditions described in the study's background, lending empirical support to the discouraged-worker hypothesis: the decline in registered society in Bitung City may be more closely related to limited awareness of digital vacancy channels such as Indofood Career than to a genuine improvement in local labor-market conditions.

Based on these findings, several recommendations are proposed. PT Indofood Sukses Makmur Tbk is encouraged to intensify socialization and promotion of the Indofood Career website through more active social-media channels, participate in offline activities such as career fairs or university visits in Bitung City, and synchronize the update speed of vacancy information between the website and the company's official social-media accounts. The Bitung City Government may consider formulating digital-employment literacy programs that specifically introduce various digital recruitment platforms, including corporate career websites such as Indofood Career, particularly to younger generations, and may collaborate with companies operating in Bitung City to conduct joint socialization efforts. Society are encouraged to make

greater use of official company websites as an active means of job searching, given their credibility and cost-free access, while also taking greater personal initiative in seeking out digital recruitment platforms rather than relying solely on social media or word of mouth. Future research is recommended to apply a quantitative approach to statistically test the relationships among socialization, perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and usage interest across a broader population, and to extend this qualitative case-study design to other industrial cities in Eastern Indonesia or to compare multiple corporate career websites, in order to enrich the transferability of these findings. This study is limited by its intrinsic case-study design involving five informants, and its findings are therefore contextual to Bitung City rather than intended for generalization to other regions; direct observation and documentation study were likewise conducted within a single observation period, and thus may not capture the longer-term dynamics of website utilization.

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