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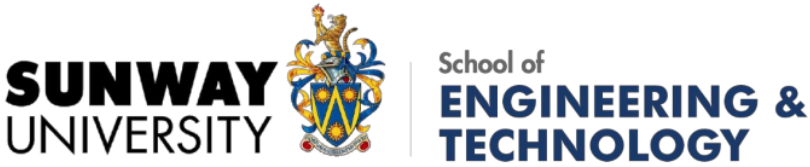

CAPSTONE PROJECT 1

Planning Document

Your Career Launchpad: Explore Endless Possibilities

by

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Abstract

The challenges presented by the job market are manifold for both the job seekers and employers, particularly students and recent graduates. This platform, “Your Career Launchpad: Explore Endless Possibilities”, is designed to ease the task of recruitment by linking job hunting individuals with possible employers. This planning document encapsulates the introduction, literature review, methodology as well as the research results for constructing the platform.

A better understanding of user experience of portals and job matching algorithms as well as understanding gaps in the literature on digital job portals. Data from user research, collected with the help of a detailed questionnaire gives useful information regarding user needs, problems and features expectations. The methodology construction is performed in accordance with an agile project management.

The proposed workplan ensures timely progress and structured completion, culminating in a platform that addresses the needs of job seekers and employers. This document serves as a foundation for the eventual implementation of “Your Career Launchpad”, aimed at revolutionizing the digital recruitment experience.

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Introduction

1.0 Overview

The job market has become very tough in that both job seekers and employers are facing major problems. This overwhelming competition makes it tremendously difficult for job seekers, particularly students and recent graduates, to get hold of opportunities suitable for their qualifications, skills and career goals. Simultaneously, employers face difficulty in identifying and recruiting the right talent to meet their organizational objective. Conventional methods of job hunting as well as some existing portals like LinkedIn and Glassdoor do not appear to solve the concerns of these two groups. To bridge this gap, “Your Career Launchpad: Explore Endless Possibilities” is conceptualized as a dynamic and user-centered job portal that streamlines the recruitment process.

The platform aims to create a tailored experience for job seekers by leveraging advanced features such as customizable filters, industry segmentation and intelligent algorithms for job matching. Employers on the other hand, benefit from tools designed for effective job posting, application tracking and candidate filtering. The project adopts an agile development approach, ensuring continuous improvement through iterative design, development and testing phases. With a focus on usability and inclusivity, “Your Career Launchpad” seeks to redefine the digital recruitment landscape.

1.1 Research Background

The evolution of technology has revolutionized the recruitment and selection processes allowing companies to improve the efficiency, cost and quality of choosing candidates. Innovations like chat-based systems, video-conferencing tools and mobile applications have simplified many aspects of recruitment such as sourcing and especially screening (Poornima Sehrawat & M.s Bornali Brahma, 2018). The internet and in particular social networking sites have changed the way of attracting candidates by providing wider options of exposure and accessibility (Nikolaou, 2021).

Also, improvements that tackle the shrinking of the recruitment pool such as applicant tracking systems which help in screening are also coming out as well as modern screening techniques such as asynchronous digital interviews and gamification methods which provide new ways of assessing people (Nikolaou, 2021). These technologies are indeed useful in recruitment as human resource professionals from different industries say that it best enables recruitment especially in the preliminary stages in sourcing (Abdul, 2020). Besides, Abdul

(2020) mentioned that other new technologies such as AI and blockchain will be able to continue this trend by making the recruitment more accurate, clear and effective.

Nevertheless, whereas these technologies have relatively eased recruitment processes for organizations, their use in job portals aimed at some specific groups such as students and fresh graduates is still low. By filling in these gaps, this section of "Your Career Launchpad" seeks to utilize these innovations to build a simple user-friendly and efficient job site that responds to the needs of its clients.

1.2 Problem Statement

Job portals have come to be a crucial part in the modern society especially during the covid-19 outbreak which sped up the transition to the online recruitment processes (Singh et al., 2021). Though a good number of people use these websites, the sites are still confronting different challenges in trying to satisfy both job seekers and employers. Users have expressed concerns over the usability of the portals, the reliability of job postings and the accuracy of job matches, thus creating a confusing view for the portals' usefulness (Deepika RM & Praveen SV, 2024).

For job seekers, these issues result in frustration and problems with the recruitment process, particularly for students and recent graduates who do not have much experience working for professionals. On the other hand, employers experience inefficiencies in the process of recruitment such as finding the target candidate and even managing applications, which results in higher recruitment expenses and delays. Researchers have suggested that there is a need to integrate new feature that will solve the described problem for all the stakeholders and that will add value to the system (Singh et al., 2021).

Regarding these problems, the adoption of automation, Java-based architectures and well-organized data analysis should help to reduce the chances of errors and also enhance the overall performance of the platform (Kadu, 2024). These goals could be fully achieved by enhancing job portals with the required skills to maximize the recruitment process and provide enough opportunities for students and make placements easier than before. "Your Career Launchpad" is geared to solve these problems by developing a user friendly and effective platform that will connect the seekers and the employers and so enhance the experience of all the users.

1.3 Objectives

The primary objectives of "Your Career Launchpad" are:

1. To simplify the job search process for students and recent graduates through intuitive design and advanced filtering mechanisms.

2. To provide employers with streamlined tools for posting jobs, managing websites and identifying top talent efficiently.
3. To develop an intelligent job-matching algorithm that reduces biases and improves the accuracy of recommendations.
4. To create a user-centric platform that is inclusive and accessible, bridging digital divides and promoting equity in recruitment.

1.4 Project Scope

In general, the project entails the conception and implementation of a web-based portal for the job market, with the design paying particularly attention to the needs of the users. The key functions include:

- User profiles: Enabling job seekers and employers to create and manage profiles.
- Job search and filters: Advanced search capabilities with customizable filters for industries, locations, skillsets and others.
- Employer dashboard: Tools for job posting, application tracking and filtering candidates based on preferences.
- Job-matching algorithm: A machine-learning-based algorithm that prioritizes relevance, inclusivity and fairness in matching.
- Responsive design: Ensuring the platform is accessible across devices, from desktops to smartphones.

The project aims to maximize usability and useful features after the project is done, therefore the projects plan is to maximize the functionalities of these features by using agile development cycles of creation and testing.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is organized into four chapters, each providing a detailed overview of the project's components:

Chapter 1

Introduction: This chapter outlines the background, problem statement, objectives and scope of the project. It provides an overview of the challenges faced by job seekers and employers and highlights the significance of developing "Your Career Launchpad".

Chapter 2

Literature Review: The second chapter reviews existing research on job platforms, user experience, algorithmic matching, internships, social networks, digital inequalities and success metrics for job portals. It synthesizes insights from scholarly work to provide a foundation for the platform's development.

Chapter 3

Methodology: This chapter outlines the methodology devised for the project and is divided into three distinct phases, which are the user research phase, development phase and evaluation phase. Phase 1 is dedicated to the problem formulation that is basically done by means of a questionnaire, whereas phase 2 adopts the agile framework to develop and improve the design, development and the platform in an iterative manner. The last phase constitutes the usability testing as well as performance testing of the platform for its usefulness.

Chapter 4
Results and Discussions: In this chapter, results from user interviews carried out during Phase 1 are described. Such results, some of which are represented in graphs and charts, encompass descriptive demographics of participants, their employment search activities, problems encountered with the currently used platform, and features that they would like to see in an employment portal. These aspects are then condensed to facilitate a better understanding of the latter phases of the project.

Chapter 5
Workplan and Timeline: The final chapter outlines the timeline for completing the project's planning document, including specific deadlines and milestones for tasks such as research, analysis, report writing, and final submission. It serves as a guide to ensure the timely completion of the planning document.

1.6 Summary

The brief overview of "Your Career Launchpad" mentions the absence of an employment portal which the business sought to complement. In doing this, the project brings together perspectives from scholarly work and practical needs to offer something that is useful, easy to reach and affordable for the people seeking jobs and employers. The next chapters focus on the details of the theoretical basis, methods of exploration and technical implementation of the platform towards its successful creation.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.0 Overview

Through constant changes in technology, especially the emergence of online recruitment channels, the entire process of linking the job seekers and the employers has been made simpler. Universities have contributed to the scholarly literature on the job platforms by exploring several key aspects such as the UX design of the job portals, the matching algorithms, the internship's strategic importance, the impact of social networks, digital divide issues and the indicators of success for job portals.

In order to be able to construct a platform that meets contemporary recruitment challenges, the chapter integrates literature across these six thematic areas to aid the building of "Your Career Launchpad". Considering the modern trends, this review also suggests ways to create user-friendly interfaces, design appropriate algorithms and reduce the digital divide and improve the efficiency of the platform in general.

2.1 User Experience in Job Platforms

User experience (UX) is important for job platforms, affecting how well job seekers and employers connect. Recent research has investigated UX problems and has suggested ways to improve them in different scenarios.

2.1.1 Challenges in User Engagement

Zhou et al. (2023) looked at recruitment platforms used by migrant workers in China and found that users were not very engaged. To solve this, they recommended a mix of offline and online help, combining in-person support with digital tools to make it easier to use. Likewise, Kim and Pan (2021) analyzed usability of job search platforms for Koreans overseas and pointed out issues like confusing navigation and lack of personalization, and they suggested specific design improvements.

2.1.2 Information Mismatch and Perspective Bias

In Brazil, Boni et al. (2021) reviewed a local job opportunity platform and found several areas needing better design, like clearer job categorization and simpler navigation. Another study by Lim and Kim (2022) investigated Korean job search platforms and noted a widespread problem, job postings were often created from the perspective of employers rather than job seekers. This mismatch caused frustration and made it hard for users to find the right jobs, highlighting the need for a user-focused design.

2.2 Algorithmic Job Matching

Algorithmic job matching has changed the world of recruitment as it has provided a way of linking candidates and employers much quicker and accurately than ever before. There are efforts to streamline these processes by conducting various research in areas that include efficiency, fairness and inclusion.

2.2.1 Comprehensive Candidate Assessments

Pendyala et al. (2022) introduced a new technique for candidate profiling based on the use of social media and machine learning tools. It allows assessing the candidates in a more integrated way, more about their skills and more about their personality. These types of improvements are designed to enhance the recruiting processes by offering potential employers more information about the candidates.

2.2.2 Matching Based on Preferences

Manlove (2013) overcame existing limitations of matching theory and focuses on real life algorithms for stable matching problems in diverse areas such as actively assigning doctors to hospitals or students to academic projects. This means that both parties are satisfied with their choices, and such approaches are important when thinking about job markets when employees and employers need to be considered.

2.2.3 Fairness and Inclusivity in Algorithms

In response to criticism regarding bias in the job-matching process Delecraz et al. (2022) came up with a job matching algorithm that is fair, transparent and inclusive. Their method addresses bias and discrimination issues allowing fair results for candidates from different backgrounds in recruitment that is increasingly demanded by society.

	Recruited		Not recruited	
Attributes	Fav.	Disc.	Fav.	Disc.
gender	71k	31k	70k	32k
nationality	67k	22k	27k	25k
place of birth	60k	24k	17k	16k
education	33k	69k	24k	78k
RP requirement	70k	19k	32k	19k
18-25 years old	29k	60k	19k	33k
25-35 years old	32k	57k	20k	32k
35-45 years old	16k	72k	9k	43k
45-55 years old	8k	81k	3k	49k

Table 2.1 Size of the population for profiles that are recruited versus not recruited, across their belonging to a (assumed to be) favored (Fav.) versus discriminated (Disc.) group

As it can be seen in Table 2.1, there are some inequalities in recruitment results with respect to favored and discriminated groups, particularly in the demographic characteristic under assessment. For example, the number of foreign applicants and those without residency permits still come last in approved applications. Such findings necessitate implementing fairness measures to avoid flattering outcomes across different socio-cultural groups in the workforce.

Attributes	Disparate Impact	Statistical Parity
gender	0.98	-0.01
18-25 years old	1.06	0.04
25-35 years old	1.03	0.02
35-45 years old	0.97	-0.02
45-55 years old	0.87	-0.09
RP requirement	**0.72**	**-0.19**
education	0.82	**-0.11**
nationality	**0.66**	**-0.24**
place of birth	**0.78**	**-0.17**

Table 2.2 Disparate Impact and Statistical Parity

Table 2.2 indicates that some other variables including nationality and residency are very different and are outside the determined fairness levels according to norms in the industry. These results create the opportunity to undertake various corrective measures, such as adjusted relative weightings for less advantaged groups or mechanisms of transparency.

2.2.4 Mitigating Bias in Recruitment Pipelines

Syed and Shivendu (2022) focused on the resume-sourcing phase, a critical juncture in the hiring pipeline where bias often arises. Their study identifies conditions under which bias occurs and proposes optimal platform strategies to mitigate it, particularly under various regulatory frameworks. These strategies emphasize the importance of fairness in the early stages of the recruitment process.

2.3 Internships as Career Preparation

In today's world, it is almost unavoidable to undertake an internship during college or university as it is perceived to be an essential component of career growth. Studies have shown the effectiveness and contribution such opportunities have on employability.

2.3.1 The Role of Internships in Career Transitions

Internships are not just meant to make students work for the sake of it but rather ensure that a smooth transition is made into the working world. Sides and Mrvica (2017) are of the understanding that these opportunities internalize academic information into practical experiences. Likewise, Callanan and Benzing (2004) uncovered a similar trend, where students who completed attachment gained employment directly related to their enrollment.

2.3.2 Perceptions of Internship Effectiveness

Most views that these internships serve as a foundation for future careers, business education being the most common. Moghaddam (2011) believes that students who have carried out internships do speak positively about their usefulness. Those who have not yet done any are even likely to express grater hopes. These findings therefore would imply that internships give value and are indeed a source of motivation in career development.

2.3.3 Diverse Internship Opportunities

Internships sponsored by employers are commonplace, but paid positions within nonprofit organizations have their own transitional benefits. As Rehling (2000) noted, the internship within the nonprofit sector has its unique value by providing opportunities for engaging in community work, while also learning a variety of skills. These experiences often expand the student's insight and their flexibility towards different work settings and culture.

2.3.4 Influence of Personality Traits

The impact of internships may differ with respect to people's characteristics. Moghaddam (2011) noted that the character relates to the traits such as a person's locus of control, the need for achievement of a set objective and the tendency to take risks into account, might help to adjust and improve the main goal of the internship to prepare students for the working environment.

2.4 Social Network and Peer Influence in Job Search

Both in-person and online social networks have an unequivocally important place in determining an individual's activities in seeking a job. They act as tools of communication, networking and peer effects, making the job-seeking process much more efficient.

2.4.1 Online Social Networks

LinkedIn and other professional networking sites are a significant contributor to employment seeking behaviors, especially for those who are currently employed and believe they can find a better job. Sender and Korzyński (2019) noted that such channels can influence people who are not actively looking for a new position, but who would not say no one if it came along.

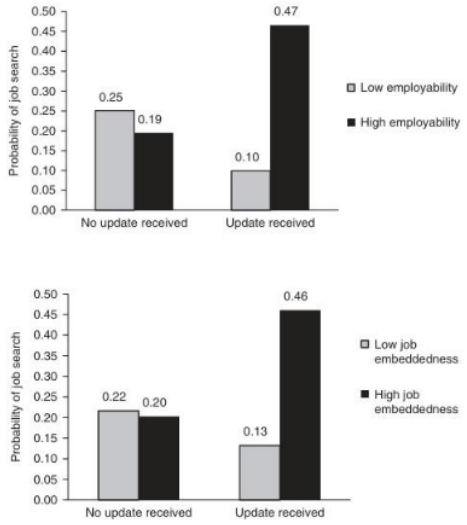

Figure 2.1 Probability of Job Search Based on Employability and Job Embeddedness

Figure 2.1 indicates that individuals with high employability are significantly more active in seeking jobs after receiving an update (47%) than those with low employability (10%). Likewise, those with low job embeddedness who are less tied up to their current job are more likely to start looking for jobs (46%) after updates than their highly embedded counterparts (13%). These results emphasize the significance of tailored updates and notifications in engendering job search behavior, especially of those with better job market circumstances or fewer responsibilities now.

This study argues that job-seeking activities can also be enhanced, as they allow linking different aspects of professional life without the need for actual contacts to be made. For unemployed people, such tools add on to the social networks by providing selected job offers and business recommendations, thus enhancing the employment seeking process.

For unemployed job seekers, Garg and Telang (2018) observed that strong ties within online networks, such as close friends or colleagues are particularly effective in generating job leads, interviews and offers. In contrast, weak ties like distant acquaintances were found to be less beneficial, underscoring the value of trusted connections.

2.4.2 Influence of Peer Behavior on Graduates

According to Tan et al. (2014), the authors around the thesis of social influence and seeking information on the web and its impact on student's job choice and the way students approach job applications. This means that social networks help with information searching but interestingly, they also help shape the decisions that people choose.

2.4.3 Offline Social Networks

Networking without hosting in-person events can be impactful in any job search. Research done by Hoye and colleagues (2009) illustrates that more extensive networks 'on the ground' and stronger bonds can lead to an increase in time spent on networking which then translates to more job offers. Personal networks often serve as a supplement to online means and provide more direct and personalized ways of finding new employment opportunities.

2.5 Addressing Digital Inequalities in Job Search

Digital inequalities pose a significant challenge to the accessibility and effectiveness of online job search platforms. These disparities, driven by sociodemographic factors such as age, education and income, impact individuals' ability to leverage digital tools for employment opportunities.

2.5.1 Sociodemographic Influences on Digital Inequalities

Age, education and income are crucial chronological factors affecting the ability to perform sophisticated job searches. According to the studies carried out by Karaoglu et al. (2021) and Green et al. (2012), old age and low educational levels correspond with users who are not proficient in utilizing virtual workplaces. These categories are usually minorities in the regions enriched with online jobs leading to poor chances of being hired.

2.5.2 Digital Skills and Job Search Success

Understanding basic computers and the Internet could make one's job search more fruitful. In the recent study conducted by Marco et al. (2023), it was revealed that individuals with better computer skills were not only more successful in seeking jobs, but also were feeling less

stress during the process. This supports the notion of training job seekers with the requisite technology to enable them deal effectively with the online space.

Table 2.3 shows the frequency with which different job-search methods were employed by respondents during the week. Even though the head of household often searches for jobs using traditional methods which include newspaper ads (92%) and seeking personal contacts (58%), only 31% of the respondents indicated that they would seek employment using the Internet on a weekly basis. This underscores the importance of non-digital methods which appear to be more effective but point to a lack of the ability and resources needed to be proficient and resort to digital means.

Job search method	Used at least weekly	Used at some time	Never used
Newspaper advertisements	92	4	4
Jobcentre Jobpoints	65	34	1
Jobcentre staff	57	43	0
Personal contacts	58	34	8
Direct approach	44	31	25
Internet	31	11	58
Community organisations	13	15	72
Jobseeker Direct telephone helpline	7	17	76

Table 2.3 Percentage of Respondents Using Selected Job-Search Methods

These statistics appropriately measure the need for addressing the digital skill gaps because the users with less confidence in using the online tools will tend to rely more on personal or community-based means. They also add to the justification on the need to have training programs that will focus on the proper use of online job-searching sites and any that are available.

2.5.3 Risks of Exacerbating Inequalities

With the increasing significance of job search services through ICT application, the digital gap may further be enhanced. As Lindsay (2005) pointed out the transition process puts specific risk groups, including populations who lack digital tools or basic skills at risk of being left behind. There is a need therefore for targeted efforts in enabling participation of people in using the online job sites.

2.5.4 Solutions for Bridging Digital Inequalities

To address these disparities, researchers recommend community-based initiatives and training programs. Lindsay (2005) proposed establishing technology centres in underserved areas and offering ICT training for unemployed individuals to enhance their digital competencies. Such measures could bridge the gap for disadvantaged groups, ensuring broader participation in the digital job market.

2.6 Success Metrics for Job Portals

Measuring and comprehending the success of job portals is critical for assessing their values as well as for improving them. Studies have been conducted to apply information systems models in the areas of job and employee portals and to determine the standard performance measures for such systems.

2.6.1 Adapting the DeLone and McLean IS Success Model

The DeLone and McLean Information Systems (IS) Success Model has been adopted very often in the evaluation of performance of various digital systems including job portals. Many key factors about portal success were identified by Debei et al. (2013):

- **System Quality**: Usability, reliability, and scalability of the portal.
- **Information Quality**: Accuracy, timeliness, and relevance of job postings.
- **Service Quality**: Responsiveness and effectiveness of customer support.

These dimensions directly determine the satisfaction levels that the users have on the site which further determines its success.

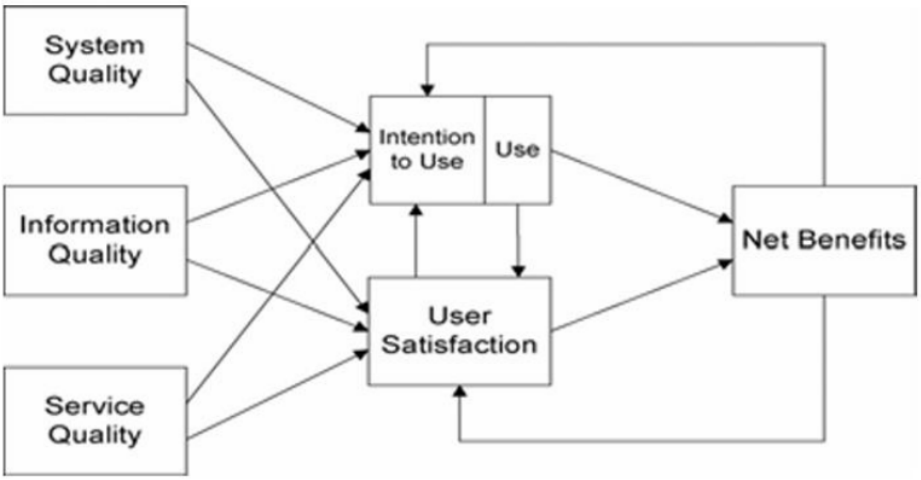

Figure 2.2 The Updated DeLone and McLean IS Success Model

Figure 2.1 explains the impact of system quality, information quality, and service quality on user satisfaction and intention to use the system which ultimately leads to actual use of the system. All these factors add up to the net benefits which are obtained from job portals, for instance purposes such as the job success rate or general user satisfaction. This model contributes towards the performance evaluation of job portals through defining salient measures of success along the technical, information and service issues.

2.6.2 Success Metrics for Employee Portals

The factors that are controlled for, which includes job portals, employee portals have been assessed on additional parameters such as collaboration and quality of support for processes. According to Urbach et al. (2010), these variables were related to enhanced performance, productivity, task novelty and satisfaction with the customers. They note that collaboration features are critical in workplaces and job portals encouraging such features are very important.

2.6.3 Click-Through Rate as a Key Metric for Job Portals

Within the job portals environment, it is well established that Click-Through Rate (CTR) metrics are crucial in determining interest from both advertisers and revenue. Smolnik et al. (2009) was able to show how job features combined with click history predictive models are

able to accurately estimate the CTR of the job listings. If there is a peak in the CTR, it implies that the job opportunities offer on the platform are suitable for job seekers making efforts to find jobs.

2.6.4 Comprehensive Models for Portal Assessment

Smolnik et al. (2009) put forward simplistic models to measure the success of job portals and pointed out a need to test the models. These models include IS traditional metrics, but also the user participation, the process's efficiency and the job outcomes' metric like job opportunities.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has tried towards this end by considering the existing literature on the key aspects of online job platforms, which comprises an outline of the principles of a workable system. It brings to the fore the importance of the user interface and user experience together with the gaps that exist in the systems where such interfaces are absent or poorly designed. The same goes for the section on algorithmic job matching which notes the advances made on candidate profiling and preferences on matching while trying to get around the barriers to diversity.

The evaluation also seeks to consider the social perspective on the use of internships in preparation for employment as well as acquisition of employable skills. In addition, the chapter draws attention to the role of social media and social relations in the course of searching for jobs and their success. It also deals with the issues of digital divide focusing on the constraints that inhibit individuals from succeeding in the digital job market and ways of addressing these constraints.

Finally, the conversation business metrics for job portals allows appropriate characteristics, the DeLone and McLean IS Success Model, which enable one to gauge the efficacy of the platforms. As it appears, these views supplement each other and adequately quip one with the requisite knowledge to create "Your Career Launchpad" in a way that is convenient, just and relevant to the demands of the applicants and providers of employment.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the methodology for designing, developing and evaluating "Your Career Launchpad", a job portal aimed at bridging the gap between job seekers and employers. The methodology is structured into three phases which are user research, development and evaluation, aligned with the agile framework to allow iterative improvements. Each phase details the specific tasks, tools and techniques employed to ensure the platform is user-centered, functional and inclusive.

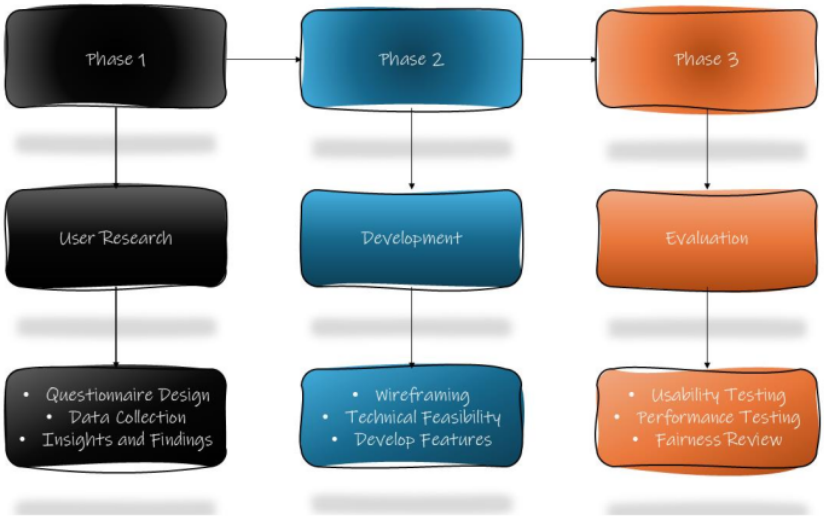

Figure 3.1 Methodology

Figure 3.1 shows the three main phases of the methodology for developing "Your Career Launchpad". Each phase focuses on specific activities necessary for creating a user-friendly and effective job portal:

1. User research phase: This phase consists of gathering information for a questionnaire directed at current students and graduates that are currently in search of internship and employment opportunities. This step intends to understand what the users need, want and problems they encounter, to provide a basis for the next steps of design and development processes.
2. Development phase: The second phase seeks to use the agile development principles to enhance the level of job portal. This aspect involves the use of cycles in designing, developing, and testing as well as constant feedback from the users to ensure the developed aspect meets the requirements.

3. Evaluation phase: The platform is subjected to usability and performance testing. The aim of usability testing is to confirm that the interface can be easily operated, the performance metrics evaluate the functionalities of the platform, fairness review aims to assess the level of diversity in the job matching results.

3.1 Phase 1: User Research

The goal of this phase is to conduct user studies to develop the planning document for "Your Career Launchpad". During this phase, user research is the most important activity where students and graduates seeking employment were the target beneficiaries of the study that was carried out in the form of a questionnaire. Information obtained in this phase will determine the features and functionalities that are supposed to be implemented on the platform.

3.1.1 Objectives of User Research

- To find out the problems students and graduates face when using job portal platforms.
- To know which features are most important for users, like filters or notifications.
- To learn about user's experiences with job portal platforms.
- To collect basic information about the participants to understand their needs better.

3.1.2 Target Audience

- Students who are seeking internships for their studies or career growth.
- Recent graduates who are looking for full-time jobs.

3.1.3 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was intended to collect quantitative as well as qualitative data. The questionnaire has four sections, each section was generated towards accomplishing a particular aim.

Section 1: Participant Information
This section sought to obtain basic information. Respondents provided information on their age, current status, major and year of graduation. This was done to categorize the responses according to their backgrounds.

Section 2: Current Job Search Behavior

This section asked how the participants were searching for jobs or internships. It pertained to such issues as the user's frequency to job portal platforms and their preferences for specific platforms such as LinkedIn or Indeed. Participants also outlined their searching behavior such as searching by filters, keywords, suggestions and other.

Section 3: Challenges with Existing Platforms
This section sought to investigate the issues that users have when using job portals. Participants can select challenges like poor navigation, irrelevant job matches or outdated job listings. They can provide recommendations on how the platforms can be improved.

Section 4: Feature Preferences for a Job Portal
This section inquires what other specific features would be desirable to job portal users. These included but were not limited to enhanced filters for job postings, alerts on new job vacancies, machine learning job recommendations and resume submission interfaces. Participants can express the significance of an intuitive and straightforward design.

3.1.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The questionnaire was shared online for one week period. Responses were collected through Google Forms. The results were then organized and analyzed into two main ways.

Quantitative Data: Answers to questions with specific options were turned into numbers and percentages. Microsoft Excel was used to create graphs and charts.
Qualitative Data: Answers to open-ended questions were reviewed to find common ideas and suggestions. These helped identify key problems and user needs.

The results from this analysis will be shown in the next chapter as charts and graphs. It will explain what users need, which challenges they face and what features they want.

3.2 Phase 2: Development

Phase 2 utilizes the agile software development methodology that is often regarded as a responsive and adaptable project management method in fast-paced settings. Software engineering in recent years has benefited from the adoption of agile frameworks owing to their capacity to respond to changing requirements and new expectations from users (Choudhary & Rakesh, 2016). This phase builds on the insights gathered during phase 1 and translates the insights into development tasks that guarantee that the growth of platform is gradual and purposeful.

3.2.1 Agile Development Approach

Within this agile development model, iterations, flexibility and collaboration are the focus during every single stage of software development life cycle. Such modelling puts in place a project that can adjust in a short span to new requirements and ensures that the feedback from the users is captured and enhanced repeatedly.

The agile process consists of several phases, which are planning, design, development, testing, release and feedback. These phases enable in achieving completed features on a recurring basis in succession of periods known as springs. This repetitive process guarantees that development is carried out in progressive steps which breed perfection and brings development close to the users and the objectives of the project.

Figure 3.2 Agile Development Process

Figure 3.2 visually represents the agile development lifecycle. The agile cycle begins with:

1. Plan: Defining the desired goals, tasks necessary for the project completion and the requirements which will be achieved within every sprint.
2. Design: The framework or system design is prepared in order to achieve the planned objectives.
3. Develop: the mentioned plans are put into implementation with the planned features or functionalities.
4. Test: The developed components are put to test to find any bugs and issues that may arise.
5. Release: The completed components are provided to either the stakeholders or the end users.

6. Feedback: The feedback received is used to improve the system and outline aspects that will be adjusted for the upcoming sprint.

This cycle repeats with great recurrence and consistency which leads to the further improvement of the project as it undergoes continuous modernization and feedback mechanism incorporation. This allows the platform to be responsive to user demands without compromising standards because agile is roll-out in incremental steps.

3.2.2 Key Dimensions of Agile Development

There are two major dimensions associated with agility. Lee and Xia (2010) outline them as response extensiveness and response efficiency, which are crucial aspects in this phase. Response extensiveness is characterized by the ability of the development team to match multi-faceted and intricate user requirements, for example, personalising job recommendations or advanced search filters. Whereas response efficiency is about realising these features in the right time and at the least cost. Inconclusion both dimensions will be addressed for the comprehensiveness and usability of the platform.

3.2.3 Benefits of Agile Development

Agile development provides several advantages that directly address the goals of this project:

- Faster delivery: The platform is able to send out certain components earlier as the development process is divided into smaller sprints, the overall target is quicker progress (K Mirnalini & Raya, 2010).
- Improved adaptability: The agile approach is developed through a series of steps and stages which makes it easier to fit in changes and add recommendations made by users (Lee & Xia, 2010).
- Higher user satisfaction: The regular testing of the platform means it is always in line with the user requirements improving satisfaction and retention levels.
- Cost-effectiveness: Incremental development reduces the risk of resource waste by focusing only on high-priority tasks (Moniruzzaman & Hossain, 2017).

3.3 Phase 3: Evaluation

The final phase that needs to be done is evaluation and validation of the created website. The evaluation process is crucial in determining if the platform satisfies the user' expectations, the functional requirements. In this stage, the internal components are thoroughly scrutinized by formal testing, user feedback collection and analysis of performance.

3.3.1 Usability Testing

Usability testing will play a key role in assessing how intuitive and user-friendly the website is for job seekers and employers. This testing will involve a group of participants, including:

- Students and recent graduates who will be the main clients of the site whose purpose is seeking for an internship or employment.
- Employers who will log into the site to put and handle recruitment activities.

The evaluation process will consist of the following activities:

- Task-based scenarios: The participants will be required to simulate normal conditions and perform activities such as job searching, applying for job and setting profiles. Such scenarios are expected to assess the level of user interaction, duration of the task and the level of contentment of the users.
- Observation and feedback: Users would be asked to carry out the tasks and their activities and experiences would be observed and recorded. They would also be asked to give verbal comments and responses which would give reasons for and difficulties in usability encountered.

3.3.2 Performance Testing

Before the website is put to use, performance testing will be carried out to check the technical efficiency, stability and strength of the site. This includes determining the efficiency of the platform when subjected to various loads in a bid to ensure a user-friendly approach. Some of the key performance indicators that will be measured include:

- Load time: Time taken for job posting pages or filtered results pages to display.
- Responsiveness: The capability of the website to resize accurately to desktop, tablet and mobile devices.
- Server load capacity: The performance of the site while many users are active on it at the same time, especially when many are active at the same peak time.

Tools such as Google PageSpeed Insights or lighthouse will be employed to evaluate the performance metrics of the site.

3.3.3 User Feedback and Surveys

After the usability and performance testing, a wide user survey will be conducted to get more insights. Surveys will contain questions that include overall satisfaction with the platform, suggestions for improving website features and user profiles, ease of use when performing tasks like job applications or posting job listing and others.

3.3.4 System Refinement and Recommendations

Based on the findings from usability testing, performance testing and user surveys, the system will be optimized to address identified issues. This phase will involve making necessary adjustments to improve the user interface of the system for better navigation, enhance the speed and performance of the system to enhance the experience, eliminating any bugs or glitches that were picked out during testing.

In addition, this phase will provide recommendations, such as integrating advanced features like job alerts, chat support or AI-based job matching algorithms to make the platform even more effective.

3.3.5 Final Validation

Final validation will confirm that every modification performed has been implemented and the platform has the goals it was explicitly designed for. This will involve:

- All primary tasks including job finding, candidate and employment seeking and posting of jobs will be verified.
- User feedback will be cross checked with the main aim of ascertaining that the issues raised in the interviews have been dealt with.
- Evaluation of the platform under environment for physical stability and operational reliability.

3.3.6 Summary

Phase 3 ensures the website provides the best experience possible for job seekers and employers. This information gathered through feedback forms during the tests as well as from surveys will be used for improving the system in future reinforcements. This cyclical approach to evaluating performance of a system that meets the agile principles ensures that the web application will always get better in real time as users interact with it.

Chapter 4
Results and Discussions

4.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the results from the questionnaire conducted in Phase 1. The results are structured into four parts in order to address the major themes that were obtained from the participants.

The first section is participant information, identifies the participants who responded to the questionnaire with their age, education level, major and their graduation year. The second section is current job search behavior, describes how the participants search for jobs or internships including the incidences where they go on job portals. This includes the type of websites they favor such as LinkedIn or Indeed, and the methods used to search such as filters, keywords and recommendations.

The third section, challenges with existing platforms, highlights the problems users face on current job portals. Among these challenges are poor system navigation, irrelevant job offered and obsolete listings, as well as the participant's recommendations on how these challenges can be remedied. The last section is prefer features for a job portal, outlines what users wish to see in a modified job portal. Such an amendment would call for better job search results, job alert notifications, customized job recommendations and enhanced user-friendliness.

4.1 Results of User Research (Section 1: Participant Information)

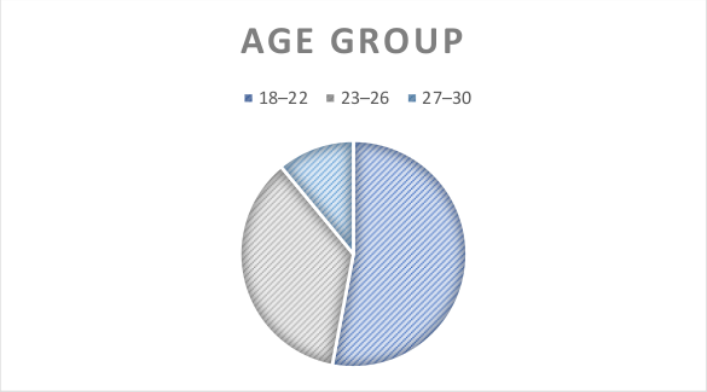

Figure 4.1 Age Group Distribution

As depicted in Figure 4.1, the age range of the respondents shows that the highest number of people who participated in this survey were within the age of 18-22 accounting for 53%, the

next group in the age bracket of 23-26 formed 36%. There is a negligible population group of respondents in the age group of 27-30 years which is 11%.

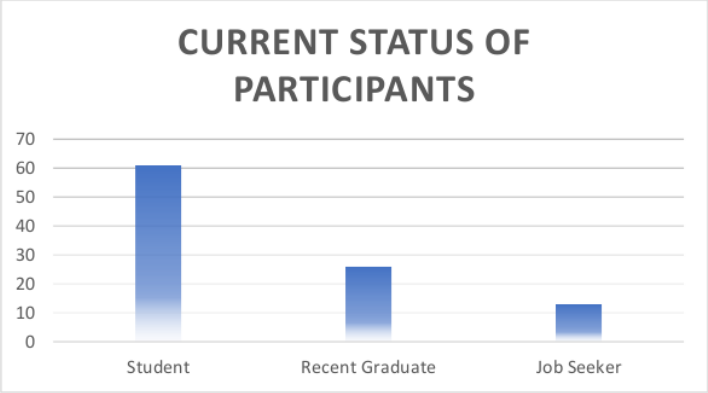

Figure 4.2 Current Status

Figure 4.2 reveals that the majority of the respondents are still in school accounting for 61% while 26 % are said to have recently graduated. 13% of respondents fall in the category of job seekers and thus fall in the lowest percentage group of the survey.

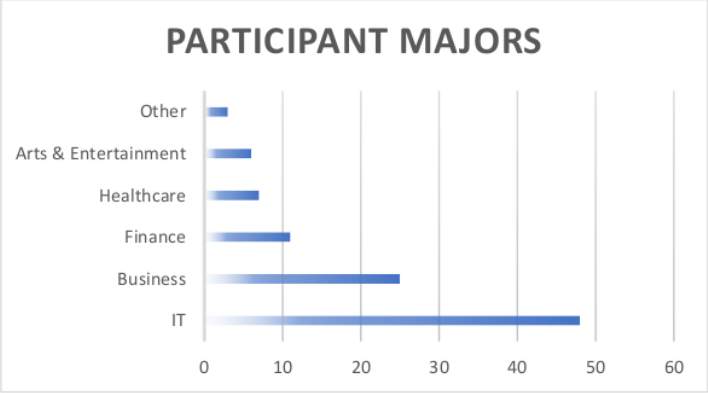

Figure 4.3 Major

From the information presented in figure 4.3 it can be seen that the majority of the participants had their major in IT accounting for 48%, closely followed by Business and Finance with 25% and 11% respectively. The rest of the respondents pursued majors in Healthcare, Arts & Entertainment and other fields.

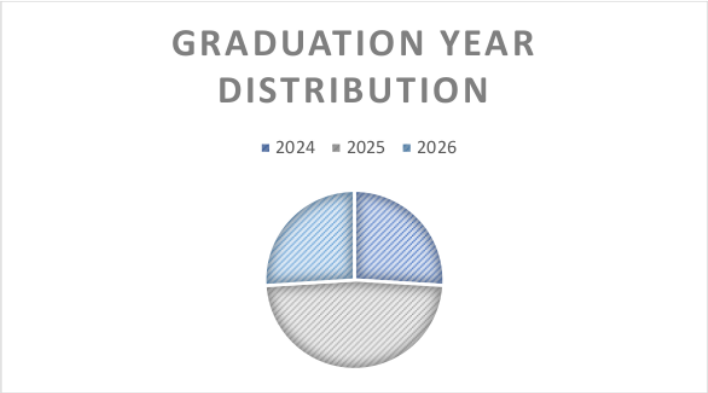

Figure 4.4 Graduation Year

Most of the participants in the survey say that they are graduating in the year 2025 which accounts for 48% of the participants while 26% say they will graduate in 2024 and the other 26% say they will graduate in 2026 as shown in figure 4.4.

It can be deduced that the respondents of the survey are mostly undergraduate and fresh degree holders in fields such as IT, Business and Finance. A considerable chunk of the respondents is below twenty-three years of age and are bound to graduate in at least a few years.

4.2 Results of User Research (Section 2: Current Job Search Behavior)

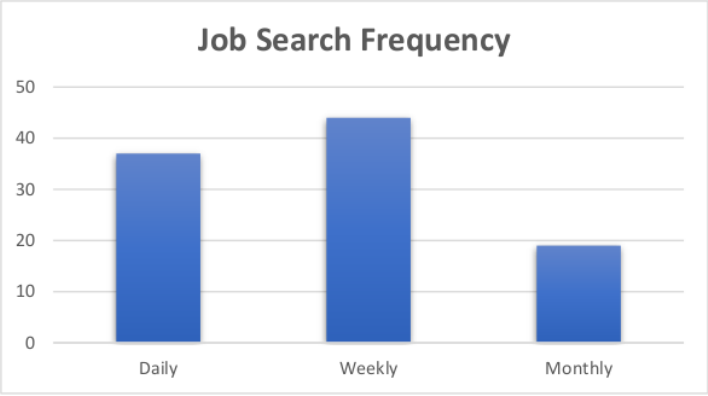

Figure 4.5 Job Search Frequency

Figure 4.5 highlights that a majority of participants search for jobs weekly (44%). Around 37% search daily, and only 19% search monthly.

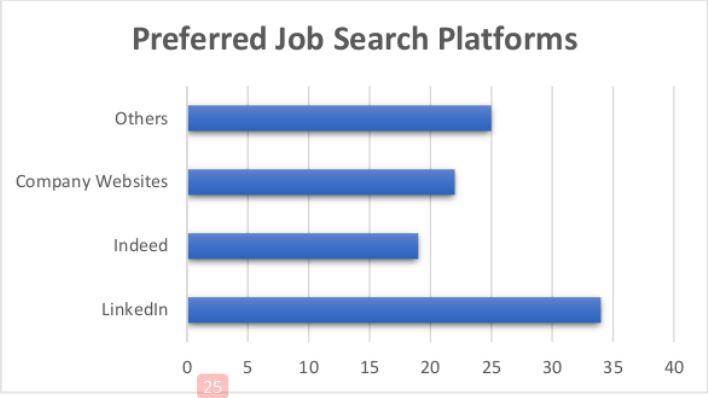

Figure 4.6 Preferred Platform

Figure 4.6 shows LinkedIn as the most preferred platform (34%), followed by other platforms (25%). Indeed and company websites are less popular.

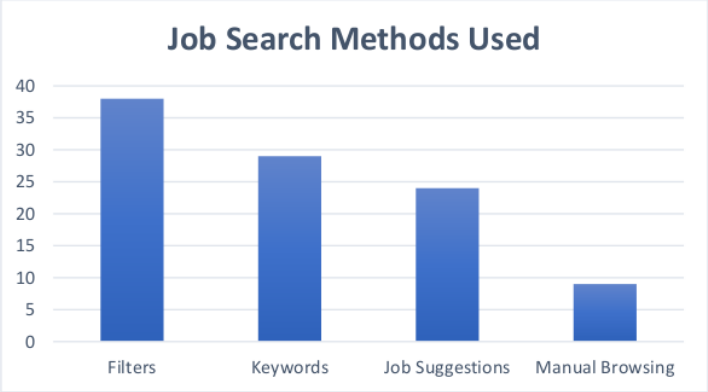

Figure 4.7 Search Method

Figure 4.7 reveals that filters (38%) is the most common job search methods, followed by keywords (29%) and job suggestions (24%). Manual browsing is used less frequently.

It was found that the participants are quite active in job portals and prefer LinkedIn over any other platform. The majority methods of searching for jobs are using filters and keywords while less people manually browse through opportunities.

4.3 Results of User Research (Section 3: Challenges with Existing Platforms)

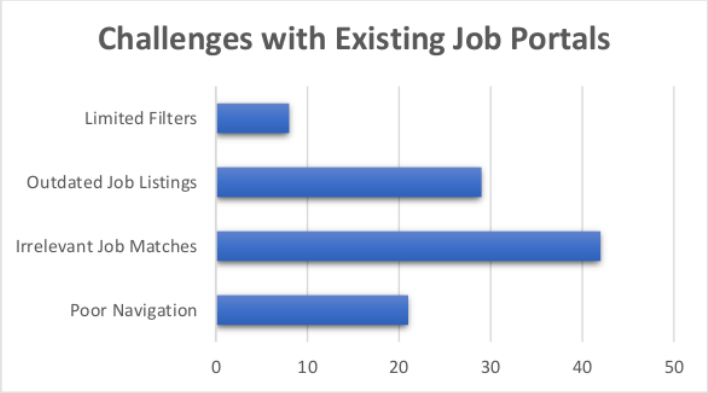

Figure 4.8 Challenges Encountered

Figure 4.8 identifies 'irrelevant job matches' (42%) as the most common challenge faced by users. Poor navigation (21%) and outdated job listings (29%) are also significant concerns.

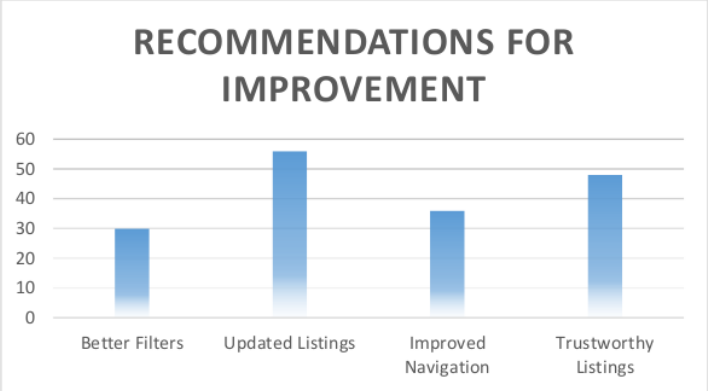

Figure 4.9 Recommendations for Improvements

Figure 4.9 suggests that updated listing (32.94%) and trustworthy listing (28.24%) are the top recommendations for improving job portals. Improved navigation and better filters are also noted.

The main issues with existing job portals include irrelevant matches, outdated listings, and poor navigation. Participants suggest improving the trustworthiness of job postings, enhancing navigation, and introducing better search filters.

4.4 Results of User Research (Section 4: Feature Preferences for a Job Portal)

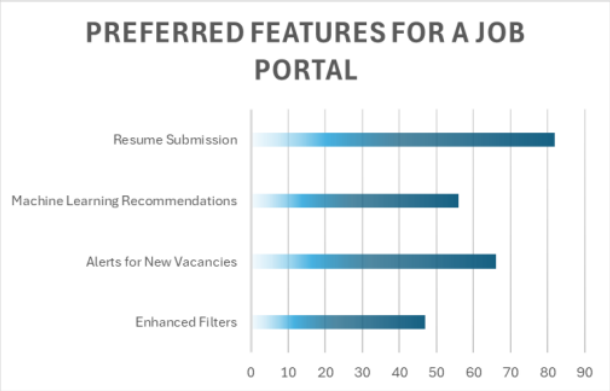

Figure 4.10 Feature Preferences

Figure 4.10 shows that resume submission (32.4%) is the most desired feature, followed by job alerts (26.4%), machine-learning recommendations (22.4%), and enhanced filters (18.8%).

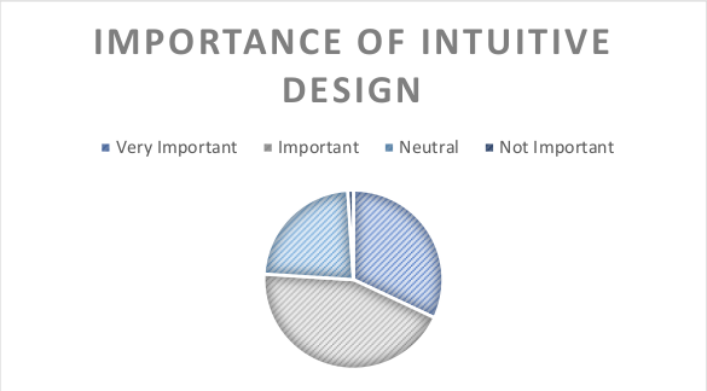

Figure 4.11 Importance of Design

Figure 4.11 highlights that 44% of participants consider intuitive design 'important', while 32% find it 'very important' and 23% find it 'neutral'. A smaller percentage remain not consider it important.

Key features participants value in a job portal include resume submission tools, job alerts, and personalized job recommendations. An intuitive design is also highly regarded, ensuring ease of use and a better user experience.

Chapter 5

Work Plan and Timeline

5.0 Overview

This chapter outlines the structured workplan and timeline for completing the planning document for "Your Career Launchpad." The plan spans 14 weeks, beginning on September 18, 2024, with the CP1 briefing session and concluding on December 20, 2024, with the final submission. It details milestones, tasks, and deadlines to ensure organized progress and timely completion.

5.1 Workplan

Project Initiation and Topic Confirmation (Weeks 1–3)
Week 1 (Sept 18–Sept 22): Attend the CP1 briefing session and review the project requirements.
Week 2 (Sept 23–Sept 29): Identify potential topics and perform preliminary research.
Week 3 (Sept 30–Oct 6): Meet with the supervisor on October 2, finalize the topic on October 3, and begin outlining the planning document.

Drafting the Planning Document (Weeks 3–4)
Week 3 (Sept 30–Oct 6): Create a draft structure for the planning document, including table of content.
Week 4 (Oct 7–Oct 13): Expand and refine the draft, incorporating research findings.

Research and Literature Review (Weeks 4–9)
Weeks 4–5 (Oct 7–Oct 20): Conduct an in-depth literature review, focusing on the main themes such as user experience, algorithmic matching, and digital inequalities.
Weeks 6–7 (Oct 21–Nov 3): Synthesize findings into cohesive sections, update the literature review chapter and get feedback from supervisor.
Weeks 8–9 (Nov 4–Nov 17): Cross-reference sources, finalize citations, and incorporate any additional research findings.

Methodology Development (Weeks 9–13)

Week 9 (Nov 11–Nov 17): Develop the methodology for Phase 1: User Research, detailing the questionnaire design and data collection process.

Weeks 11-12 (Nov 25–Dec 8): Expand on Phase 2: Development and Phase 3: Evaluation methodologies, ensuring alignment with agile principles.

Week 13 (Dec 9–Dec 15): Review and refine the methodology chapter.

Results and Discussions (Weeks 10–11)

Week 10 (Nov 18–Nov 24): Analyze data collected from the questionnaire, create graphs and charts, and draft the results section.

Week 11 (Nov 25–Dec 1): Discuss the results, interpret key findings, and finalize Chapter 4.

Revisions, Proofreading, and Finalization (Weeks 13–14)

Week 13 (Dec 9–Dec 15): Perform revisions based on supervisor feedback and proofread the document for accuracy and coherence.

Week 14 (Dec 16–Dec 19): Complete final edits and prepare the document for submission.

Submission (Dec 20, 2024): Submit the finalized planning document.

5.2 Timeline

Week	Milestones	Tasks
Week 1	CP1 Briefing	Review requirements and expectations.
Week 2	Topic Selection	Preliminary research and shortlisting topics.
Week 3	Topic Confirmation	Meet supervisor, finalize topic, and outline planning document.
Week 4	Draft Planning Document	Create table of contents, refine draft introduction.
Week 4-5	Literature Review	Conduct in-depth literature review on relevant themes.
Week 6-7	Literature Review Update	Organize findings, update draft, seek supervisor feedback.
Week 8-9	Literature Review Finalization	Cross-reference sources and complete the chapter.
Week 9	Methodology Phase 1	Design questionnaire and plan data collection.
Weeks 10–12	Methodology Phases 2 & 3	Expand development and evaluation methodologies.
Weeks 10–11	Results Analysis	Analyze questionnaire data, create charts, draft results.
Week 13	Revisions and Proofreading	Review and proofread planning document.
Week 14	Finalization	Final edits and document preparation.
Submission Week	Final Submission	Submit the finalized planning document.

Table 5.1 Timeline

5.3 Gantt Chart

The capstone project timeline is depicted in the Gantt chart below, which includes the start and finish dates of each job and milestone as indicated in the figure 5.1.

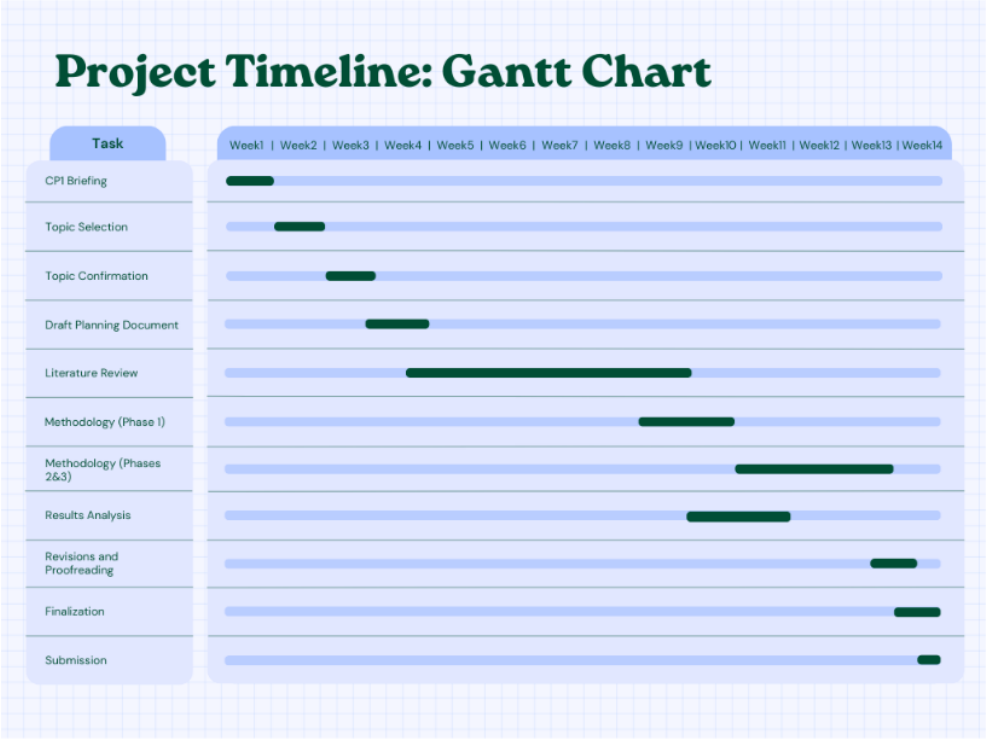

Figure 5.1 Gantt Chart

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