



LUNDS UNIVERSITET

Ekonomihögskolan

Institutionen för informatik

Beyond the Buzz

Exploring the Impact of Trending Terminologies on Informatics Research

Kandidatuppsats 15 hp, kurs SYSK16 i informatik

Författare: Viktor Stuesson
Sten-Åke Åkesson

Handledare: Niki Chatzipanagiotou

Rättande lärare: Nicklas Holmberg
Miranda Kajtazi

Beyond the Buzz: Exploring the Impact of Trending Terminologies on Informatics Research

SWEDISH TITLE: Bortom Hyphen: Utforskande av Påverkan av Trendiga Termer på Informatikforskning

AUTHOR: Viktor Sturesson, Sten-Åke Åkesson

PUBLISHER: Institutionen för informatik, Ekonomihögskolan, Lunds universitet

EXAMINATOR: Osama Mansour, PhD

SUBMITTED: May, 2023

DOCUMENT TYPE: Bachelor's thesis

PAGE NUMBERS : 89

KEYWORDS: Informatics Research, Buzzwords, Trend Analysis, Social Identity Theory, Research Agendas

ABSTRACT:

The bachelor's thesis explores the impact of buzzwords in informatics research; examining how these terms shape research agendas, methodologies, and community identities through the lens of Social Identity Theory. The study employs a qualitative research approach where data were collected through interviews from purposefully selected academics of the informatics field, and were thematically analyzed concluding to the dual role of buzzwords: they facilitate communication but can also drive superficial or misaligned research efforts. The findings indicate that buzzwords significantly direct research focus, often overshadowing more critical scientific inquiries and narrowing methodological diversity. They also contribute to the formation of community identities, influencing researchers' methodological choices and alignment with specific technological trends. This dynamic can limit foundational research and innovation in favor of trending topics. The bachelor's thesis suggests that while buzzwords are essential for disseminating new ideas, their influence requires careful management to ensure they enhance rather than compromise research quality and relevance. It recommends that researchers critically assess the impact of buzzwords in their work and encourages further investigation into the long-term effects of terminological trends across the discipline. Thus, the bachelor's thesis generates theoretical and practical contributions for the informatics research field.

SAMMANFATTNING:

Kandidatuppsatsen undersöker effekterna av buzzwords inom informatikforskning; den granskar hur dessa termer formar forskningsagendor, metoder och gemenskapsidentiteter genom Social Identity Theory. Studien använder en kvalitativ forskningsansats där data samlades in genom intervjuer från medvetet utvalda akademiker inom informatikområdet och analyserades tematiskt, vilket ledde till slutsatsen om buzzwordens dubbla roll: de underlättar kommunikation men kan också driva ytliga eller felriktade forskningsinsatser. Resultaten visar att buzzwords avsevärt styr forskningsfokus, ofta överskuggar mer kritiska vetenskapliga undersökningar och begränsar metodologisk mångfald. De bidrar även till att forma gemenskapsidentiteter, påverkar forskares metodval och samstämmighet med specifika teknologiska trender. Denna dynamik kan begränsa grundläggande forskning och innovation till förmån för aktuella ämnen. Kandidatuppsatsen föreslår att även om buzzwords är nödvändiga för att sprida nya idéer, krävs noggrann hantering för att säkerställa att de förbättrar snarare än försämrar forskningens kvalitet och relevans. Den rekommenderar att forskare kritiskt bedömer effekten av buzzwords i sitt arbete och uppmuntrar till vidare undersökning av terminologiska trender över lång tid inom disciplinen. Således bidrar kandidatuppsatsen med teoretiska och praktiska insikter för forskningsfältet inom informatik.

Acknowledgments

We are deeply thankful to our supervisor, Niki Chatzipanagiotou, for her invaluable guidance and dedication throughout our research journey. Her significant contributions, expertise, and support have been fundamental to our work. We also wish to extend our gratitude to the respondents who generously dedicated their time and actively engaged in this study. Their valuable perspectives and readiness to contribute have been crucial to the success of our research. We appreciate their integral role in this bachelor's thesis. Thank you.

May, 2024

Viktor Sturesson & Sten-Åke Åkesson

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Background..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Problem Identification..... | 3 |
| 1.3 Previous Related Studies..... | 3 |
| 1.4 Research Purpose and Research Questions..... | 4 |
| 1.5 Delimitations..... | 4 |
| 2 Literature Review..... | 5 |
| 2.1 Search Strategy..... | 5 |
| 2.2 Informatics Research..... | 7 |
| 2.3 Buzzwords..... | 8 |
| 2.4 Research trends..... | 9 |
| 2.4.1 Research Trends within Informatics..... | 10 |
| 2.5 Conclusions of literature review..... | 11 |
| 2.6 Social Identity Theory..... | 11 |
| 3 Methodology..... | 13 |
| 3.1 Research Approach..... | 13 |
| 3.2 Method of Data Collection..... | 14 |
| 3.2.1 Interviews..... | 14 |
| 3.2.2 Interview Procedure..... | 14 |
| 3.2.3 Respondents, Sampling Technique, Criteria and Size..... | 14 |
| 3.2.4 Interview Guide..... | 15 |
| 3.3 Method for Data Analysis..... | 15 |
| 3.4 Reliability and Validity..... | 17 |
| 3.5 Ethical Considerations..... | 17 |
| 4 Findings..... | 19 |
| 4.1 Theme 1: Exploring the Challenges of Informatics Research..... | 19 |
| 4.2 Theme 2: Trend Sensitivity in Informatics Research..... | 20 |
| 4.3 Theme 3: Prevalence of Buzzwords..... | 21 |
| 4.4 Theme 4: Influence of Buzzwords on Researchers..... | 22 |
| 4.5 Theme 5: Navigating Buzzwords in Informatics Research..... | 23 |
| 4.6 Theme 6: Buzzwords and the Responsibility of Researchers..... | 25 |
| 5 Discussion..... | 27 |
| 5.1 Navigating Buzzword Trends..... | 27 |
| 5.2 Impact of Word Trends on Researchers Experience..... | 28 |
| 5.3 Challenges and Opportunities..... | 29 |
| 5.4 Research Agenda Formation..... | 29 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 5.5 Social Identity Theory..... | 30 |
| 5.6 Conclusion of Discussion..... | 31 |
| 6 Conclusion..... | 32 |
| 6.1 Conclusions..... | 32 |
| 6.2 Contribution..... | 32 |
| 6.2.1 Theoretical Contribution..... | 32 |
| 6.2.2 Practical Contribution..... | 33 |
| 6.3 Suggestions for Future Research..... | 33 |
| 7 References..... | 34 |
| Appendix A - Interview Guide..... | 36 |
| Appendix B - Informed Consent Form..... | 38 |
| Appendix C - Interview 1..... | 40 |
| Appendix D - Interview 2..... | 47 |
| Appendix E - Interview 3..... | 57 |
| Appendix F - Interview 4..... | 66 |
| Appendix G - Interview 5..... | 75 |
| Appendix G - AI Contribution Statement..... | 82 |

Figures

| | |
|---|---|
| Figure 1: Average number of 'Diversity' mentions in Annual Reports of Large-Cap Companies 2013-2022 (Made by the Authors, 2024)..... | 2 |
| Figure 2: Average number of 'Sustainability' mentions in Annual Reports of Large-Cap Companies 2013-2022 (Made by the Authors, 2024)..... | 2 |

Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1: Table of articles included in the literature review..... | 5 |
| Table 2: Respondents Overview..... | 15 |
| Table 3: Themes and their corresponding codes..... | 16 |

1. Introduction

The following chapter is an introduction to our bachelor's thesis, presenting the research's background and problem identification. Also, this chapter presents previous studies that are of relevance for the study in combination of research purpose, research question and delimitations.

1.1 Background

Informatics research is at the forefront of technological innovation, with researchers constantly exploring new methodologies, techniques, and applications to address real-world challenges (Recker, 2021). Buzzwords, characterized by their succinctness and catchiness, serve as shorthand descriptors for cutting-edge concepts and technologies often used within the field (Malyuga & Rimmer, 2021). While they can facilitate communication and foster collaboration, buzzwords also have the potential to obscure underlying principles and create confusion (Bensaude Vincent, 2014).

The concept of buzzwords, as a term, gained popularity and widespread usage decades ago. While it is challenging to pinpoint an exact starting point for the use of buzzwords, they were first described by Hallgren & Weiss (1946) at Harvard University as a study technique, where students learned to identify a distinct type of language, to help them in their studies. Since then, their prevalence has increased significantly in the latter half of the 20th century and continues to evolve in the 21st century. Buzzwords can be seen as a reflection of what is trending in society, for example new innovations and social values (Clulay, 2013).

To investigate the phenomenon of trending words, this bachelor's thesis concluded a quick analysis¹ of the annual reports of large-cap companies listed on the Stockholm Exchange. Large-cap companies, short for large-capitalization companies, refer to corporations with a market capitalization typically exceeding \$10 billion. These companies cover a variety of sectors and have standardized reporting systems. They were therefore used as a resource for seeing language trends over time in general society. The analysis intended to find patterns in the frequency of usage of words that have been described as buzzwords, like "Diversity" (Cluley, 2013). The results as shown in figures 1 and 2 indicate and support the notion that there are trends in word usage, which raised our interest in continuing this research.

¹ The analysis was conducted in January 2024 and is based on 1553 annual report files (some in Swedish, some in English) covering 126 different large-cap companies and a ten year period (2013-2022). The data was sourced from the Swedish Financial Supervisory Authority's register of stock exchange information.

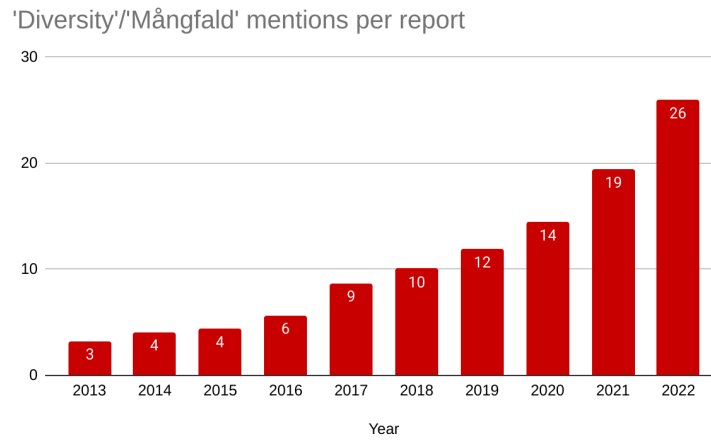


Figure 1: Average number of 'Diversity' mentions in Annual Reports of Large-Cap Companies 2013-2022 (Made by the Authors, 2024)

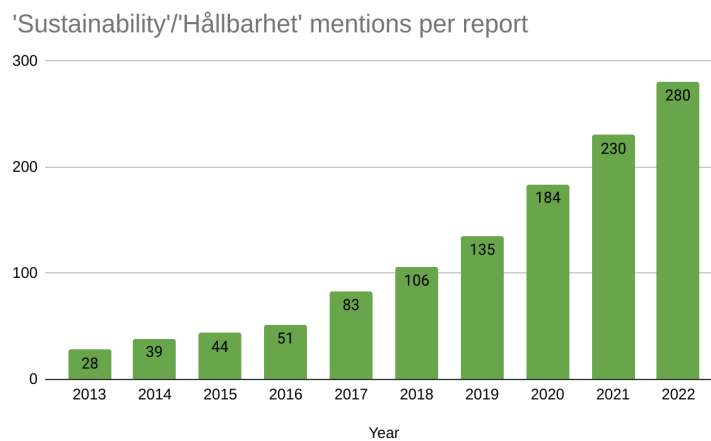


Figure 2: Average number of 'Sustainability' mentions in Annual Reports of Large-Cap Companies 2013-2022 (Made by the Authors, 2024)

In the above *figure 1* and *2*, the terms 'diversity' and 'sustainability' were mentioned approximately nine and ten times more frequently per annual report in 2022 compared to 2013, indicating a significant surge in their prevalence. This prompts the question if these words have transformed into buzzwords and are now “of little meaning used chiefly to impress laymen” (Merriam-Webster, 2024, para. 1). The findings of this quick sweep also raise another question, if trending words impact some of the biggest companies in our area in this magnitude, what impact will the words have on the industry-close and trend-sensitive research field of informatics?

1.2 Problem Identification

The field of informatics is inherently aligned with the rapid pace of technological innovation and digital transformation (Holmström & Persson, 2015). The dynamic nature of this field, coupled with its responsiveness to emerging trends, positions it at a risk for the potential pitfalls associated with buzzwords in technoscience (Bensaude Vincent, 2014).

The core issue arises from the dual-edged nature of buzzwords: on one hand, they foster rapid engagement with emerging technologies and ideas; on the other, they risk oversimplification, misinterpretation, and a potential detachment from the underlying principles they are meant to represent (Bensaude Vincent, 2014). This paradox poses significant challenges for a dynamic research field like informatics.

The importance of addressing the impact of buzzwords in informatics is underscored by the preliminary analysis of word trends in annual reports. If such trends can affect the priorities of large-cap companies, their impact on a trend-sensitive field like informatics, which both influences and is influenced by corporate and technological innovations, is likely even more pronounced. It raises fundamental questions about the integrity of research direction and the potential for buzzwords to dictate rather than reflect the true needs and opportunities within informatics research.

1.3 Previous Related Studies

Goyal et al. (2018) examine in their study how the themes and topics in informatics research have changed during the last seventeen years. The findings suggest that informatics research is adapting to environmental changes, such as technological advancements and institutional pressures, through increased collaboration, diverse topics, and shifts in analysis levels (Goyal et al., 2018). According to the authors, these adaptations may lead to either positive or negative outcomes for the field, depending on factors like collaboration motivations.

Burton-Jones et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of foundational theories in the informatics field, and encourage bold new theoretical ideas and approaches moving forward. Two significant trends highlight why: the rapid changes and increasing complexity in practice due to digitalization, and a counter-trend in research that questions the value of theory in the era of big data and machine learning (Burton-Jones et al., 2021). The paper introduces the concept of "next-generation theorizing", which is rather than referring to the latest technology fad, shifting significantly from current patterns of theorizing to uncover new lines of inquiry (Burton-Jones et al., 2021). Buzzwords often represent emerging technologies or trends that significantly impact practice and research (Bensaude Vincent 2014). However, the rapid adoption and sometimes uncritical usage of these buzzwords can lead to superficial understandings and applications, potentially overshadowing deeper theoretical insights and understandings. Burton-Jones et al. (2021) encourage a move beyond the surface level appeal of trending fads to explore their deeper theoretical and practical implications.

Kalling et al. (2005) study how listed Swedish companies perceived the term 'e-business' between 1997 and 2001 by doing a quantitative analysis of annual reports. The findings

included that the companies had in the early stages displayed an overly positive attitude, even though they had not had the chance to actually implement e-business in their company (Kalling et al., 2005). Kalling et al. (2005) expressed a belief that this pattern of perception was evident within other contexts as well, like academic researchers. They expressed that the next step for further research would be to continue studying the tendencies after 2001 by conducting qualitative studies.

The adaptiveness of the IS field as described by Goyal et al. (2018), together with the call for next-generation theorizing (Burton-Jones et al., 2021) underscore the importance of critically examining how buzzwords might influence the field of IS. There is however a research gap in studying these effects. Kalling et al. (2005) further highlight the relevance of studying word trends within the field and mark a gap in the research of more up-to-date trends. Considering the previous work concluded on this specific field, there is a justification for this bachelor's thesis research to be conducted, contributing to fulfilling a research gap that the previous studies have not chosen to focus on or have not been able to.

1.4 Research Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this bachelor's thesis is to explore and highlight the effects of word trends and their impact on the informatics research field. The aim is to increase the quality and relevance of future selected research areas within the informatics field. In order to conclude this, this bachelor's thesis aims to answer the following research question:

- *How do academics in the informatics field experience the impact of word trends in regard to affecting their work and research agenda?*

1.5 Delimitations

This bachelor's thesis focuses exclusively on studying academics of the informatics field based in Swedish universities. The findings may not reflect trends outside this region. Another focus of the study is interviewing academics who primarily consider themselves to work specifically within the field of informatics. While the respective field intersects with other fields, i.e. computer science and economics, this delimitation ensures that the findings are relevant to the informatics community but may not capture the full spectrum of perspectives from bordering fields.

2 Literature Review

This chapter focuses on reviewing literature that is of importance for this bachelor's thesis. Concepts that create a theoretical basis of understanding for our study are thoroughly introduced and explained. The theory of Social Identity is presented, and it is explained how the theory along with the main literature review concepts formulate a theoretical framework which is used in later chapters to interpret and discuss the research findings.

2.1 Search Strategy

For this bachelor's thesis we have used mainly the databases *Scopus*, *LUBsearch*, and *AISel*, with one additional article found on *ResearchGate*. We also searched for relevant articles in the Senior Scholars' Basket of Journals (SSBJ)² not found in *AISel* and used the Swedish Information Systems Academy (SISA) for information about informatics research. Keywords and combinations of those keywords that have been used when searching for literature are “buzzword”, “research trends”, “informatics research”, “information system research”, “word trends”, “information systems field”, “informatics field” and “meta”. The search was conducted throughout March and April 2024. As for exclusions and inclusions, this literature review has excluded all papers which are not written in English. Regarding publication date, the review aimed to exclude all articles published before 2010, but one exception was made. Gibbons (1999) was included as its content is notable, still considered relevant and referred to in current research. However, a majority of the articles date from the past five years. Considering that the bachelor's thesis is focusing on word trends, it is of relevance to study how these trends have evolved during the past years. The outcome of our literature review search can be seen in the following table 1.

Table 1. Table of articles included in the literature review

| Article | Database | Motivation |
|--|---------------------------|--|
| Bensaude Vincent, B. (2014). The politics of buzzwords at the interface of technoscience, market and society: The case of ‘public engagement in science’. <i>Public Understanding of Science</i> , 23(3), 238-253. | LUBsearch | Explains buzzwords and their impact on research via “public engagement”. |
| Cluley, R. (2013). What Makes a Management Buzzword Buzz? <i>Organization Studies</i> , 34(1), 33-43. | Scopus | Explains the phenomena buzzwords. |

² The Senior Scholars' Basket of Journals is a list of eleven journals that the College of Senior Scholars encourages colleagues to consider to be the top journals in the informatics field (Senior Scholar's Basket of Journals, 2024)

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| Malyuga, S., & Rimmer, W. (2021). Making sense of "buzzword" as a term through co-occurrences analysis. <i>Heliyon</i> . 2021 Jun 4;7(6). | Scopus | Explains the phenomena buzzwords. |
| Palvia, P., Daneshvar Kakhki, M., Ghoshal, T., Uppala, V., & Wang, W. (2015). Methodological and Topic Trends in Information Systems Research: A Meta-Analysis of IS Journals. <i>Communications of the Association for Information Systems</i> , 37, pp-pp. | AISeL | Discusses trends in informatics research. |
| Abbasi, A., Sarker, S., & Chiang, R.H.L. (2016) Big Data Research in Information Systems: Toward an Inclusive Research Agenda, <i>Journal of the Association for Information Systems</i> , 17(2). | AISeL | Discusses the term 'Big Data' within informatics research. |
| Guo, X. (2022). The Spread of Internet Buzzwords from the Perspective of Communication Science from 2017 to 2021. | ResearchGate | Discusses how buzzwords spread in the digital era of the internet. |
| Nambisan, S., & George, J. F. (2024) Digital Approaches to Societal Grand Challenges: Toward a Broader Research Agenda on Managing Global-Local Design Tensions. <i>Information Systems Research</i> . | SSBJ: Information Systems Research | Discusses how informatics research in recent years has moved towards tackling grand societal challenges. |
| Holmström, H. & Persson, A. (2015) Informatik: En ämnesöversikt. <i>Vetenskapsrådet</i> . Stockholm, Sweden. | SISA | Explains the fundamentals of informatics research. |
| Brown, R. (2020) 'The social identity approach: Appraising the Tajfellian legacy', <i>British Journal of Social Psychology</i> , 59(5), pp. 5–25. | Scopus | Discusses the social identity theory. |
| Chipidza, W. and Tripp, J., (2021). Symbolic capital and the basket of 8: What changed after the creation of the basket? <i>Decision Support Systems</i> , 149, p.113623. | LUBsearch | Describes the Basket of Eight. |
| Kahn, M. (2019). The contract between science and society: A South African case study. <i>Science and Public Policy</i> , Volume 46, Issue 1, February 2019, Pages 116–125. | Scopus | Discusses the contract between science and society. |
| Carrier, M (2019). How to conceive of science for the benefit of society: prospects of responsible research and innovation. <i>Synthese</i> 198 (Suppl 19), 4749–4768. | Scopus | Discusses how society influence science. |

| | | |
|---|---------------------------|--|
| Fitzgerald, B., Dennis, A. R., An, J., Tsutsui, S., & Muchhala, R. C. (2019). Information Systems Research: Thinking Outside the Basket and Beyond the Journal. <i>Communications of the Association for Information Systems</i> , 45, pp-pp. | AISEL | Discusses the Basket of Eight. |
| Recker, J., (2021). Scientific Research in Information Systems: A Beginner's Guide, 2nd ed. <i>Springer Nature Switzerland AG</i> . | LUBsearch | Explains the challenges for informatics researchers. |
| Gibbons, M. (1999). Science's New Social Contract with Society. <i>Nature</i> , 402(6761), C81-C84. | LUBsearch | Discusses the emergence of a new contract between science and society. |
| Mazaheri Lagzian, E. & Hemmat, Z., 2020. Research Directions in Information Systems Field: Current Status and Future Trends: A literature analysis of AIS Basket of Top Journals. <i>Australasian Journal of Information Systems</i> , 24. | Scopus | Discusses trends in IS research |

2.2 Informatics Research

Informatics research is a scientific discipline focused on understanding the design and use of information technology (IT) within individual, organizational, and societal contexts (Holmström & Persson, 2015). It plays a crucial role in analyzing societal developments and the increasing digitalization of various sectors. Holmström & Persson (2015) emphasizes how the field relates to the socio-technical dynamics of digital transformation and seeks to balance rigorous research methods with practical relevance. Informatics spans multiple application areas, contributing to broader societal understanding of digitalization's impacts and fostering interdisciplinary knowledge development (Holmström & Persson, 2015).

In 2007, the AIS College of Senior Scholars established the Basket of Eight to describe top informatics journals. Initially, it featured six journals but in 2011 it expanded to include eight, aiming to standardize journal recognition for tenure and promotion evaluations in the IS discipline (Chipidza & Tripp, 2021). Chipidza & Tripp (2021) found that this effort changed how informatics researchers worked together and chose where to publish, making the field more inclusive. However, the impact on the quality of journals was mixed, suggesting that not all researchers valued the list equally. Chipidza & Tripp (2021) suggest reevaluating how the Basket of Eight's effectiveness is measured.

Fitzgerald et al. (2019) further challenge the notion of using the Basket of Eight in informatics research, arguing they lack validity and reliability. They suggest the use of journals do not account for the highly skewed distribution of citations within informatics

research, and instead advocate for paper-level metrics (Fitzgerald et al., 2019). However, Fitzgerald et al. (2019) conclude that the Basket of Eight should not be abandoned until the new metrics are better understood. The list of premier journals was expanded to include eleven journals in 2023 (Senior Scholar's Basket of Journals, 2024).

The Swedish Information Systems Academy (SISA) is an organization founded in 2010 to promote informatics as an academic subject area in Sweden (SISA, 2016). They describe the informatics discipline as inherently dynamic, and that this necessitates ongoing dialogues about its identity due to the constant change of what is at the field's core contra periphery (SISA, 2021). SISA (2021) advocates for the development of guidelines for publishing high-quality research within the IS field and considers this a collective responsibility of all Swedish informatics departments. They provide general recommendations to promote high-quality publications like the Basket of Eight and to foster an internal identity, creating "disciplinary congruence". They do however note the probable impossibility of creating detailed instructions for the field (SISA, 2021).

Informatics researchers face a variety of challenges in conducting their research (Recker, 2021). As it is fundamentally a social science, imprecision, vagueness, and ambiguity creep into the research. To put this more clearly, informatics researchers can never definitively prove anything (Recker, 2021). Recker (2021) further underlines that the bridging of technical and social sciences demands a broad understanding of both technological complexities and human behaviors. Further, the rapidly evolving nature of digital technologies requires researchers to constantly update their knowledge and adapt their research methodologies. This complexity requires informatics researchers to be proficient in a variety of theories and methods, making the research process more dynamic and multifaceted compared to fields with a more narrow focus (Recker 2021).

2.3 Buzzwords

The phenomenon of buzzwords became particularly prominent as a means of communication as technologies advanced, industries became more specialized, and the need for concise language to convey complex ideas grew (Cluley, 2013). Today buzzword itself means an important-sounding word or phrase, usually something technical, of little meaning (Malyuga & Rimmer, 2021). Buzzwords are extremely recognisable, although their own definition is mostly vague or unknown (Malyuga & Rimmer, 2021). In various fields such as business, marketing, technology, academia, and politics, buzzwords have become heavily relied upon for communication (Cluley, 2013). They often reflect emerging trends, innovations, and social values, serving as shorthand for complex concepts and facilitating communication within specific communities or industries.

Cluley (2013) however mentions a group of organization theorists, linguists and philosophers that argue that communication in the world would be better without buzzwords. According to Bensaude Vincent (2014) buzzwords have three main capabilities; *they generate matters of concern and play an important role in trying to build consensus*; *they set attractive goals and agendas*; and *they create unstable collectives through noise*, where the last point can be related to Cluley's (2013) findings. Both authors imply that buzzwords lead to more

confusion than clarity and are devaluing the words meaning and importance. This is of great importance to this bachelor's thesis and will come in handy both when formulating the method of collecting data as well as analyzing it.

Bensaude Vincent (2014) explains further that buzzwords operate via “buzz”. The buzz creates a movement by using the “noise” of a word, not its meaning and implications. The meaning of a word is referred to as its “signal”, and in order to transmit a signal to the public, buzzword uses increasing noise instead of the signal to deliver its message (Bensaude Vincent, 2014). This could for example be seen as an overuse of the word. An example of this is cloud computing, a word that has created a lot of buzz, while the word itself is hard to define and explain. The concept of cloud computing only comes alive when enough people start to talk about and use it (Bensaude Vincent, 2014).

As for buzzwords in the digital era, an article by Guo (2022) characterizes internet buzzwords as high-frequency words with specific meanings in cyberspace, evolving from hot events and social phenomena. They are distinguished by their ease of transmission, emotional expression, and ability to reflect social issues. According to Guo (2022) the internet buzzwords all follow a distinct and relatively short life cycle, from emergence to cancellation, meaning they are trending. Further the author explains that internet buzzwords play a pivotal role in expressing emotions and monitoring public opinion, but could also contribute to negative phenomena like spoofing subculture and digital divides (Guo, 2022). Overall, the article concludes that internet buzzwords reflect social changes and have the potential to shape public discourse positively if managed responsibly.

2.4 Research trends

Regarding trends within research there have been several studies made pointing towards the emergence of a new “social contract” between science and society (Kahn, 2019). In the article by Kahn, the author refers to a highly cited article by Gibbons (1999) explaining that for the longest time universities and governmental research institutions have operated independently, choosing their own directions for their studies. The interaction between science and society has been as that, the society takes part of the findings made by science, who takes public fundings and gives back information about their latest discoveries, called “reliable knowledge” (Gibbons, 1999). In recent times, the roles of this interaction have been flipped. Instead of the society receiving the benefits of conducting research, the science today is expected to investigate areas based on the demands of the society (Carrier, 2019). As a result of this, the lines between science and society are fading away. Gibbons (1999) means that science is influenced by a culture of accountability, impacting the direction of both teaching and research. The trend of society influencing science is referred to as “public engagement” and the concept was institutionalized at a public engagement conference organized by the EU in Lisbon in 2007 (EU, 2008). In the article by Bensaude Vincent (2014) the connections between the concept of public engagement and buzzwords is made. In order to force public engagement into the science field, a certain type of language is used to describe its importance. Words like “public”, “responsible”, “social” and “environmental” are often used, which are all prime examples of buzzwords (Bensaude Vincent, 2014).

2.4.1 Research Trends within Informatics

When looking at trends found within IS research, Palvia et al. (2015) point out how technological developments have meant a rapid variation in research topics over the years. Informatics research in the 1990s was marked by the advent of the internet, whereas the 21st century has been characterized by innovations such as smartphones, tablets, and the rise of big data, alongside advancements in business intelligence and cloud computing technologies (Palvia et al., 2015).

Mazaheri Lagzian & Hemmat (2020) explore the current and future trends in informatics research, focusing on topics and methodologies across a twelve-year period (2007-2018) within the Basket of Eight. It identifies electronic commerce/business, informatics research, and information system usage/adoption as the main research topics, with surveys and mathematical modeling being the dominant methodologies. The study suggests a growing interest in areas like IoT, blockchain, and social media, alongside a shift towards more accurate quantitative methods, reflecting the field's evolving nature (Mazaheri Lagzian & Hemmat, 2020).

Nambisan and George (2024) emphasize the growing call in recent years for the informatics research community to address societal grand challenges (GCs) such as climate change, sustainability, social well-being, and social justice. These challenges are characterized by their global reach, complexity, uncertainty, conflicting stakeholder interests, and long-term impact. The authors argue that for informatics research to be truly impactful in the context of GCs, it must move beyond theoretical discussions and develop practical frameworks. They propose a specific framework intended to guide informatics research in contributing effectively to these challenges, highlighting the need for clarity in terminology and methodological rigor within the field.

Similarly, Abbasi et al. (2016) address a related concern within the informatics research community, focusing on the disruptive impact of big data. They argue that the traditional information value chain is undergoing significant changes due to the emergence of big data, leading to new challenges and opportunities in academic research and practice. The authors stress the importance of moving beyond the hype surrounding big data to develop approaches that can leverage its full potential.

While focusing on different aspects, both articles highlight a common issue: the influence of hot topics, like 'big data' and 'sustainability', within the informatics research community. Nambisan and George (2024) and Abbasi et al. (2016) suggest that to advance meaningful research, there needs to be a shift towards clear definitions and actionable research agendas. This shift is crucial for addressing the real-world implications of these buzzwords and ensuring that informatics research remains relevant and impactful. In essence, both articles call for a more critical and pragmatic approach to informatics research in the context of prevailing trends and challenges.

2.5 Conclusions of literature review

The literature review underscores the unique position of informatics research within the dynamic landscape of technological advancement, but a knowledge gap was found concerning how buzzwords impact the field. When analyzing the literature review findings, several key insights about the informatics research field emerge:

(i) **Dynamic Nature:** The rapid evolution of technology fuels the continuous emergence of new terminology within informatics (Recker 2021). The field's inherent pace and connection to technological progress and the digital era might make it a fertile ground for the creation of buzzwords (Guo, 2022).

(ii) **Interdisciplinarity:** The cross-disciplinary character of informatics leads to a convergence of concepts from diverse fields (Holmström & Persson, 2015). This mixture might blur the definitions and interpretations of buzzwords, contributing to their spread and creating a 'noise' around their meaning, as highlighted by Bensaude Vincent (2014).

(iii) **Industry Connection:** The strong ties between informatics research and industry (Holmström & Persson, 2015), accentuate the influence of 'public engagement,' a concept brought to light by Gibbons (1999). This relationship renders the field particularly susceptible to the sway of industry trends and buzzwords, which may shape research directions and focus.

Despite these observations, a gap persists in understanding the effects of buzzwords in informatics research. Although Nambisan and George (2024) and Abbasi et al. (2016) advocate for clearer definitions and actionable research agendas, rather than hyped up words, there is a lack of comprehensive studies concerning how word trends impact informatics research.

This literature review sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of how buzzwords impact informatics research through the lens of Social Identity Theory (Brown, 2020). Using this theory will offer a comprehensive, theoretically grounded understanding of the complex interplay between language, identity, social dynamics, and behavior in the academic research context.

2.6 Social Identity Theory

To explore how researchers of the informatics field experience the impact of word trends this bachelor's thesis discusses its findings in later chapter 5 through the lens of Social Identity Theory. Originally the theory, created by Tajfel and Turner in 1979, proposed that individuals' self-concepts are partly derived from their perceived membership in social groups (Brown, 2020). Social Identity Theory asserts that people categorize themselves and others into various groups, which leads to identification with one's own group (in-group) and differentiation from others (out-groups). This in turn leads to intergroup bias. The theory has today expanded far beyond its original intergroup relations focus (Brown, 2020). Brown (2020) describes Social Identity Theory as being based on a few core assumptions:

- (i) Individuals see themselves both as individuals and as members of groups, with social identities becoming important in group contexts. Examples of social identities can be nationality, club membership, or profession.
- (ii) Social identities have cognitive, evaluative, and affective components, influencing the self-concepts and behaviors of individuals. An example could be how an individual acts when they are in the cheering section of their favorite sports team. All actions performed fall on the so-called interpersonal-intergroup continuum.
- (iii) The pursuit of positive social identity leads individuals and groups to seek positive differentiation from other groups, often through comparison of valued dimensions. Simply put, finding ways of considering the in-group (we) to be of higher value than the out-group (them) increases the sense of belonging.

In the context of this bachelor's thesis, buzzwords can be seen as symbols of identification within information systems research. Analyzing buzzwords through the lens of Social Identity Theory might reveal how these terms can create a sense of belonging or distinction among IS researchers, influencing their research focus and alignment with group norms and values. While critics argue that the theory lacks specificity in some areas (Brown, 2020), the theory has been used extensively in research across various domains, including informatics. Using Social Identity Theory to analyze the impact of buzzwords on IS research provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the social and psychological dynamics at play. This offers insights into how these terms shape research agendas, group identities, and the broader academic discourse.

3 Methodology

The methodology chapter provides an in-depth explanation of how this bachelor's thesis was conducted. Research approach, data collection, settings, respondents, data analysis, reliability, validity and ethical considerations are all motivated.

3.1 Research Approach

There are three approaches when conducting research: the quantitative, the qualitative and the mixed methods approach. The quantitative research approach deals with numerical data and aims to quantify patterns. It often involves quantitative surveys and experiments, followed by a statistical analysis of the material. Quantitative research aims to test hypotheses in order to be able to confirm or reject them. The research approach aims for generalizability, using representative samples to draw conclusions about a larger population. Statistical techniques help researchers assess the extent to which findings can be applied beyond the sample (Oates et al., 2022).

The qualitative research approach gathers non-numerical data, focusing on qualities such as opinions, behaviors, and experiences. Qualitative methods are exploratory in nature, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena and their meanings. Common techniques include semi-structured interviews, focus groups, respondent observation, and document analysis. The data analysis involves identifying themes, patterns, and meanings from the collected data. This is often done by using helpful techniques such as thematic analysis, based on coding which are commonly used. Findings in qualitative research are often context-specific and may not be easily generalizable to a larger population. Instead, qualitative research aims for in-depth understanding and rich descriptions (Oates et al., 2022).

The mixed methods approach combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods within a single study. This approach integrates the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem or phenomenon. Qualitative data can provide rich, in-depth insights into the meanings and contexts of phenomena, while quantitative data can provide statistical rigor and generalize findings to a larger population. Researchers may use techniques such as comparing, merging, or connecting qualitative and quantitative findings to draw conclusions and make interpretations. Another strength of mixed methods research is that it allows the researchers to be flexible in their approach to studying complex phenomena (Oates et al., 2022).

Considering the research question for this bachelor's thesis the qualitative approach is determined to be more suitable. Qualitative research allows for gaining a deep understanding of academics' opinion about the complex field of informatics that is to be explored. Through methods such as interviews the bachelor's thesis can explore new nuances, perspectives, and underlying meanings that quantitative methods might overlook (Oates et al., 2022). Even

though the mixed methods research approach might be able to increase the trustworthiness of the bachelor's thesis, the limited time that is set for the research favors the more simple but still exploratory nature of the qualitative research approach.

3.2 Method of Data Collection

3.2.1 Interviews

The qualitative research approach entails the following main method for collecting data, that is, interviews. The method of interviews provides a good balance between focus and exploration. The type of interviews decided to use for this study is semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews combine open-ended and specific questions, encouraging a dialogue between the interviewer and the respondent (Oates et al., 2022). This choice of technique is justified by the need to explore the nuanced influence of buzzwords on IS research from the perspectives of those directly involved. Semi-structured interviews offer flexibility to probe deeper into topics that arise, or unexpected angles brought up, while still guiding the conversation with a set of prepared questions. This is relevant for our bachelor's thesis as the respondents we interviewed have different experiences of how specific buzzwords have affected their work.

3.2.2 Interview Procedure

The research setting for this bachelor's thesis is primarily defined by a series of semi-structured interviews with informatics academics from various universities across Sweden. The interviews all took place in April 2024, allowing the study to capture a snapshot of the current attitudes the academics have towards buzzwords in the informatics research field. The authors of this bachelor's thesis are situated in Lund University; however, the interviews broke physical boundaries by utilizing Zoom. This widely recognized video conferencing tool enabled the inclusion of respondents irrespective of their geographical location within Sweden. By utilizing a virtual setting for these interviews, the research embraces the flexibility and accessibility offered by digital technology. This setting not only reflects the current trends in academic research practices but also enables a sustainable and inclusive approach to gathering qualitative data. The approach ensures that the research encompassed a broad spectrum of insights from academics based in diverse institutional environments. Each respondent was in their respective office or chosen professional setting, contributing to a consistent yet individually comfortable interview backdrop.

3.2.3 Respondents, Sampling Technique, Criteria and Size

The decision on who the study sees as potential research respondents is determined by the type of information the research seeks and is based on the research questions (Oates et al., 2022). The sampling technique used was purposeful sampling based on certain criteria. This is a non-probability technique that relies on the researchers' judgment on deciding who would be the most suitable respondent (Patton, 2002). As the aim of the study is gaining insights into the experience of how informatics academics perceive how buzzwords affect their field, we determined a criterion for our respondents to be involved with informatics research, and to consider themselves to work specifically within the field of informatics.

There may be a difference in opinion on what constitutes being involved with research. To ensure the respondents have comparable contexts another criterion was therefore that the respondent is active within a university. There are several universities in Sweden with informatics departments, our aim was to have respondents from different universities. As the experience might differ between the workplaces, it would be hard to generalize the results to the entire Swedish context if all respondents work in the same organization.

We sent out an email to the potential respondents we found when browsing all informatics departments in the country explaining our aim and asking if we could interview them. The academics who replied positively were then screened to make sure that they met the set sampling criteria. Thus, we concluded to 5 respondents, who were contacted to decide on a suitable date and time for their interview. An overview of the respondents can be found in the following table 2.

Table 2. *Respondents Overview*

| Respondent | Relevance for this bachelor's thesis |
|-------------------|---|
| R1 | Conducting research within digitalization |
| R2 | Conducting research within digitalization and security |
| R3 | Does not currently conduct research but has been working as a reviewer for acknowledged journals. Former associate editor |
| R4 | Conducting research within AI |
| R5 | Conducting research within e-learning |

3.2.4 Interview Guide

To keep things consistent between the interviews, an interview guide was created as suggested when conducting semi-structured interviews (Oates et al., 2022). This guide listed the order of the topics and made sure all important questions were asked, while allowing for spontaneous additional questions if something interesting came up. The guide is in Swedish as that is the language used during the interviews. The guide can be seen in full in Appendix A.

3.3 Method for Data Analysis

For the analysis of our collected data, we decided to use thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data in order to find patterns and categorize information into a meaningful structure. That is, it involves systematically organizing and categorizing data to uncover underlying meanings, concepts, and insights related to a specific research question or phenomenon of interest. Thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke (2006) consists of the following six-step

process: (i) data familiarization, (ii) generating initial codes, (iii) searching for themes, (iv) reviewing themes, (v) defining and naming themes, and (vi) producing the report.

So, what we did when analyzing our collected data was the following: Firstly, we transcribed all interviews with the help of the AI-based tool Whisper. Then, we translated the transcribed data into English. The interviews were held in Swedish, however they were translated into English to ease the understanding of the reader. We started by becoming familiar with the collected data, which included transcripts of interviews, and some field notes of ours taken during the interviews. We read and re-read the data to gain a thorough understanding of the content. We coded the data by identifying and labeling relevant segments or passages. These initial codes represent the most basic units of analysis. Once the coding framework was defined, the codes were used on our data in order to find interesting patterns and prepare for the next step in the process. Once the initial coding was complete, we began to identify patterns, similarities, and differences across the coded data. We grouped the related codes together to form potential themes or patterns that captured key concepts or ideas within the data. This process involved comparing and contrasting codes and looking for recurring themes that cut across different data segments. We reviewed and refined the identified themes, ensuring that they accurately reflect the content and context of the data. For this, we merged some initial themes, we split or renamed others when needed to create a coherent and meaningful thematic framework as shown in table 3. Once we finalized the themes, we mapped out their relationships and connections, examining how themes intersect or diverge within the data. We interpreted the meaning of each theme in relation to the research question. Finally, we presented the themes, which represent the research findings, in a coherent and structured manner. This involved describing the identified themes, providing illustrative examples from the data as shown in coming chapter 4, and we discussed the implications of the findings in chapter 5

Table 3. Themes and their corresponding codes

| Theme | Code |
|--|-------------|
| Exploring the Challenges of Informatics Research | ECIR |
| Trend Sensitivity in Informatics Research | TSIR |
| Prevalence of Buzzwords | PB |
| Influence of Buzzwords on Researchers | IBR |
| Navigating Buzzwords in Informatics Research | NBIR |
| Buzzwords and the Responsibility of Researchers | BRR |

3.4 Reliability and Validity

The reliability of a research evaluates if it is unbiased, neutral and accurate (Oates et al., 2022). By explaining in detail how every step of this bachelor's thesis was conducted, we aim to strengthen its reliability. The interview guide, which was structured, and data collected from the interviews which was transcribed contribute towards the bachelor's thesis transparency. When talking about reliability, it is also important to discuss repeatability. This means how the results of the research would differ if the same work was conducted again. However, repeating the same research and concluding to the exact same outcome is not quite possible, especially in qualitative research. This is because the respondents could change their opinions over time and therefore the results will not be the same, no matter how well the research methods are replicated. Still, the interview guide of the bachelor's thesis allows future researchers to conduct the research again.

Validity can be divided into internal validity and external validity. Internal validity refers to the extent the researchers have examined the right things, collected data from the right sources and if the conclusions are coherent with the findings (Oates et al., 2022). External validity discusses if the research's findings are applicable to different settings, which is referred to as the research's generalizability. However, qualitative research does not aim to generalizability. Still, the research outcome can be generalized up to a point in similar contexts and settings. A factor that impacts the generalizability is how well the research samples are representative (Oates et al., 2022) In our case, how well are the respondents representative for their field.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

There are several important ethical considerations to have in mind when performing a bachelor's thesis. That is, during the process the research respondents were made fully aware of their rights to: not participate, withdraw, give informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality (Oates et al., 2022). The respondents all signed a consent form that can be seen in full in Appendix B.

The rights to not participate and to withdraw refer to accepting if the respondent decides that they do not want to be a part of the study and that they are allowed to change their minds at any time, even if they have previously said they want to participate. For this bachelor's thesis study the respondents were informed in the initial contact that it is a completely voluntary study to participate in and that they are allowed to withdraw at any point without consequence.

The right to give informed consent refers to consent only being able to be given when the respondent is fully aware of the nature of the research. This was done by making sure the initial email sent out contained essential information about the researchers, an explanation of what the aim of the study was, what was expected of them in regard to interview question topics, expected length and how their data will be handled. At the time of the interviews, the respondents were also asked if they wanted access to the transcription after the interview, to give them an opportunity to go through what they had said and to potentially retract answers.

The rights to anonymity and confidentiality refer to the respondents being certain their identity is protected, in the terms of the study not revealing who they are and that their data is stored in a safe and secure place. This is essential considering the nature of the study, as the themes of the questions might trigger the respondent to speak negatively about their workplace or colleagues. We therefore started each interview by assuring the respondent their responses will be anonymous and that their data will be stored with confidentiality. This is accomplished by blacking out answers that could be traced back to the respondent. Some answers have been completely left out, as they risked exposing the respondents identity, and were not meaningful for the findings bachelor's thesis.

4 Findings

The findings chapter presents the collected data from the interviews after they have been thematically analyzed. The analyzed data are presented sorted into different themes which represent the research findings. Each theme is consequently supported with the respondents' quotations.

Here follows a presentation of the findings from the thematic analysis, exploring the pervasive influence of buzzwords within the field of informatics research. The themes discussed are carefully structured to reflect a progressive deepening into the subject, starting with general perceptions and moving towards specific impacts and personal stances within the field. Each theme builds upon the previous, illustrating not only the prevalence and influence of buzzwords but also their nuanced implications for research focus, methodology, and academic identity. This ordered exploration directly corresponds to the overarching research question, aiming to uncover how buzzwords shape, direct, and sometimes constrain the research landscape in informatics. Through this analysis, the findings seek to offer insights into both the constructive and obstructive roles that buzzwords play in shaping academic discourse and practice within the informatics community.

4.1 Theme 1: Exploring the Challenges of Informatics Research

All respondents share a similar view of what the main principles of informatics research is. Describing it as *“The interaction between information technology and people”* (R1, 2), *“How to create value of the interaction between people and organization on the one hand and technological opportunities on the other.”* (R2, 2). R4 described the field as being *“the development, use, and effects of information systems”* (R4, 2), and went on to explain that information systems in this context should be understood *“in the broad sense of the word, as in not just the software but also the processes and people”* (R4, 2). Further, R1 pointed out how apart from the basic definition, the field is very open, saying *“it can be many different things”* (R1, 2) and how defining it isn't easy. R3 explains how the field is not static, it *“looked completely different 20 years ago”* (R3, 2). The respondent went on to say how the field now has *“a myriad and width that is enormous”* (R3, 2).

When asked about what separates informatics from other fields, R3 immediately mentioned the interdisciplinary nature of the field. *“That is the simple answer, interdisciplinarity”* (R3, 4). R4 brought up an identity crisis within the field of IS, saying there are many articles from *“information systems researchers who claim other researchers are derailing, writing articles more in the field of economics”* (R4, 6). R4 went on to say what this shows is that what separates the field of IS from other fields is the *“technological artifact”*. This connection to technology has an effect on the field. When discussing AI, R1 pointed out how they *“are only a few steps ahead of the students in understanding”* (R1, 6).

All respondents brought up aspects concerning the complications that arise in researching informatics. R2 said the field suffers from *“a methodological difficulty, but also a weakness in relation to other subjects that have a more evidence-driven experimental basis approach”* (R2, 4). Another problem with informatics research is brought up by R1 who explains that research often *“lags behind, it takes several years for research to be put forward”* (R1, 12). Further, R2 said that *“all research is always a series of compromises”* (R2, 12). R2 means that it is impossible to encompass every perspective in a single research article. It is a challenge posed for researchers to try to constantly contend with their own *“assumptions and shortcomings”* (R2, 12).

Concluding, the respondents define informatics research as the interaction between technology and people to create value. However, they acknowledge the field's complexity and evolution, emphasizing its interdisciplinary nature and connection to technology. Challenges include methodological difficulties, lag in research dissemination, and the need to navigate assumptions. Interdisciplinary approaches and constant self-awareness are crucial for researchers in this dynamic field.

4.2 Theme 2: Trend Sensitivity in Informatics Research

All respondents argued that there are clear trends within research, especially within the informatic research field. The respondents agreed that there are trends regarding that some topics are discussed more frequently than others but also that there are trends that affect the way informatics research is conducted, e.g. methodological trends and intellectual trends. R1 says *“There are firstly the trends within subjects. What you write about purely empirical. And then there are the more intellectual trends. [...] Sustainability has been a thing for a long time. AI. [...] Then there has been very much e-commerce. A lot of social media.”* (R1, 12). R4 carried a similar sentiment, saying *“if you look back, there have definitely existed trends. Both in what is researched. ERP was very trendy for a while. But there are also trends in which frameworks informatics researchers use. Like oh now it is trendy with Technology Acceptance. No, now we will not do that, now it is affordances. And then no, now we will not do that. Now it is something different.”* (R4, 14) Regarding what is trendy now, R2 concludes *“I would say that on the methodological level there are two things. One is the mixed methods approach. [...] The other one is the through the lens of - research.”* (R2, 10). R3 points out that a lot of the trending subjects within the informatics field all connect to systems revolving around being helpful for humans, especially vulnerable people, such as systems for African hospitals (R3, 12).

R1 explained a tendency within the informatics field where researchers repackage existing concepts with a new catchy name in order to achieve recognition, but in truth it is just an old concept with a new name. *“(IS researchers) write many papers that are kind of position papers. Maybe senior researchers that want to leave their mark on, let us say, AI. [...] One tries to launch buzzwords. [...] And in reality you are talking about the same thing that already has an established term. You see this quite often.”* (R1, 34). R3 also touches on this when discussing white and black knights within research. *“People usually talk about white knights and black knights. White knights represent those who come up with something completely new. And one way to be brand new is to repackage things and present it in a new*

environment and give it buzzwords and things like that.” (R3, 6). The respondent then continues to explain that this is a known effort for newer researchers to build some sort of reputation within their domain (R3, 6). The conclusion from R3 is that these researchers are actually black knights and do not contribute to any new and groundbreaking research. *“Black Knight, they don't contribute anything new. They contribute to perspectives and insights which in turn can be stimulated from a political point of view. You have to see that through somehow as a researcher. And have insight into your own identity. Do I want an easy way to get a career and gain respect by repeating what others think I should say, or should I perhaps go a different route?”* (R3, 16). A clear example of this phenomena is according to R3 research regarding climate change or sustainability (R3, 16). R5 shares a similar sentiment, saying *“Unfortunately, there are a few more trends that affect research. I would prefer the other way around. I actually think that trends influence a lot, because I see a lot of researchers who try to do things just because it's a trend. There is no value in it.”* (R5, 18).

When comparing informatics to other fields, R1 said they can not see this repackaging of concepts in other fields, saying *“I think you see it less in for example management research. [...] Yes, they are quite conservative with introducing new concepts when they are not needed.”* (R1, 36). R1 was unsure why this is but said that *“It is simply a culture maybe, [...] It is the entire IT world so (informatics) maybe follows the IT world this way with a lot of acronyms. [...] It is seen as advanced somehow to throw around some cryptic terms.”* (R1, 38). The sensitivity for trends is not exclusive to informatics research according to R2, but can also be seen in domains close to informatics research (R2, 28).

To summarize, trends heavily impact informatics research, shaping both topics and methodologies. Respondents note the prevalence of buzzwords and the repackaging of existing concepts for recognition. This trend sensitivity extends beyond informatics, affecting adjacent domains. Researchers must balance innovation with integrity, avoiding opportunism and prioritizing genuine contributions.

4.3 Theme 3: Prevalence of Buzzwords

The respondents discussed the occurrence and reach of buzzwords within the informatics research field. Most respondents agree on there being a connection between buzzwords and trends within informatics research (R1, 24; R2, 22; R5, 30), R3 said they are partly connected (R3, 26) and R4 said they are unsure, explaining that *“you would almost have to conduct some sort of bibliometric study”* (R4, 30).

According to R3 buzzwords are mainly used in order to show your identity and belonging to a certain group. It is a tool for self preservation (R3, 22). This is *“Because a buzzword often represents an underlying policy that is embedded in the buzzword. So I would now like to say that buzzwords and trends are somewhat connected. You choose a trend that people have started to observe and set a buzzword. And this buzzword represents some kind of angle so to speak. [...] Buzzwords are created early in a trend that is beginning to be noticed. Precisely because those who have wanted to focus on the trend have a vested interest in finding like-minded people and understanding each other. It is also this self-preservation and identity that comes connected to this.”* (R3, 26). R3 then discusses that the prevalence of the right

buzzwords can lead to more easily getting fundings for your project (R3, 16). *“Sustainability, climate as well. Even though there are a lot of researchers who say that maybe we shouldn't put all the focus there. Maybe we should think about something else. So that there will be a pressure policy from the top about where we should go. And maybe that's a good thing. It might be bad. But that we are influenced, that is true.”* (R3, 16).

Another aspect that is lifted by R3 is that renowned authors and researchers also are used as buzzwords. By mentioning them in your own work, you take an active stance, according to R3. *“These, the moguls. Which are somehow considered to be the heavier names in various fields of interest. When you use them, they almost represent a kind of school. A way of thinking about whatever phenomenon it is. And by mentioning them in the research. That's how you position yourself that you belong to that furrow of thought. So it's an identity connection too. So also names and concepts.”* (R3, 34).

R1 states that informatics research is more susceptible for buzzwords than other fields because of the fact that it examines information technologies (R1, 24). R5 explains that in the respondent's opinion, the informatics field has a tendency to try being “cool”. This takes shape in a more heavy usage of buzzwords, compared to fields such as healthcare (R5, 34).

In summary, most respondents recognize a link between buzzwords and emerging trends within informatics research. Buzzwords often emerge early in the lifecycle of a trend to mark identity and attract like-minded researchers, and informatics is especially susceptible. Buzzwords in informatics research are multifaceted tools that serve both to navigate and to shape the research landscape, from securing funding and marking intellectual territory to signaling membership within particular research communities.

4.4 Theme 4: Influence of Buzzwords on Researchers

The respondents highlight several aspects of influential factors for researchers. R2 describes that the intellectual local environment of a researcher has a strong influence (R2, 12) combined with the perspective of renowned researchers (R2, 16). R2 states *“I think there is a perception, to what extent I can't tell, but there are probably quite a lot of my colleagues that could say “I feel like I have to publish in this and that direction.”* (R2, 18). R2 concludes that researchers within informatics are very sensitive to buzzwords (R2, 24).

R4 says that it is very possible society influences researchers, depending on the organizations that fund the research. *“They are to give out funding for that which is requested, maybe by government and municipality.”* (R4, 20). R1 points out that the committee that is funding research sets an agenda which the researchers need to stick to. *“And a committee sits there and decides on certain types of subjects that are important. So where these senior researchers, a lot of their work involves having their finger in the air and sensing. And read these calls and look at okay, here you want research on sustainability or here you want research on sustainability or ethical aspects of digitization or inclusivity.”* (R1, 14). Later R1 explains that if you as a researcher have a problem with this way of working, then researching is not for you (R1, 18).

According to R5 buzzwords are words used to draw attention. However, the impact of buzzwords on the research agenda, R5 finds embarrassing. According to the respondent, the research agenda should be based on previous research, just not what people find fun and exciting at the time (R5, 24). R5 continues to explain how there is a huge gap between science and society, especially within the informatics field, and that researchers use this gap to gain publications and citations. By writing research covering this very specific gap, which may not be that relevant anymore, the researcher earns easy acknowledgment. (R5, 22).

“When I was a PhD student, I realized that there is a huge gap between research and society. I can say that the researcher researches the needs of society. But society does not adjust itself so much to research, the research we have on informatics. We prove a lot of things that are needed, but if it doesn't become a trend, it's nothing that people do anything about. So I see the gap is quite large actually. That research- I can say that it is a bit sad that the researcher has found that this is very much of the need. And they write a research proposal, they get projects, they publish things. But it's mostly because they make money from it. It is not to solve a problem in society. And when you really want to solve a problem in society, you have to go through a lot of official bureaucracy instead. And then you want to change something... Almost impossible, but if it is possible, then it must become a trend first.” (R5, 22).

R1 discussed how in informatics research communities there is an advantage of successfully launching a new academic concept, like "sociomateriality" (R1, 12). If linked early to a popular theory, a buzzword is created which leads to extensive citations and solidifies the researcher's strong academic standing. However, R1 also noted the difficulty of achieving this without pre-existing status, as new ideas can easily be ignored in the competitive academic environment (R1, 36).

The intellectual environment, societal changes, and funding agendas significantly influence researchers in informatics. Buzzwords and trends shape research directions, with scholars feeling pressured to align with certain topics. The funding committee's agendas and the influence of renowned researchers also steer research focus, highlighting the need for adaptability and critical evaluation.

4.5 Theme 5: Navigating Buzzwords in Informatics Research

The answers from the respondents explored key aspects of their view regarding conducting research within the informatics field, and their opinions varied. When asked about where high quality informatics research can be found, all respondents acknowledge the existence of the Senior Scholar's list of premier journals. However, the responses differed in how much the respondents rely on these in practice.

R3 said *“First and foremost we have these big journals, but I personally do not take that path. [...] I always go via IEEE, because they are always first on the latest technology. [...] Sometimes it goes wrong, but usually I end up right”* (R3, 8). R1 said *“I think that I have a pretty good radar for what's quality. So I search first and foremost freely. And then I see what comes up.”* (R1, 8). R2 is also open minded when searching for material. *“I'm interested in all sources.”* (R2, 8). Further R2 explained that there is a great deal of sources outside the traditional academia that works with a scientific methodology. The respondent names

examples of this, which could be consulting firms and bloggers. As long as they are transparent in how they conduct their work, R2 sees them as a legitimate source and focuses on what interests them (R2, 18). This is something that R2 thinks will be even more prominent in the future (R2, 8).

R4 mainly uses articles from the top ranked journals in their work, explaining *“It is research that has gone through a quite tough quality review. And then one can keep on critiquing the reviewing [...] but that research has quality assured itself at least”* (R4, 10). The respondent went on to say *“What alternatives do we have to this peer review process? I have no alternative to it. You can critique it for being slow or for the reviewers having too much power in it, or whatever it is. [...] But what comes out on the other end often has a quite high quality”* (R4, 12). R4 also pointed out that *“the journals have their agendas and they for example have their special issues. And some of them have AI special issues now. So that can absolutely affect what is sent in.”*

R2 says that *“changes in society clearly define a broad research agenda”* (R2, 16). *“I mean, I also see that the major journals are talking about generative AI now. So they turn their coat after the wind. So to a very high degree it is not only reserved in the junior level but also the senior level. Okay, Covid, great example. Suddenly, everyone would be talking about distributed work using video system support. Back then, no one talked about Chat GPT, even though it was probably bubbling away in the background. There are current issues out there that seep in here as well and dominate temporarily.”* (R2, 26). R4 pointed out that the top journals may affect the direction of research by *“what they accept and don't accept. If they say ‘No, now we have enough of this, we will no longer accept affordances-articles’. Well then people will stop.”* (R4, 16).

R4 sees the use of buzzwords existing outside of high-quality research, saying *“you can sometimes see it in opinion pieces. There was a funny opinion piece at the start called: ‘So what if Chat-GPT wrote it?’ [...] It has 70 co-authors or something. They collected short submissions from many prominent researchers in informatics and some from management. [...] And different concepts are used quite liberally. [...] Talking about services like Alexa, and Chat-GPT and Siri. And calling them AGI tools. [...] Now you are throwing around terms that you do not understand what they mean.”* (R4, 34). R4 does however not see this as a problem in the high-ranking journals as they *“hold you to your choice of terminology”* (R4, 36)

R5 struck a balance between these two perspectives. Concerning the Premier list of journals they said *“They are very good. All roads that lead to state of the art articles and knowledge are good ideas. [...] At one point I just searched for many keywords in any database, [...] but later I preferred (the journals) as they are a bit more structured”* (R5, 14). R5 further expressed that he/she tries to avoid publishing research covering the same trending subjects that everyone else is writing about. *“But I try to avoid trends actually. You can clearly see in research when a topic comes up, for example Chat GPT, then everyone becomes interested in publishing something in it. So I try to avoid it. I actually don't think it's the best. It's good that some people like it and do it, that's why we have research in different areas. But I'm not much of a trendy person myself. I can say, I don't follow trends that much and I actually think there are enough people who do, so I don't have to.”* (R5, 16). R2 lifts a point of criticism towards the academic world. R2 argues that a lot of researchers only consider their own point of view

when writing an essay/report/article and in many cases are lacking a self-critical perspective (R2, 10).

In conclusion, the responses reveal diverse perspectives on how they approach finding and conducting high-quality research, particularly concerning the role of buzzwords and the influence of trending topics. Overall, the discussion reveals a complex landscape where informatics researchers navigate between established academic standards and the dynamic influx of new technologies and societal trends. There's a recognized need for balancing rigorous scholarly practices with the adaptability to new ideas and trends, though opinions vary on how best to achieve this balance.

4.6 Theme 6: Buzzwords and the Responsibility of Researchers

An aspect brought up in the interviews is the idea of the researcher's own responsibility. R2 pointed out that it is a problem that *"much of the publicly funded research never leads to benefits for the public"* (R2, 18). R2 explains that it is costly to produce a single paper, and that the researcher therefore has a responsibility to not waste their privilege (R2, 18). R2 continues saying that *"You have a responsibility for this money, I don't think it is an unreasonable thought that this should have a kickback on something that is about contributing to a better society."* (R2, 18). This is because of the people working to produce a surplus through taxes that is used to conduct research (R2, 18). The kickback to the people funding the research is however, according to R2 not there. *"But then there is a lot, then there are other points of view that can be raised in this matter, namely that much of the tax-funded research never benefits the public. It is locked. We hand over the copyright when we publish to the publicist or publisher, the scientific publisher. And this has been paid for by tax funds in Sweden. We hand over the copyright and then that copyright is sold back to the university libraries. The public must pay a fee to take part in it. The universities have to pay themselves. If I want to read my own paper, I have to pay for it myself. And I think that is something that is seriously wrong. So it's a construction that I still don't really think is honorable, it's not right."* (R2, 18).

The issue with opportunistic researchers does not only affect society but also the quality of future research, which is why one must be cautious when conducting buzzword-driven research. R2 states *"So I think that you also have a responsibility not to be too opportunistic, or at least to take responsibility for having a very privileged position. Not all people can afford, as well as being given such a generous intellectual platform as scientists have. So absolutely, no total ban on buzzword-driven research, I think we need the buzzword, right, because it also means that we have something to dig into on an ongoing basis. Then I don't think it is good in terms of long-term research for the individual researcher to be too opportunistic. This means that you often lose a certain type of skin over time."* (R2, 34).

R2 also describes the responsibility of considering more than one perspective when conducting research, not the one that the researcher himself or herself takes his or her stance from. *"You have a responsibility to combine your perspective with a contracting perspective. [...] You could at least try to show that there is a possibility that I am in the wrong."* (R2, 10). R3 also points out that researchers have to take a stance in their work. *"You have to decide,*

should I be more mainstream and just go with the flow?" (R3, 18). The respondent explains that this has led to that the total number of articles has increased significantly and by this the good and groundbreaking research is harder to identify (R3, 20).

Researchers grapple with the ethical responsibility of conducting publicly funded research. Concerns arise over the disconnect between research outcomes and societal benefits, with funding often not translating into public gains. Buzzwords can have a positive effect, creating an attractive goal, but can also lead to academics conducting their research with blinders on, meaning they lack awareness about what they potentially could research instead. Some of the respondents advocated for a more conscientious approach, urging researchers to consider broader societal impacts and diverse perspectives in their work.

5 Discussion

In the discussion chapter the findings are interpreted and discussed in relation to the previous literature and the selected theory. The findings answer the posed research question of the bachelor's thesis: How do academics in the informatics field experience the impact of word trends in regard to affecting their work and research agenda?

The structure of the discussion chapter is designed to achieve several key objectives: synthesizing the research findings with theoretical insights, addressing the research question, and linking the outcome to the chosen theory. The chapter starts with a look at what the findings indicate that buzzwords mean for academics, then venturing further into how word trends impact their work; challenges and opportunities that come with buzzwords and how they affect the research agenda. At the end of the chapter the findings are expanded further by viewing them through the theory of social identity followed by a closing remark with a concluding answer to the research question.

5.1 Navigating Buzzword Trends

The findings showed that all the respondents share an understanding of the concept buzzwords, describing them in a similar way as Malyuga & Rimmer (2021). The respondents also agree that on some level, a heavier usage of popular buzzwords has the potential to result in publications and higher citations of a researcher's work. This is highlighted in the point that R3 lifts about using buzzwords in order to take a stance and show the academic world that you share their view and values.

A possible reason for this could be connected to the article from Kahn (2019), covering the social contract between science and society. The article points toward the society setting the research agenda for science. As Gibbons (1999) expressed it, science is affected through a culture of accountability. An explanation for this shift could be motivated by R1, who says that the research agenda is heavily influenced by the committee who decides what projects are receiving fundings. As these committees are influenced by politics and in their turn also in some extent longs for an identity and belonging, it will most likely result in the promotion of research projects that are in line with their own values and perspectives, extending the argument made by Carrier (2019) that the line between science and society is fading away. This idea is strengthened by the comment from R2, saying that changes in society clearly defines the broad research agenda. The respondent also highlights that the respondent suspects many of his colleagues feel forced to publish in certain domains, which is a concrete example of how researchers choose their subjects in order to identify themselves with a certain group.

Another perspective that could explain the heavy usage of buzzwords within the informatics field, comes from R5. The findings showed that the informatics field has a tendency to be “cool”, as expressed by the respondents. The research field could possibly try to position itself as a “modern” and “updated” research field, and therefore be more reliant on trendy

word usage, aligning with Bensaude Vincent (2014) and Cluley (2013). Combining R5's perception of the informatics field with R3's theory about black knights concealing themselves as white knights, rebranding existing research with new hip words in order to stand out leads to a research field in risk of lacking meaningful research. According to R1, this phenomenon is also a characteristic for the informatics field, meaning it is of importance to continue investigating this subject.

5.2 Impact of Word Trends on Researchers Experience

According to the findings, researchers in the informatics field perceive word trends as influential forces shaping their work and research agenda. The findings reveal that word trends, characterized by buzzwords and emerging terminology, have a significant impact on researchers' experiences within the field. Respondents consistently highlighted the challenge of navigating through the evolving language dynamics, with implications for the direction and focus of their research agenda.

From the findings, it was apparent that informatics research is characterized by its interdisciplinary nature and responsiveness to technological innovations, as highlighted by several respondents who emphasized how dynamic the field is. This aligns well with the literature, where authors like Holmström & Persson (2015) noted the socio-technical dynamics and Palvia et al. (2015) pointed at the continual adaptation and variation in research topics in informatics due to rapid technological progress. The respondents had similar views on the basic definition of informatics research, but they all alluded to the field being hard to define and broad. This also aligns well with the literature, echoing SISA (2021) regarding the dynamic nature of the field's identity. This constant change creates a field that is susceptible for new trends to instantiate.

The findings presented examples of recent trends in informatics research: E-commerce, AI, and IoT were all brought up by multiple respondents. Not only were the respondents aligned with each other, but this also aligns with the literature as the same trends were identified by Mazaheri & Hemmat (2020). A conclusion that can be drawn from this is that not only are there trends in the field, but they are prominent enough that all academics we have spoken to are able to pinpoint them quickly.

Additionally, the prevalence of buzzwords, as discussed by Cluley (2013) and Bensaude Vincent (2014) creates a tension between clarity and unclarity, requiring researchers to evaluate the meaning and significance of emerging terminology, which extends with this bachelor's thesis findings. R3's statement on black and white knights connects well to this, meaning that new research frequently just is old research, rebranded with the intention to achieve attention and publication. The repackaging of previous research is also described by R1, R2 and R5, pointing towards researchers of today desperately wanting to earn recognition quickly. Based on this bachelor's thesis, the easiest way of achieving this seems to be researching fields that are favored by both the funders as well as the publishers. Overall, researchers in informatics experience the impact of word trends as a pervasive influence that shapes their research agenda and trajectory.

Nambisan and George (2024) pointed out how in recent years, informatics research has had an increase in calls to address societal grand challenges. The findings of this bachelor's thesis align with this notion. R1 pointed out how the committee that funds the research decides on subjects that are important, subjects like sustainability or inclusivity. Abbasi et al. (2016) touches on the notion of the impact of big data, arguing for the need of clarity in terminology, and to avoid the hype around the subject. This resonates with the comments from R4 about the opinion piece on AI. The example included many prominent researchers using terms quite liberally and clearly without any deeper understanding.

5.3 Challenges and Opportunities

The findings revealed several key challenges in informatics research. One issue mentioned by respondents is the methodological difficulties that arise due to the social nature of the field and the rapid evolution of technology. This reflects a broader concern discussed in the literature, where Recker (2021) noted the complexity of the field requiring IS researchers to balance rigorous research methods with the practical relevance required in a field that is constantly changing due to technological advancements.

While buzzwords can facilitate communication and reflect emerging trends (Guo, 2022), they also present challenges related to overuse (Cluley, 2013; Bensaude Vincent, 2014). The current situation within informatics research presents both challenges and opportunities for the future. In order to conduct meaningful research, both the literature review and findings of this bachelor's thesis points towards moving away from research influenced strongly by trending words, e.g. buzzwords, or as R2 phrased it, opportunistic research. The reasoning for this is, as R5 stated, research should be based upon previous studies, solely.

Additionally, respondents noted that informatics research often lags behind current technologies due to the time-intensive nature of conducting thorough research. This issue aligns with Recker (2021), who argued that the pace of digital transformation poses significant challenges for traditional research methodologies, which may not be able to keep up with the rate of innovation.

5.4 Research Agenda Formation

When interviewing the respondents, the reliance upon Basket of Eight, and similar, varies quite a lot. Respondents 4 and 5 are relying on these journals for finding inspiration and updates on state of the art knowledge of the informatic field (R4 & R5). However, R5 mentions that even though the respondent uses the journals for inspiration, it's important for the respondent to avoid researching the areas that are covered in the journals. Respondents 1, 2 and 3 have a different approach, using their own expertise and experience to search more freely outside these highly ranked journals (R1, R2, R3). Even though none of the respondents criticizes the highly ranked journals on the same points as Chipidza & Tripp (2021) and Fitzgerald et al. (2019), their answers reflected that they don't feel like one could

solely rely on reading publications from these sources. In R2's opinion, these journals are turn cloaks, solely publishing articles covering the latest trends.

R2 highlighted an interesting point regarding much of their inspiration derives from articles produced by private and independent sources such as companies and personal bloggers. Their advantages against traditional academia could be a higher level of independence and lesser level of environmental influence. Without the pressure to produce opinions that are coherent with funders and publishers the possibility of conducting groundbreaking and meaningful research, as R3 would express it, true white knights, might be more favorable. However, there is still a risk with this, which R2 points out. In order for this kind of research to be reliable and accepted, a higher level of transparency is required. Further, as R4 pointed out, articles published in the Basket of Eight do at least go through a quality review which might make them less susceptible to buzzword usage than companies and personal bloggers.

5.5 Social Identity Theory

The social identity theory suggests that individuals derive a part of their self-esteem from the social groups to which they belong, influencing their behaviors and attitudes through these affiliations (Brown, 2020). The findings suggest that in the context of informatics research, buzzwords not only communicate emerging trends but also signify membership within certain scholarly circles, thereby playing a pivotal role in forming academic identities and shaping community norms. This is exemplified by R3 pointing out that buzzwords are used to show the academic world that you share their view and values.

The prevalence of buzzwords in the informatics field not only facilitates communication but also acts as a mechanism for forming and reinforcing community identities among researchers. For instance, the adoption of specific terminologies such as "AI" aligns researchers with certain trends, and helps to establish in-group and out-group dynamics, where members of the in-group share a common language and research focus, further solidifying their collective identity. The findings further suggest buzzwords are not just prevalent in research topics but also at the methodological level. This implies that using a certain method or perspective on research that is currently trendy is another way that researchers can differentiate themselves and their identity from other academic groups, reinforcing their belonging with the in-group.

Further, the findings indicate that the adoption and propagation of specific buzzwords guide the focus of research activities, determining what areas are considered cutting-edge or fund-worthy. Both R1 and R3 say using some words, for example "sustainability", increase the odds of getting funding. This dynamic not only affects individual career trajectories but also shapes the overall direction of scholarly discourse within the field. Through the lens of social identity theory, it becomes evident that researchers align their activities with the prevailing terms to maintain status within their community. This alignment results in a homogenization of research topics, where trending buzzwords drive the research agenda. This means there is a focus on subjects deemed important, which might be for the better, but potentially at the expense of diversity and innovation in explored themes.

5.6 Conclusion of Discussion

The research question posed at the start of this bachelor's thesis is "How do academics in the informatics field experience the impact of word trends in regard to affecting their work and research agenda?". To answer this, here follows a summary of the discussion and the key findings:

(i) Buzzwords are seen as crucial for gaining recognition and funding within the academic community. However, their overuse can lead to superficial research that prioritizes trendiness over substantive contributions.

(ii) Buzzwords significantly influence the direction of research agendas, often determining what topics receive attention and resources.

(iii) Buzzwords help in forming and reinforcing academic communities, aligning researchers with specific technological trends and methodologies.

(iv) While buzzwords can facilitate career advancement and community belonging, they also pose challenges. The reliance on trending terms can stifle methodological diversity and depth in research.

(v) The bachelor's thesis suggests a need for critical awareness and a balanced approach in adopting buzzwords, advocating for integrity in research practices over mere opportunism.

In essence, the findings of this bachelor's thesis underscore the complex role of buzzwords in shaping academic identities and research trajectories, reflecting both their potential benefits and pitfalls.

6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusions of the bachelor's thesis. Both theoretical and practical contributions are stated, along with suggestions for future research.

6.1 Conclusions

This bachelor's thesis explored how word trends affect the research agenda within the informatics research field by answering the research question “*How do academics in the informatics field experience the impact of word trends in regard to affecting their work and research agenda?*”. The bachelor's thesis study employed a qualitative research approach and collected data through semi-structured interviews from five purposely selected academics of the informatics field. The collected data were analyzed thematically, generating six themes, which represent the research findings. The findings were interpreted with the help of previous literature and the social identity theory to conclude the research outcome.

The findings show that buzzwords play nuanced roles in shaping academic discourse, funding decisions, and publication strategies. Buzzwords have a substantial influence on the direction of research agendas, often dictating the themes that receive attention and funding. This effect underscores the importance of critical awareness and scrutiny in the adoption of new research terminologies. Further, the findings demonstrate how buzzwords contribute to the formation of community identities within informatics, aligning research groups with specific technological trends and methodologies. This community-building aspect can have both positive and negative implications for the field's evolution. The reliance on buzzwords can lead to methodological narrowness, where methods that align with the 'trendy' terminology are favored over potentially more appropriate approaches. This trend can stifle methodological diversity and innovation in research practices.

6.2 Contribution

6.2.1 Theoretical Contribution

The bachelor's thesis contributes to the existing body of knowledge in informatics research by critically examining the pervasive influence of buzzwords within the field. It expands the theoretical framework of how trending terminologies can shape, and sometimes skew, the research agenda in informatics. Firstly, the study explores the social aspects of buzzwords, illustrating their role not just as communicative tools but as powerful agents that can create new research paths or reinforce existing ones. By applying the theory of social identity, the bachelor's thesis underscores how buzzwords foster a collective identity among researchers, influencing their research choices and methodologies.

Moreover, the bachelor's thesis contributes to the discourse on the interaction between language and technology evolution, highlighting how terminological trends can both reflect and propel technological advancements. It offers a nuanced understanding of the dual role of buzzwords as catalysts for innovation and as potential traps for superficial research. This exploration enriches theoretical perspectives on the dynamics of academic discourse and its impact on technological research and development.

6.2.2 Practical Contribution

Practically, the findings of the bachelor's thesis serve as a guide for both academics and industry practitioners in the field of informatics. It alerts academics to the potential biases introduced by buzzwords and encourages a more critical approach to adopting new research themes. The insights gained from this study can help inform better research practices, promoting a balance between trend responsiveness and foundational rigor.

For industry practitioners, understanding the influence of buzzwords on research trends is crucial for navigating market dynamics effectively. By recognizing the patterns of how certain terminologies gain prominence and shape research agendas, practitioners can better anticipate shifts in technology focus and investment. Furthermore, the bachelor's thesis provides recommendations for academia-industry collaborations, suggesting ways to harness the positive aspects of buzzwords in driving innovation while mitigating their risks.

6.3 Suggestions for Future Research

There are several directions that future research could take to expand on the insights from this bachelor's thesis. A longitudinal analysis of trends, tracking the evolution of specific buzzwords over time and their lasting impact on research directions and outcomes. This would help in understanding not just the immediate, but also the long-term effects of buzzwords on the informatics discipline. Further, an investigation into how buzzwords influence research funding allocations and publication metrics could provide insights into the economic and academic implications of terminology trends. This research could help in shaping policies for funding bodies and academic journals to promote more diverse and foundational research. As this bachelor's thesis is constrained to the Swedish context, exploring how different cultural and regional academic communities adopt and adapt to buzzwords could offer valuable insights into the global dynamics of research trends. This can aid in understanding how local and global research agendas are shaped by language trends. Finally, incorporating qualitative research from industry practitioners could provide a practical perspective on how buzzwords influence product development, marketing strategies, and industry standards in the technology sector beyond academic research.

7 References

- Abbasi, A., Sarker, S., & Chiang, R.H.L. (2016) Big Data Research in Information Systems: Toward an Inclusive Research Agenda, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 17(2). Retrieved from: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1737&context=jais>
- Bensaude Vincent, B. (2014). The politics of buzzwords at the interface of technoscience, market and society: The case of 'public engagement in science'. *Public Understanding of Science*, 23(3), 238-253. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0963662513515371>
- Braun, Virginia and Clarke, Victoria (2006) Using thematic analysis-in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2). pp. 77-101. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235356393_Using_thematic_analysis_in_psychology
- Brown, R. (2020) 'The social identity approach: Appraising the Tajfellian legacy', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 59(5), pp. 5–25. Retrieved from: <https://bpspsychub.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/bjso.12349?src=getfttr>
- Burton-Jones, A., Butler, B.S., Scott, S., & Xu, S.X. (2021). "Next-Generation Information Systems Theorizing: A Call to Action," *MIS Quarterly*, (45: 1) pp.301-314. Retrieved from: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/misq/vol45/iss1/11/>
- Carrier, M (2019). How to conceive of science for the benefit of society: prospects of responsible research and innovation. *Synthese* 198 (Suppl 19), 4749–4768. Retrieved from: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-019-02254-1>
- Chipidza, W. & Tripp, J., (2021). Symbolic capital and the basket of 8: What changed after the creation of the basket?, *Decision Support Systems*, 149, p.113623. Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0167923621001330>
- Cluley, R. (2013). What Makes a Management Buzzword Buzz? *Organization Studies*, 34(1), 33-43. Retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0170840612464750#bibr25-0170840612464750>
- EU. (2008). EU cyber-security agency investigates Facebook hack. Retrieved from: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/2d7d42ad-d69e-46ab-94bd-035b068ae676/language-en>
- Fitzgerald, B., Dennis, A. R., An, J., Tsutsui, S., & Muchhala, R. C. (2019). Information Systems Research: Thinking Outside the Basket and Beyond the Journal. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 45, pp-pp. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.17705/1CAIS.04507>
- Gibbons, M. (1999). Science's New Social Contract with Society. *Nature*, 402(6761), C81-C84. Retrieved from: <https://www.nature.com/articles/35011576>
- Goyal, S., Ahuja, M., & Guan, J. (2018). Information Systems Research Themes: A Seventeen-year Datadriven Temporal Analysis. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 43(1), pp. 404–431, 23. Retrieved from: <https://aisel-aisnet-org.ludwig.lub.lu.se/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4088&context=cais>
- Guo, Y., (2022). The Spread of Internet Buzzwords from the Perspective of Communication Science from 2017 to 2021. *BCP Education & Psychology ESS*, 7, pp.404-411.

- Retrieved from:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366691305_The_Spread_of_Internet_Buzz_words_from_the_Perspective_of_Communication_Science_from_2017_to_2021
- Hallgren, F. M., & Weiss, H. (1946). 'Buzz words' at the B School. *American Speech*, 21, 263.
- Holmström, H. & Persson, A. (2015) Informatik: En ämnesöversikt. Vetenskapsrådet. Stockholm, Sweden. Retrieved from:
<https://sisa-org.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Holmstrom-and-Persson-2015.pdf>
- Kahn, M. (2019). The contract between science and society: A South African case study. *Science and Public Policy*, Volume 46, Issue 1, February 2019, Pages 116–125. Retrieved from: <https://academic.oup.com/spp/article/46/1/116/5004402>
- Kalling, T. (2005). 'It's all e-biz, kids': A Quantitative study of Swedish Executives' View on E-business between 1997 and 2001. In J. Hedman, T. Kalling, D. Khakhar, & O. Steen (Eds.), Lund on Informatics Liber.
- Malyuga, S., & Rimmer, W. (2021). Making sense of "buzzword" as a term through co-occurrences analysis. *Heliyon*. 2021 Jun 4;7(6) Retrieved from:
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8203706/#bib31>
- Mazaheri Lagzian, E. & Hemmat, Z., 2020. Research Directions in Information Systems Field: Current Status and Future Trends: A literature analysis of AIS Basket of Top Journals. *Australasian Journal of Information Systems*, 24. Retrieved from:
<https://journal.acs.org.au/index.php/ajis/article/view/2045>
- Merriam-Webster. (2024). Buzzword. In Merriam-Webster.com dictionary. Retrieved from:
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/buzzword>
- Nambisan, S., & George, J. F. (2024) Digital Approaches to Societal Grand Challenges: Toward a Broader Research Agenda on Managing Global-Local Design Tensions. *Information Systems Research*. Retrieved from:
<https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/isre.2023.0152>
- Oates, B.J. (2022). *Researching Information Systems and Computing* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Palvia, P., Daneshvar Kakhki, M., Ghoshal, T., Uppala, V., & Wang, W. (2015). Methodological and Topic Trends in Information Systems Research: A Meta-Analysis of IS Journals. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, 37, pp-pp. Retrieved from:
<https://aisel.aisnet.org/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3895&context=cais>
- Patton, MQ. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Recker, J., (2021). *Scientific Research in Information Systems: A Beginner's Guide*, 2nd ed. Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- Senior Scholar's Basket of Journals. (2024) Association for Information Systems. Retrieved from: <https://aisnet.org/page/SeniorScholarListofPremierJournals>
- SISA. (2016). Stadgar SISA. Swedish Information Systems Academy. Retrieved from:
<https://sisa-org.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/StadgarSISA.pdf>
- SISA. (2021). Recommendation regarding publication in the informatics/information systems discipline in Sweden. Retrieved from:
<https://sisa-org.se/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/SISA-TP-Recommendation-1.pdf>

Appendix A - Interview Guide

Etiska aspekter:

1. Presentation av oss och uppsatsen
2. Förklara att:
 - a. Intervjun spelas in, samt kommer transkriberas
 - b. Alla svar kommer vara anonyma
 - c. Materialet kommer enbart att användas för studiens syfte
 - d. Intervjupersonen kan när som helst välja att avbryta intervjun.
3. Godkänner du detta?
4. Förklara studiens syfte
 - a. The purpose of this bachelor's thesis is to explore and highlight the effects of word trends and their impact on the information system research field. The aim of this is to increase the quality and relevance of future selected research areas within the information systems field.
5. Några andra frågor innan vi startar?

Inledande frågor:

1. Kan du ge en beskrivning av din roll på universitetet?
2. Hur länge har du arbetat på universitetet?
3. Hur såg din bakgrund ut innan du påbörjade din nuvarande roll?
4. Vad har du forskat på/vad forskar du på just nu?

Informatik forskning:

1. Vad är enligt dig informatik forskning?
2. Hur särskiljer sig informatikområdet jämfört med andra forskningsområden?
3. Vart hittar du inspiration till din forskning?
4. Vad ser du som informatikforskning av hög kvalitet?

Forskningstrender:

1. Har du upplevt att det funnits trender under de senaste åren inom informatikfältet?
 - a. Kan du ge exempel?
2. Tror du att dessa trender påverkar vad man forskar kring eller tror du att forskningen påverkar vad som är trendigt?
 - a. Kan du ge exempel?
3. Känner du till det sociala kontraktet mellan forskning och samhälle och hur det har vänts?
 - a. Om nej, förklara.
 - b. Hur upplever du det påståendet?

Buzzwords:

1. När du hör ordet buzzword, vad tänker du då?
 - a. Om inget, ger vi en förklaring kring begreppet
2. Vad tycker du om användningen av buzzwords när det kommer till påverkan av kommunikation/förståelse av ett ämne?

3. Skulle du koppla samman användningen av buzzwords och trender inom informatik forskning?
 - a. Kan du ge exempel?
 - b. I vilken utsträckning?
 - c. Ser du skillnader från andra fält?
 - d. Ser du skillnader mellan olika informatikforskare?
4. Vilka utmaningar har du stött på när du hanterat buzzwords i din forskning? Har det uppstått möjligheter genom deras användning?

Avslutande:

1. Har du några andra aspekter eller funderingar du vill ta upp innan vi avslutar?
2. Tack för att du medverkade.
3. Vill du att vi skickar transkriberingen till dig för att säkerhetsställa att svaren uppfattats korrekt?

Appendix B - Informed Consent Form

Samtyckesformulär för deltagande i kandidatuppsats

Datum: Mars-April 2024

Titel på forskningen: Beyond the Buzz: Exploring the Impact of Trending Terminologies on Informatics Research

Forskare: Viktor Sturesson och Sten-Åke Åkesson, Kandidatprogrammet i Systemvetenskap, Institutionen för Informatik

Syfte med forskningen: Syftet med denna kandidatuppsats är att utforska och belysa effekterna av ordtränder och deras inverkan på forskningsfältet inom informationssystem. Målet är att öka kvaliteten och relevansen av framtida utvalda forskningsområden inom fältet informationssystem.

Vad du kommer att bli ombedd att göra i forskningen: Som deltagare i denna studie kommer du att bli ombedd att delta i en semi-strukturerad intervju som fokuserar på din upplevelse och syn på hur ordtränder påverkar forskning inom informatik. Intervjun beräknas ta ungefär 40 minuter.

Risker och obehag: Vi förutser inga risker eller obehag för dig som deltagare i denna forskning.

Konfidentialitet: Din identitet kommer inte att avslöjas för andra utanför forskningsgruppen. Dessutom kommer ditt namn inte att exponeras under eller efter forskningen. Resultaten från våra intervjuer kommer endast att användas i syfte för forskningen. Ditt bidrag kommer att behandlas konfidentiellt till den högsta möjliga graden enligt lag.

Forskningens fördelar och fördelar för dig: Genom att delta i denna studie bidrar du med värdefull insikt som kan förbättra förståelsen för hur ordtränder påverkar informatikforskningsfältet. Som deltagare får du även en möjlighet att reflektera över din egen forskningspraxis.

Frivilligt deltagande och återkallande: Ditt deltagande i denna studie är helt frivilligt. Du har rätt att vägra att svara på någon fråga som gör dig obekvämt eller när som helst dra tillbaka ditt deltagande utan att det påverkar dig negativt. Ditt beslut att inte delta eller att stoppa deltagandet kommer inte att påverka din relation med forskarna eller Lunds Universitet, nu eller i framtiden. Om du väljer att dra tillbaka dig från studien kommer all insamlad data att omedelbart förstöras.

Frågor om forskningen: Om du har frågor om forskningen eller din roll i studien, tveka

inte att kontakta Viktor Sturesson eller Sten-Åke Åkesson via e-post eller telefon.

Juridiska rättigheter och signaturer: Jag samtycker till att delta i forskningsstudien som genomförs av Viktor Sturesson och Sten-Åke Åkesson. Jag har förstått innebörden av denna studie och önskar delta samt tillåter inspelning av diskussionen. Jag avsäger mig inte några av mina juridiska rättigheter genom att signera detta formulär. Min signatur nedan indikerar mitt samtycke.

Deltagare: _____

Signatur: _____

Datum: _____

Forskare: _____

Signatur: _____

Datum: _____

Appendix G - AI Contribution Statement

For our bachelor's thesis, we used two AI tools, ChatGPT and Whisper, which made our work a lot easier and more efficient. ChatGPT helped us to summarize the main points from articles we found during the literature search. This saved us time because we could quickly gain an understanding of whether the article was relevant to our research. ChatGPT also helped us write better by making suggestions on the language and how to communicate more clearly and logically. This helped make sure our thesis was easy to read and understand.

We used Whisper for help with transcribing the interviews. Normally, writing down everything someone says in an interview takes a long time, but Whisper did that job for us by turning the spoken words into written text quickly and accurately, only requiring a few manual edits here and there. This meant we could spend more time thinking about what our interviews meant instead of just typing them out.

Using these AI tools meant we could do more in less time. We didn't have to spend hours on tasks like reading through every potential article in detail or typing out interviews. Instead, we could use that time to think more about our research and what our findings meant.