Systematic Review of Variables Influencing the Saving Behaviour of South Africans

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Abstract

This study systematically reviews variables influencing the saving behaviour of South Africans. South Africans do not have a saving culture and are known to be poor savers. However, to ensure a secure financial future, people need to start saving as soon as possible. Although much research has been conducted on the determinants of saving behaviour, there is no agreement on the variables that influence the saving behaviour of people, especially in the South African context. As a result, the study developed a theoretical framework of variables influencing the saving behaviour of people. A systematic review was conducted using 30 research articles, which were selected based on strict inclusion criteria. The study found five main variables influencing the saving behaviour of South Africans, namely, demographics, level of income, financial literacy, parental influence and life cycle. Various sub-variables were also identified. The focus group interviews confirmed the main variables, but additional sub-variables were proposed such as culture, ease of debt access, saving incentives and peer influence. These variables and sub-variables should be considered by organisations, policymakers and educators to steer initiatives that encourage better-saving behaviour by South Africans.

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1. Introduction

This section provides the background to the importance of saving practices followed by the study's problem statement and research objectives.

1.1. Background

Saving is defined as the process of setting aside a portion of current income for future use (Wegrich, 2020). Eker (2005:1-212) defines saving as the action of refraining from spending money now and setting it aside for emergencies or a future purchase. According to Karlan, Ratan and Zinman (2014:36-78), saving is critical for both people and society at large.

Ulkumen and Cheema (2011:164-187) suggest that sufficient saving is significant as it ensures sufficient consumption over time. According to Ruefenacht, Schlager, Maas and Puustinen (2014:922-943), saving is important in times of financial turmoil, as the amount of money saved for the long-term gains relevance and directly affects a household's ability to survive during times of financial crises. Saving is also seen as an important tool for capital accumulation and formation, which will, in turn, improve the economic growth and development of a country (Rikwentishe, Pulka & Msheliza, 2015:111-118). In the current economic climate, economic growth is essential and any means of growing the economy should be considered. Therefore, to encourage a culture of positive saving behaviour, it is important to understand the factors that influence a person's saving patterns (Lee & Hanna, 2015:129-135).

1.2. Problem statement

Existing research of saving behaviour has predominantly focused on exploring the factors that drive such behaviour (Brown & Taylor, 2016:1-14; Heckman & Hanna, 2015:187-199). These studies have identified several factors that influence saving behaviour, however, there is limited research on variables that affect the saving behaviour of South Africans. The lack of literature has led to a gap in this field of study, making it difficult to address the low-saving culture in South Africa.

South Africa's saving rate has been declining over the last few decades, resulting in declining levels of both public and private investments, in turn, affecting the economic growth of the country (Amusa, 2013). Faku (2019) states that the low saving rate in South Africa calls for change and improvement to encourage better-saving behaviour and, in turn, grow the weakening South African economy. This study aims to identify variables that affect the saving behaviour of South Africans through a systematic literature review, whereafter, the identified variables are refined by means of an expert focus group in the field of financial planning so that a framework of variables that affect the saving behaviour of South Africans is developed, which can be used by organisations, policymakers and educators to steer initiatives that encourage better-saving behaviour by South Africans.

1.3. Research objectives

The primary objective of this study is to systematically review variables that influence the saving behaviour of South Africans, and to propose a framework of saving behaviour variables.

1.3.1. Secondary objectives

To achieve the primary objective of this study, several secondary objectives were formulated, namely:

SO_1: To outline the concepts involved in the saving behaviour of South Africans

SO_2: To identify the variables that influence saving behaviour from literature

SO_3: To develop a theoretical framework of the variables that influence saving behaviour

SO_4: To propose and evaluate a framework of saving behaviour variables for the South African context

This paper first provides a literature overview, followed by the methodology used in the study and, lastly, the findings and recommendations.

2. Literature review

From the literature review, saving and saving behaviour is first defined and then the variables influencing saving behaviour are identified to propose a theoretical framework for this study.

2.1. Defining saving and saving behaviour

Researchers have developed many definitions for the concept of saving and, for the purpose of this study, the definitions of saving are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Definitions of saving

Authors and Date	Definitions of saving
Najarzadeh, Reed and Tasan (2014)	Saving is the process of maintaining one's current income for future use and refers to the accumulation of financial and non-financial assets.
Agbemaya, Nyarko, Asimah, Sedzro and Antor (2016)	Saving is the active process of putting money aside for a future event or purpose and argues that it is not only "unspent" earnings, but money actively put aside for future use.
Surbhi (2017)	Saving refers to the portion of disposable revenue, which is not used in consumption.
Gerhard, Gladstone, and Hoffmann (2018)	Saving is conceptualised as what is left over from disposable income after expenditure.
Pant (2021)	Saving refers to cash at hand that one has not yet spent, while others believe that saving is money kept in a money market account or certificate of deposit waiting for a rainy day, and others suggest that saving is any money invested for future returns.
Vos (2021)	Saving refers to the income that is not spent on current expenses, it is the money set aside for future use that is not spent immediately.

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 1 outlines the definitions of saving from 2014 to 2021. It is prevalent from the various definitions that saving is widely accepted as the process of actively putting money aside for future use, investment, or consumption. In addition, it is money that is put aside with a specific goal or event in mind. This definition of saving was accepted for the purpose of this study.

2.2. Variables influencing saving behaviour

Various definitions for saving behaviour are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Definitions of saving behaviour

Authors and Date	Definition of saving
Arent (2012)	Saving behaviour is described as all the activities related to the saving decisions of individuals and households.
Ahmad, Yunus, Baharudin, Johari and Ripain (2015)	Saving behaviour is an important behaviour that assists in promoting economic growth at both an individual and household level.
Kapounek, Korab and Deltuvaite (2016)	Saving behaviour refers to the decisions made regarding the saving and consumption of individual or household earnings.
Maison, Marchlewska, Sekscinska, Rudzinska-Wojciechowska and Lozowski (2019)	Saving behaviour is referred to as one of the most important financial behaviours, as it provides people with both financial and psychological security while improving their overall sense of well-being.

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 2 lists the various definitions of saving behaviour, and it is prevalent that saving behaviour is seen as any activity relating to the financial decisions of a person or family.

Kapounek *et al.* (2016:625-633) suggest that saving behaviour is determined by a complex number of economic, demographic, social and cultural factors. Researchers such as Botha, Keeton and Simleit (2011:1-19), Nwachukwu (2012:69-70) as well as Krishnamra and Suppakitjarak (2015:326-330) have investigated the determinants of saving to some extent.

2.3. Proposed theoretical framework for the study

Many studies have investigated the various factors that influence the saving behaviour of people (Rengarajan, Sankararaman, Sundaram, Rizwan & Nibin 2016:2-7). Kim (2010:35-44) suggests that there are both internal and external determinants of saving. The internal determinants include level of income, age, expected income and profits, while the external determinants include economic performance and real interest rate. Ozcan, Gunay and Ertac (2003:1405-1416) suggest that the main factor that influences the saving behaviour of people is that of the interest rates offered by financial saving institutions. The study suggests that higher interest rates encourage higher rates of saving.Rengarajan *et al.* (2016:2-7) assert that demographics, level of income, marital status and gender are some of the factors that influence the saving behaviour of people. While Thung,Kai, Nie, Chuin, and Tsem (2012:1-109) believe that financial literacy is the key factor that influences the saving behaviour of people, as people who have knowledge in the field of finance and business are more likely to save towards their futures than those who do not. Parental influence and a person's life-cycle position are also considered key factors that influence saving behaviour (Kim, 2010:35-44).

2.3.1. Demographics

Longley (2020) defines demographics as the analysis of population characteristics and population sub-sections, such as age, race and gender. According to French (2014:1-4), demographics refer to the statistics about the population of a specific geography such as a city, province or nation. Furthermore, demographics include a selection of socioeconomic information, comprising of age, gender, race, income level, employment status and residence location (French, 2014:1-4). Demographics also refers to a subset of the general population, namely, the age group, gender, nationality and sexual orientation (Longley, 2020).

A study conducted by Fisher, Hayhoe and Lown (2016:1-13) to investigate the gender differences in personal saving behaviour among single-person households found that gender influenced the saving behaviour of people. The reason for this was investigated by Faff, Mulino and Chai (2008:1-3) who suggest that because women are found to have lower levels of wealth and significantly lower levels of income compared to men, women are less active in saving than men.According to Griskevicius, Tybur, Ackerman, Delton, Robertson and White (2012), gender influences important areas of human life such as consumer behaviour and economic decisions. Furthermore, research shows that because men are more likely to receive higher levels of income than women, they are much more likely to save (Griskevicius *et al.,* 2012).

According to Ozcan, *et al.* (2003:1405-1416), there are many variables that influence the saving behaviour of people. The study found that demographic variables such as area of residence, age and life expectancy had a significant influence on saving tendencies (Ozcan, *et al.*, 2003:1405-1416). As a result, demographic factors such as age, gender and nationality were all found to have some impact on the saving decisions of people (Amusa, 2013:73-88).

2.3.2. Level of income

According to Ball and Chernova (2007:497-529), income refers to a person's earnings to provide a service or as an exchange for providing a product. Income is also described as moneyreceived by a person or organisation over a specific period of time for services performed, products sold, interest on investments, royalties or payment for renting property (Dohmen, Falk, Fliessbach, Sunde & Weber, 2011:279-285). The income that is earned by people is utilised to fund expenditures and investments as well as to save (Ball & Chernova, 2007:497-529). Income level describes the categories people are separated into based on the amount of income they earn, as a result, people are usually categorised as being "rich" or "poor" (OECD, 2016).

Income is considered to be one of the most crucial factors that influence the saving behaviour of not only people but the saving rate of a country at large (Aidoo-Mensah, 2018:133-143). Several research studies on the factors influencing the saving behaviour of households or people found there to be a positive relationship between income and saving (Aidoo-Mensah,2018:133-143). This is based on the belief that people cannot save what they do not have, therefore, having income available encourages positive saving patterns (Romm, 2003).

A study conducted by Kudaisi (2013:107-119), to investigate the determinants of domestic saving in West Africa during 1980-2006, found that an increase in the level of income received by a household had a positive influence on the saving rate of such a household. Additionally, a study conducted by Zwane, Greyling and Maleka (2016:209-218), to explore the variables influencing household saving in South Africa, observed a positive relationship between household saving and income in South Africa. The study concluded that saving in South Africa is largely driven by the level of income received by a household (Zwane *et al.,* 2016:209-218). Ozcan *et al.* (2003:1405-1416) suggest that income levels have a significant influence on the saving behaviour of people. However, factors such as life expectancy, economic environment and financial literacy also influence the saving decisions of people and households (Ozcan *et al.,* 2003:1405-1416).

2.3.3. Parental influence

Parental influence is described as any belief, opinion or action that directly or indirectly influences or shapes the attitude of a child (Maccoby, 2000:1-27). According to Chiarlitti and Kolen (2017:205-212), parental influence refers to the impact parents have on the behaviour and attitudes of their children, or how parents influence the conduct of their children by their behaviour. According to Maccoby (2000:1-27), parental influence is seen as one of the main factors that have an impact on the behaviour and actions of children.

Dangol and Mararjan (2018:42-63) suggest that there is a significant relationship between parental financial teaching and saving behaviour. A study conducted by Brown and Taylor (2016:1-14) to examine the early influences on the saving behaviour of teenage British children over time found that the actions and behaviour of parents had an impact on their children’s saving tendencies. The study investigated the determinants of the saving behaviour of children between the ages of eleven and fifteen and found that parental allowances increased the probability of a child saving (Brown & Taylor, 2016:1-14). Additionally, the study found that the financial expectations of the head of the household had an influence on the saving behaviour of their dependents (Brown & Taylor, 2016:1-14). Finally, contrary to the findings of many other studies, there was no evidence found to prove that the saving behaviour of parents influenced the saving decisions of children (Brown & Taylor, 2016:1-14).

A study conducted by Alekam, Salleh and Mokhtar (2018:309-323) aimed to investigate the effect of family, peer behaviour, saving and spending behaviour on financial literacy among young generations. Through the utilisation of questionnaires and arithmetic analysis, the study revealed a close relationship between parental influence and children's saving behaviour. Furthermore, the study concluded that parents taught financial literacy, effective funds management, saving and investing to their children by providing financial teachings and setting a positive example from an early age (Alekam *et al.,* 2018:309-323). Chalimah, Martono and Khafid (2019:22-29) concur that parental influence plays a significant role in shaping saving behaviour.

2.3.4. Life cycle

A life cycle refers to the entire span of a living being's existence, encompassing its birth, growth, and eventual death, along with all the changes experienced by the being during this time (Bogin & Varea, 2017:37-50). Bogin and Varea (2017:37-50) state that all social mammals undergo three primary stages of postnatal development, namely, infant, juvenile, and adulthood. However, the human life cycle is more accurately described by five distinct stages, namely, infant, child, juvenile, adolescent and adulthood. As people progress through these stages, their abilities, perspectives and needs undergo transformations (Bogin & Varea, 2017:37-50).

Changes in the life cycle of people have a significant impact on their saving decisions such as getting married and starting a family (Ferreira, 2015). A study conducted by Love (2009:385-432) to investigate the influences demographic shifts had on the saving decisions of peoplefound that marital status changes had a significant impact on saving behaviour. According to Grinstein-Weiss and Sherraden (2004:1-26), research shows that unmarried people have low saving performance levels compared to those who are married. Grossbard and Pereira (2010:1-26) found that in societies where there are high marriage rates, these societies are usually associated with high levels of saving.

The life-cycle theory suggests that the principal motivation for saving and investing is to accumulate money for later consumption, specifically for retirement (Mpaata, Koske & Saina, 2020:56-67). According to Ferreira (2015), age and life cycle have been identified as the most influential factor in the saving decisions of people. Mpaata *et al.* (2020:56-67) suggest that people do not only save more as they get older because their earnings levels become higher, but as they get to retirement age, the more likely they are to prioritise saving. Figure 1 depicts the proposed theoretical framework of variables influencing saving behaviour.

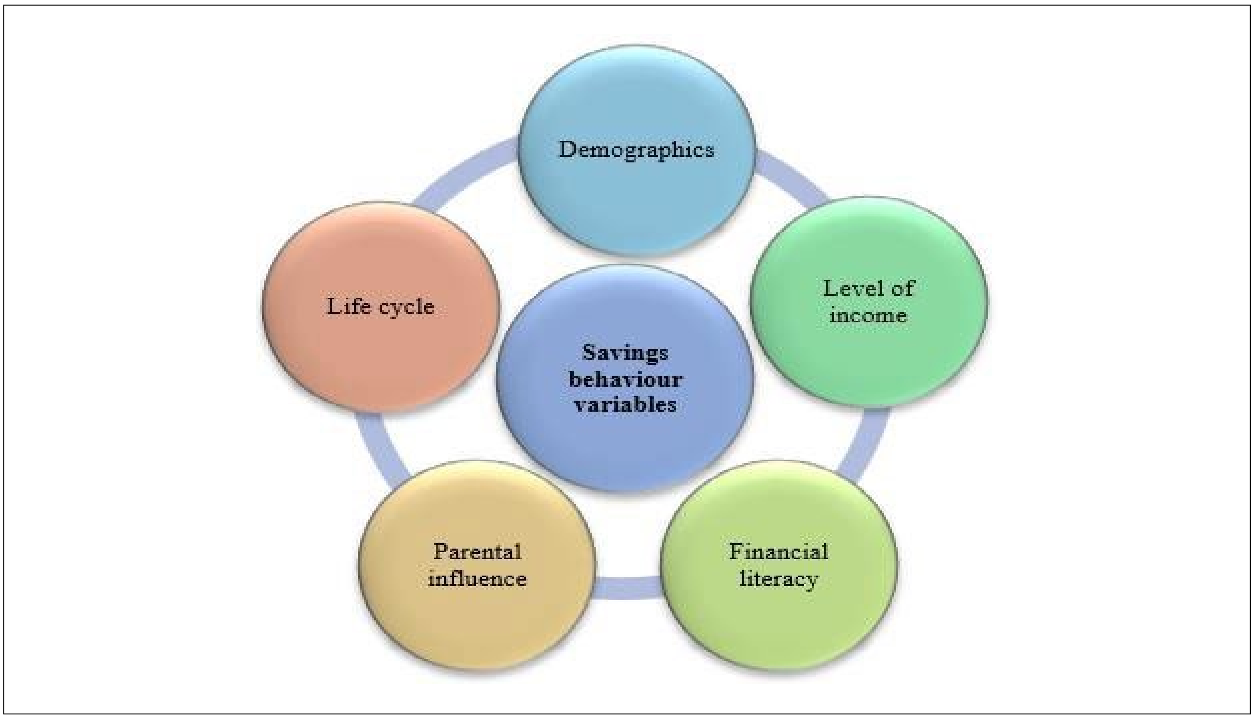

Figure 1: Proposed theoretical framework of variables influencing saving behaviour

Source: Authors' own compilation

Figure 1 shows the saving behaviour variables discussed. The saving behaviour variables identified in this Figure 1 were used as a basis when systematically reviewing current research on saving in South Africa.

3. Research methodology

The methodology employed in research concerns a set of rules and procedures that guide the researcher (Brewer & Miller, 2003). According to Fink (2005), to review literature, a methodology with a systematic approach that explains the complete mechanism of its operations and includes all material relevant to the area of the study is needed. There are several research paradigms that exist, some are of a qualitative nature while others are of a quantitative nature (Davies & Fisher, 2018:21). Given the nature of this study, an interpretive paradigm was deemed to be the most appropriate as it was important to gain a deeper understanding of variables that impact on the saving behaviour of South Africans. The research process refers to the systematic procedure that is followed by a researcher to answer the research question (Jansen & Warren, 2020). The research process of this study was critical as the large amounts and various types of data within the study required clear compartmentalisation of the various datasets. As a result, a mixed-method systematic review approach was adopted in this study. Van Rooyen (2018:21) identifies that mixed method systematic reviews have the advantage of not relying on a single set of data but rather allowing for the study of phenomena from various perspectives as well as having the explicit processes of a systematic review. For the purposes of this study, a three-step process was followed. The first step was to develop a theoretical framework of variables affecting saving behaviour of South Africans (see Figure 1) to guide the systematic review. The second step was the systematic review of selected academic articles based on the predetermined theoretical framework. This was followed by a focus group that evaluated the proposed framework of variables that influenced the saving behaviour of South Africans.

3.1. Systematic review process

Harden and Thomas (2015:751-752) define a systematic review as the application of explicit, systematic processes in the review of documents (such as academic articles, public policy and other research materials) to synthesise the findings into a cohesive overview of the literature or research outputs in a particular field. The sampling and data collection process of the systematic review is discussed in Section 3.1.1.

3.1.1. Systematic sample review

For the basis of this study, the primary data used for the systematic review was a set of 30 academic articles relating to the variables that influence the saving behaviour of people, specifically South Africans (see Figure 1). The study selected various literature based on a criterion of inclusion that related to the factors influencing the saving behaviour of people. Table 3 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Feature	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Date	2010-2022	<2010
Topic/subject of study	Must be related to the variables influencing saving behaviour of Africans, specifically, South Africans	Any study not related to the variables influencing the saving behaviour of South Africans/Africans
Language	English (originally written or translated)	Any foreign or indigenous language
Country of origin	All African countries	Any country outside the borders of Africa

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 3 shows the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selection of the sample of academic articles that were utilised in this study. The sample of academic papers was limited to those that met the selection criteria. The criteria of inclusion limited the use of articles to those that had been published between 2010 to 2022 to ensure that the data collected was relevant. The articles also needed to be related to the saving behaviour of South Africans and/or identify the variable that influenced the saving behaviour of South Africans so as to guarantee the accuracy of the proposed theoretical framework of variables influencing the saving behaviour of South Africans. Furthermore, the inclusion criteria limited the sample of articles to only those articles that had been written or translated into English to ensure that the articles were understood and interpreted correctly. The sample size of the review was set at 30 academic outputs that met the criteria as set out by the conditions.

3.1.2. Systematic review data collection

To identify variables that influence the savings behaviour of South Africans, the study systematically reviewed 30 academic articles selected by utilising inclusion criteria. The study followed a systematic review process to conduct the examination of the articles selected. The systematic review process framework suggested a four-step approach of, firstly, introducing the text to be analysed, then providing a summary of the text, then exploring the text and, finally, presenting the main findings of the text. In the first step of the analyse process, the 30 articles selected for analysis were introduced by tabulating the author, title, and journal of the selected article. The study analysed academic research published from 2010 to 2020 to ensure that the results from these academic papers were relevant, and the data examined was not dated. The main variables and sub-variables found in each article to have an influence on the savings behaviour of individuals were then identified and tabulated.

3.2. Focus group process

To ensure that the proposed framework identified the variables that had the most impact on the saving behaviour of South Africans, a group of purposely selected participants evaluated and assessed the proposed framework by means of a focus group. Focus groups are useful tools for better understanding topics of interest by gathering information through the discussions and interactions of a carefully selected group of people (Hise, 2021). Fouche, Strydom and Roestenburg (2021:362) find that authors are generally not in agreement about the number of focus group members to be recruited. However, according to Fouche *et al.* (2021:362), it is safe to argue that a focus group should not be less than three and not more than 15 members, although the ideal may be six to ten members. The focus group of this study was made up of seven participants. For Fouche *et al.* (2021:362), focus group members are recruited through a purposive sampling method, namely, participants were identified through consultation with the research supervisor and co-supervisor.

The inclusion criteria suggested that each participant should have obtained formal education and training in at least one of the following fields of study, namely, personal finance, economics or business management. The participants should be 18 years or older, and anyone under the age of eighteen would not be selected to form part of the focus group. Each member needed to have sufficient knowledge about saving and investments.

The focus group session was chaired by the researcher, the session was voice recorded, the built-in transcription was enabled, and the transcribed text was used for further analysis. Participants were made aware of the recordings and that the recording devices should not inhibit the free expression of their views or opinions.

A focus group schedule was used to organise and structure the discussions and activities within the focus group session. The focus group schedule guided the researcher to ensure that all relevant topics were covered, allowed for effective time management and provided a framework for gathering valuable insights and feedback from the participants. This was conducted in a systematic manner based on their level of agreement with the variables identified in the literature and systematic review.

The data collected from the focus group was then analysed and compared to the data gathered by systematic review. The results of differences and similarities were then synthesised.

3.3. Credibility of the research process

To evaluate the quality of researched qualitative data, four aspects of research should be established, namely, credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Connelly 2016:1-16).

Credibility is defined as the belief that can be placed on the accuracy of findings (Kortjens & Moser, 2018: 121-126). It establishes whether the research findings produce credible data drawn from the sample (Connelly, 2016:1-16). As a result, various sources of data and/or methods, peer debriefing and member checking were used in this study to demonstrate credibility. The dependability of a study demonstrates the trustworthiness of research as it establishes whether the research findings are consistent and repeatable (Connelly, 2016:1-16). For this study, an external researcher examined the study, using a technique known as an external audit. According to Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams and Blackman (2016:1-17), the phenomenon describing the degree to which findings described in one academic research paper is applicable or useful to theory, practice and future research is known as transferability. To ensure that the process can be replicated in another setting, proper descriptions of the process were provided.

Confirmability can be described as the extent to which the findings of a particular research study can be confirmed by an outside researcher (Kortjens & Moser, 2018:121-126). It focuses on establishing that the findings of a study are not a figment of the researcher's imagination but can be substantiated and is derived from credible data (Kortjens & Moser, 2018:121-126). In this research, the researchers demonstrated that findings were linked to conclusions in a manner that could be followed and replicated as a process.

3.4. Ethics in the research process

For the completion of the study, ethical clearance had to be obtained to ensure that the study would be completed in an appropriate manner and that no rights of the parties involved in the study would be infringed. Ethical clearance was obtained by the completion and submission of the relevant application form. The various sections were completed to ensure that the ethical standards were upheld throughout the duration of the study. Ethical clearance was granted for the completion of the study on the bases that all the ethical guidelines suggested were followed and approved by the relevant institution. The ethics clearance number allocated was **H21-BES-BMA-107.**

4. Results and Findings

The systematic reviews that were employed in this study were adapted from the systematic review approach suggested by Browne and Keeley (2012) to meet the specifics of this study. It followed a four-step process of systematically reviewing and examining the introduction, summary, text exploration and main findings of each paper selected separately. Firstly, the academic paper was introduced, the main objective of the study was discussed while exploring the purpose for conducting the study. This was followed by a summary of the study.

4.1. Systematic review process results

The 30 academic papers that were carefully selected based on strict criteria were systematically reviewed to identify the key variables impacting the saving behaviour of people. The systematic review identified different variables that initially did not form part of the theoretical framework. However, the systematic review found that these variables had a significant influence on the saving behaviour. These variables did not influence the saving behaviour of people in isolation but as sub-variables of the already theoretically developed variables. The newly identified sub-variables were categorised into the related theoretical variables, which are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4: Sub-variables extracted from the systematic review

Sub-variable(s) / Variable	Before systematic review	After systematic review
Demographics	Various population characteristics: • Age • Gender • Race • Employment • Residence	Sub-variables extracted: • Business ownership • Number of dependents • Marital status • Dependency ratio • Size of household • Religion • Position in household • Population growth • Access to internet • Geographical distance to an ATM • Homeownership status
Level of income	Categorisation of people based on the amount of income they received over a certain time period. Categorising individuals in groups of poor, middle-class and rich.	Sub-variables extracted: • Wealth effects • Economic variables (interest rate, fiscal policy, financial sector development, financial depth, terms of trade, external saving, real GDP growth, public saving, real exchange rate, foreign capital growth, money supply, budget deficit, deposit rate, saving deposit rate) • Bank account type • Disposable income • Level of indebtedness
Financial literacy	Financial literacy for the purposes of the theoretical framework was referred to as the understanding of ideas relating to saving, investmentsand the management of personal funds.	Systematic review found the following variable as a sub-variable under the variable category of financial literacy: • Highest level of education
Parental influence	The impact a person’s biological parents, adoptive parents or guardian’s behaviour had on their own mannerisms and behaviour.	Sub-variable extracted: • Level of trust in formal institutions

Variable \ Sub-variable(s)	Before systematic review	After systematic review
Life cycle	Life cycle refers to a person's life stage, for example, adolescence, teenager or adulthood.	Sub-variables extracted: • Political instability • Life expectancy

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 4 tabulates the theoretical framework of variables and the variables extracted after the systematic review.

4.2. Focus group process results

An analysis was conducted on the focus group session transcript to assess the participants' agreement or disagreement with the variables identified in the study, which are presented in Table 5. If participants were thought to have strongly agreed with the variable, then a score of 1 was given, if they were thought to have agreed with the variable, a score of 2 was given, if they made no comment, a score of 3 was given, if they were thought to have disagreed with the variable, a score of 4 was given and if they were thought to have strongly disagreed with the variable, a score of 5 was given.

Table 5: Focus group responses

Variable	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7
Demographics	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Level ofincome	1	2	2	1	1	2	2
Financialliteracy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Parental influence	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Life cycle	2	2	1	2	1	2	3

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 5 tabulates the participants' responses to the questions posed on each of the study's variables in the focus group session. As evident from Table 5, there were no participants who disagreed with any of the identified variables, which confirmed both the critical nature of these variables and their significance and relevance in the South African context.

4.3. Theoretical framework vs Systematic review vs Focus group

The initial theoretical framework for the study included saving behaviour variables such as demographics, income, financial literacy, parental influence and life cycle. To measure whether these variables were indeed those to be considered, two different sets of data were collected. First, a set of 30 research papers selected based on strict inclusion criteria were systematically reviewed, followed by an analysis of a focus group session held on the variables influencing the saving behaviour of South Africans. A comparison of the theoretical framework,systematic review and focus group analysis is summarised in Table 6.

Considering the variables extracted from both the systematic review and the focus group, an empirically tested proposed framework of variables and sub-variables was developed. Figure 2 presents the empirically tested proposed framework of variables and sub-variables that influence the saving behaviour of South Africans. Figure 2 shows the sub-variables identified in the study categorised under the various variables found to have an influence on the saving behaviour of people.

Table 6: Comparison of the systematic review and focus group findings

Variable	Systematic review	Focus group findings
Demographics	Findings from the systematic review showed that the factors suggested by the study categorised as demographics were present as variables influencing the saving behaviour of people in the research papers examined.	The participants concluded that demographics influenced the saving behaviour of people.
Income	Findings from the systematic review found that income was identified as a variable that had significant influence on the saving behaviour of people in the studies examined. It was found that half (50%)of the studies analysed concluded that income was a determinant of saving.	Only a third (30%) of the participants believed income to be a determinant of saving.
Financial literacy	Findings from the systematic review showed that financial literacy was identified in a few (6.67%) of the research papers examined.	The focus group (100%) reached consensus that financial literacy had a significant influence on thesaving behaviour of people.
Life cycle	Findings from the systematic review showed that life cycle specifically was not found in any of the selected academic papers analysed.	The focus group (100%) all agreedthat life cycle played an important role in influencing saving behaviour.

Source: Authors' own compilation

Table 6 shows the comparison of the main findings from the systematic review and focus group session.

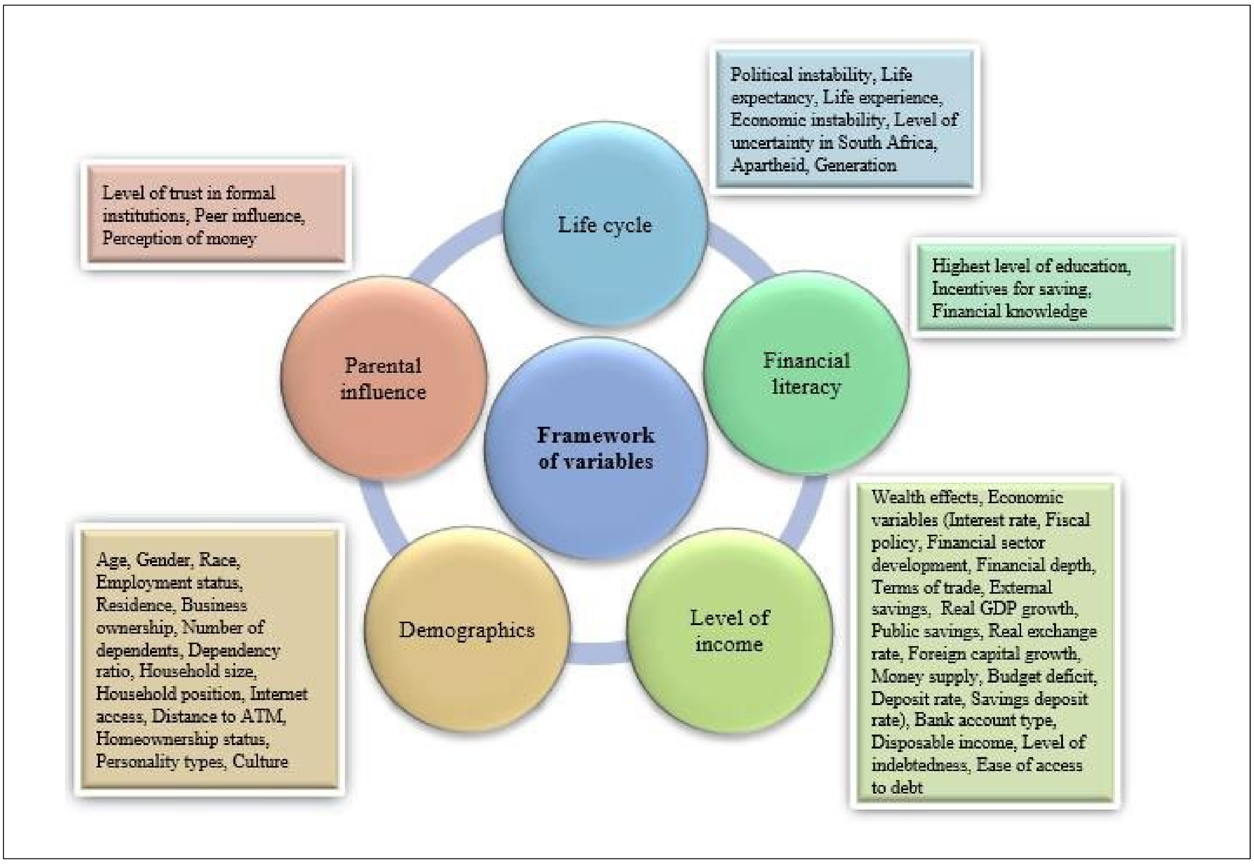

Figure 2: Empirically tested proposed framework
Source: Authors' own compilation

5. Managerial implications

A number of managerial implications were extracted from this study.

5.1. Financial literacy

The main findings of the study showed that financial literacy was an important variable to consider in relation to influencing the saving behaviour of people. However, financial literacy is underdeveloped for most of the South African population, and this hinders South Africans from making informed and positive financial decisions. It is, therefore, suggested that financial education initiatives should be implemented across all levels of education. The responsibility of educating people and providing them with financial knowledge should rest on government, educators, financial service providers, managers and parents/guardians. Financial education should be a continuous component of teaching and should be taught at foundational, secondary and tertiary phases of learning and places of employment.

Financial literacy should form part of the skill set taught to employees by managers and supervisors. Employees, especially those that are receiving a salary for the first time, should be advised on how to make informed decisions regarding saving and spending. The financial literacy gained will ensure that employees make positive saving decisions and this will positively affect the economy at large.

5.2. Demographics

In relation to demographics, socio-economic factors should be considered by government when examining methods to increase public saving. Emphasis should be placed on addressing challenges related to the high unemployment rates, poverty and social inequality within South Africa.

Government in collaboration with businesses, business owners and managers should build opportunities to create jobs, which will allow people to receive an income and, in turn, be able to save. Furthermore, managers should consider CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) projects that will address issues relating to poverty and social inequality in the environment in which they are situated.

5.3. Level of income

Economic factors, wealth effects, bank account type, level of indebtedness, disposable income, and ease of access to debt should be considered when examining level of income as a variable influencing the saving behaviour of people. Employment opportunities should be initiated by government in collaboration with managers, business owners and businesses to ensure that people have disposable income and are in a financial position to save. Good debt management is essential to the development and growth of a country's economy, and it is for this reason that programmes should be put into place by managers to assist employees with managing their debt. These programmes should be centered around ensuring that employees are equipped with the proper skills to manage their income in a positive and efficient manner.

It is important to remember that all these factors should not be considered in isolation but should be considered in conjunction with each other to ensure that South Africans increase their saving behaviour and adopt better saving habits.

6. Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to systematically review variables influencing the saving behaviour of people. This was done to develop a framework of variables influencing the saving behaviour of South Africans that could be utilised to encourage positive saving behaviour among South Africans and, in turn, increase the South African rate of saving. The main findings of the study identified various factors that influenced the saving behaviour of people.

The systematic review and the focus group session conducted concurred with the theoretical outline of variables influencing the saving behaviour of people, namely, that demographics, level of income, financial literacy, parental influence and life cycle all had a significant impact on the saving behaviour of South Africans. These variables should be considered together with the sub-variables identified when developing legislation and programmes to improve saving in South Africa.

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