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IMPACT OF CONDITIONAL JOB OFFER ON APPLICANT REACTIONS TO
SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE SELECTION PROCESS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science
in
Psychology:
Industrial/Organizational

by
Ashley Autumn Gomez

MARCH 2019

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ABSTRACT

Social media (SM) permits the sharing of personal information online, which can lead to employers accessing personal, non-job-related information about applicants throughout the selection process. Limited prior research (Jeske & Shultz, in press; Stoughton et al., 2015) has found that, to varying degrees, applicants find this access of their personal information to be an invasion of their personal privacy. The aim of the present study was to replicate prior findings regarding invasion of privacy moderating the relationship between SM screening presence and procedural justice perceptions and to expand on prior research by exploring whether the stage at which this information was collected (pre- and post- conditional job offer) would mediate the relationship between SM screening and perceived invasion of privacy. A survey was administered electronically and participants (N = 210) were randomly assigned to one of four SM screening conditions: (a) SM screening absent, job offer absent, (b) SM screening absent, job offer present, (c) SM screening present, job offer absent, and (d) SM screening present, job offer present. One component of the hypothesized model was supported, that those in the SM screening groups reported higher levels of perceived invasion of privacy as compared to the no SM screening groups. No interaction effects were found between SM screening and stage in the selection process on either perceived invasion of privacy or procedural justice perceptions, indicating limited to no support for the proposed model. Thus, alternative, more

robust contextual models for the examination of SM screening in the selection process were proposed for future research.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The use of Social Media (SM) has become commonplace in much of the developed world, with over 1.71 billion monthly active users worldwide as of early 2016 (Statistica, 2016). Traditionally, Social Media encompasses various Social Networking Sites (SNSs) that might be established for connecting with individuals in one's personal (e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Instagram) or public (e.g., LinkedIn) life. SNSs make up one of the largest and most popularized SM platforms, and are defined as, "web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others in the system" (Boyd & Ellison, 2008, p. 211). However, Social Media can be more robust than individual networking sites, and may include collaborative project space, blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social worlds (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Although some types of SM are designed essentially as a digital résumé that is meant to be shared with one's professional network, many are not. Professionally oriented Social Media (SM), such as LinkedIn, typically contain information regarding past work experience and education, professional connections and recommendations, and other information intended to be seen by

one's professional network, and even by potential employers. However, many other types of SM aren't intended for such professional level use and information is not shared on those sites with the potential future employer in mind.

The current study focused on the latter type of SM, those developed for personal use purposes and therefore not intended for use in job-related decision making but that are sometimes still used in selection and screening practices (Goldberg, Kelley, Magdon-Ismail, Mertsalov, & Wallace, 2010). A recent Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2013) study found that 20% of organizations surveyed used SM as a screening tool and another 12% were planning to incorporate the SM screening into their selection process. These numbers are down, from roughly 40%, reported in the first iteration of the survey (Grasz, 2009). Information regarding the specific type of SM examined was not addressed. This reflects a common occurrence in the practice of Human Resources, in that it can sometimes be far removed from the scientific community. Practices are often put into place long before they have been empirically or even legally examined. The initial spike in use and then slow reduction is likely the result of increased empirical information and professional opinions available to HR professionals on the use of such practices. Making intentional efforts to integrate science into practice makes up evidence-based human resources (EBHR), which is further aided when scholars examine practical organizational issues in their research (Rousseau & Barends, 2011). Addressing topics such as the proper use of SM for screening in selection

processes is an important and worthy endeavor in bridging the gap between research and practice.

Although the use of SM for screening and selection has already been examined previously, the aim of the present study is to determine if the use of SM screening in the selection process will positively or negatively impact a candidates' perceptions of privacy and procedural justice related to the selection process. As outlined in the coming pages, and in an attempt to build on previous research, this study will also examine if these perceptions differ based on when SM screening occurs in the selection process (i.e., either before or after a conditional job offer is made). This is especially relevant as more states across the US are requiring that background and medical checks take place after issuance of a conditional job offer (O'Connell, 2014), which raises questions surrounding how to categorize SM screening as a tool in the selection process. This is a particularly salient topic as organizations attempt to address continued technological advances and accompanying societal beliefs through the implementation of appropriate organizational policy. This study is an attempt at providing more information to aide in EBHR practices, as it related to policy development surrounding SM screening in selection. When the entire internet is at the fingertips of HR professionals, it may be tempting to research potential employees. It is important that clear evidence is available to them regarding the potential positive and negative consequences of such actions.

Social Media in Selection

Utilizing the definitions above, Boyd and Ellison (2007) explain that the first true social networking sites began in the late 1990s but did not gain widespread popularity until around 2003 and have been growing in popularity ever since. Initially, most SNSs were designed to support existing face-to-face relationships. However, as SM has become more prevalent and mainstream, this support of face-to-face relationships has broadened to also include platforms for creating new relationships, typically based around some shared hobby or experience (Madden, 2012).

Although research and best practices on the use of SM in selection is expanding, there are many popular press articles predating any research on the topic geared toward organizations (e.g., Wiehl, 2008) and applicants (e.g., Roberts & Roach, 2009; Sacks & Graves, 2012) on how to best capitalize on SM for employment purposes. Accordingly, these hiring organizations may be looking for evidence of inappropriate behavior, such as binge drinking or provocative photos, or negative remarks about previous employers as a means of trimming down their applicant pool. Although some research has been done to find out what HR professionals are looking for when they screen SM (SHRM, 2013), very little is known about those organizations or managers who may be operating independently or without dedicated human resource staff.

Landers and Schmidt (2016a) recently pointed out six hurdles that currently exist to effectively utilize social media screening in any selection

process. Specifically, they point out that there exists almost no evidence that can speak to the reliability or validity of using social media in the selection process. Further, there is no evidence to suggest benefits, such as extracting information regarding person-job or person-organization fit, would outweigh the costs, such as lawsuits initiated by applicants, or realized utility to an organization. Additionally, there are a slew of potential legal and ethical issues surrounding such practices, such as using SM platforms for business use (which may be a violation of their terms and conditions), concerns over an applicant's right to privacy in their personal lives, and the introduction of non-job-related information that may lead to bias and detract from an assessment of job-related characteristics. There is also no current theory or data that indicates where SM screening would best be integrated into current selection systems. And finally, even if all of the above obstacles were met, they point out that technology related to SM is rapidly changing and any attempt at standardization could easily be thwarted as the technology outpaces the research and theoretical developments.

Although scholars (e.g., Jeske & Shultz, 2016) have overwhelmingly recommended that organizations not incorporate SM screening into their selection processes due to the aforementioned obstacles, guidelines for use have recently been developed (Davison, Bing, Kluemper, & Roth, 2016). Most notably, Davison et al. (2016) recommend that the use of any selection tool, SM screening included, begin with a proper job analysis. They also recommend that all screening be done within the human resources departments within

organizations and that protections are put in place, such as training screeners to be consistent and follow a standardized approach. Although not explicitly stated, all of these guidelines seemed to point to the need for organizations to implement SM policies that set a standard for SM use in their organizations, especially as it relates to recruiting and selection. However, organizations may be fearful of putting guidelines in writing when the legal landscape regarding such practices is still so unclear.

Invasion of Privacy

With the widespread use of SM, an organization's ability to pry into the private lives of their applicants has grown exponentially. As mentioned previously, very little is known about the behaviors of both hiring managers and applicants as they relate to SM and the impact that those behaviors can have with regard to employment. In theory, privacy settings on SM sites should allow the user to limit who may have access to their personal information, particularly those individuals who are not a part of their network. However, a study conducted by Sophos (2007) found that 41% of people accepted a friend request from a fabricated profile. The implications of this are far-reaching. At a minimum, it is clear that privacy settings are being applied differentially across SM users, which may or may not result in adverse impact in the selection process.

As a real-life example, Madera (2012) mentions that in the hospitality industry, it is common practice for large organizations to maintain a SM profile that is then used to 'friend' recent graduates and potential employees. This gives

the organization access to information that may have otherwise been set to 'private' by these individuals. Additionally, these applicants may not realize what they have opened themselves up to by accepting the friend request or they could be actively involved in the recruitment process and fear not accepting the friend request may lead to lower standing in the selection process.

Despite increased privacy options across many SM platforms, there exists many accounts in the media of individuals losing out on job opportunities or losing a job they already had as a result of sharing information through SM. Very recently, in May 2015, an applicant received job offers from two different companies, and decided to weigh his decision on a public forum. Unfortunately, as a result of sharing his personal opinions about each company, one of the companies chose to rescind the job offer on the grounds of bad fit and indecisiveness. While a representative of the other company also commented and encouraged the applicant to accept their offer (Petroni, 2015). In a similar situation, a soon to be Cisco employee of the San Francisco bay area, tweeted after receiving his job offer that, "Cisco just offered me a job! Now I have to weigh the utility of a fatty paycheck against the daily commute to San Jose and hating the work." Because keywords in any 'tweet' are searchable through the site, a company representative found and responded, "Who is the hiring manager. I'm sure they would love to know that you will hate the work. We here at Cisco are versed in the web." Although the Twitter user took down his comment and made his information private after the initial event, internet savvy individuals who saw

the tweet, as well as the response from Cisco, were able to reveal the true identity of the person who made the original post, resulting in the job offer being rescinded (Zupek, 2009). In both instances, blatantly obvious actions were made by the applicants that resulted in the withdrawal of a job offer which had already been made.

The relative invasiveness of various selection procedures has been examined and have been found to vary greatly in how much applicants perceive them to be invasive. Collecting personal information as a means of screening candidates is considered to be among the most invasive (Stone-Romero, Stone, & Hyatt, 2003). Alge (2001) has argued that perceptions regarding one's own privacy impacts their identity management because privacy is related to a person's ability to mask components of themselves that they might want kept secret, as a means of managing how their identity is perceived by others. It follows that an invasion of that privacy could then lead to negative evaluations by the offending party, specifically lowered perceptions of fairness as measured by procedural justice perceptions.

Procedural Justice Perceptions

One of the primary theoretical models for examining applicant reactions is organizational justice theory, which explains various factors that affect appraisals of fairness throughout the selection process and how these perceptions impact various other outcomes of organizational interest (Gilliand, 1993). The general premise of organizational justice theory as it applies to selection contexts is that

applicants develop justice perceptions regarding the selection process, which then influence subsequent thoughts and behaviors toward the end of the selection process.

In this original model, organizational justice theory was comprised of procedural justice and distributive justice (Gilliland, 1993). Further, Gilliland theorized that procedural justice had three sub-dimensions: formal characteristics, interpersonal treatment, and explanations. Greenberg and Cropanzano (1993), alternatively offered a two-prong theoretical approach to procedural justice which included social procedural justice and structural procedural justice. Through a scale development process including deductive item generation, exploratory factor analysis, and later confirmatory factor analysis, Bauer and colleagues (2001) found support in their scale for an 11-factor model with two higher order factors, which most appropriately maps onto the model theorized by Greenberg and Cropanzano (1993). Gilliland's theoretical model is still supported as his interpersonal treatment category closely resembles Greenberg's social factor and Gilliland's formal characteristics category is qualitatively similar to Greenberg's structure factor. However, this does leave Gilliland's explanation category unaccounted for in the scale developed by Bauer, although it was considered in the original item development.

Procedural justice is linked to perceptions about organizational processes (in the case of selection, this would be the application process) or one's level of system satisfaction, while distributive justice references perceptions of

organizational resource allocations, and is arguably similar to fairness perceptions (Greenberg, 1990). Of particular importance to applicant reactions is procedural justice, as there is a focus on determining an applicant's overall perception of fairness in the selection tools (e.g., pre-employment testing, background checks, and interviews), which make up the overall selection procedure and encompassing applicant experience.

These concepts were further advanced with the development of a selection procedural justice scale (Bauer et al., 2001). The full scale encompasses all of the formal procedural justice rules: job-relatedness, chance to perform, reconsideration opportunity, consistency of administration, feedback, information known, openness, treatment, two-way communication, and propriety of questions (Gilliland, 1993; Leventhal, 1980). Job-relatedness is the extent to which a selection procedure is perceived to be measuring some knowledge, skill, ability, or other characteristic (KSAO) that is at face value, related to the job or otherwise appears valid. Chance to perform is defined as having ample opportunity to display one's KSAO's within the confines of the selection process. Reconsideration opportunity is defined as, "the opportunity to challenge or modify the decision making/evaluation process and the opportunity to review and/or discuss outcomes" (Bauer et al., 2001, p. 391). Consistency is the extent to which selection procedures are administered in a standard and consistent manner over time. Feedback is defined as the opportunity for applicants to receive timely and informative feedback. Information known is defined as prior

knowledge regarding the selection procedure before taking part in it. Openness is defined as the extent to which communication from the organization to the applicant is seen as honest and open. Treatment is defined as the extent to which applicants are treated with warmth and respect in relation to the selection procedure or test. Two-way communication is defined as the applicant's level of opportunity to offer their own input and subsequently have that feedback considered during the selection process. Finally, propriety of questions is defined as, "the extent to which questions avoid personal bias, invasion of privacy, and illegality and are deemed fair and appropriate" (Bauer et al., 2001, p. 391). As mentioned above, procedural justice refers to the perceived fairness of methods used to assess suitability for employment (Bauer et al., 2001). SM screening could be considered one of such methods and therefore it is suitable to assume applicants would develop evaluations surrounding that procedure that might impact their overall appraisal of the organization. A particularly negative candidate experience, which could occur when a perceived invasion of privacy or lack of fairness exists, could even lead to litigation or attempts to publicly tarnish an organization's reputation.

Preliminary research, utilizing a justice perspective, has tied SM screening to increased perceptions of invasion of privacy, reduced organizational attractiveness, and increased intent to litigate when compared to individuals not subjected to such screening (Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015). Specifically, they found that individuals who were led to believe their SM had

been screened as part of the selection process, perceived a greater invasion of privacy, which was inversely related to organizational attractiveness. It is important to note that study participants (the applicants) were not provided the opportunity to give their consent to be screened, rather they were informed after the fact that the screening had occurred. This provides important foundational groundwork for the future of applicant reactions research to SM screening. Specifically, Stoughton and his colleagues (2015) have found evidence in support of SM screening being perceived as an invasion of privacy in the application process.

Additionally, the original study by Stoughton et al. (2015) was followed up using a non-student sample to provide further generalizability of findings, and support was found for this model. In Study 2, participants were not true job applicants, as they were in Study 1, but study participants were asked to respond as if they were applying for a job. This model requires replication and further testing to determine under what circumstances SM screening will lead to perceived invasion of privacy. For example, expectations of privacy may vary greatly across demographic groups including age, gender, ethnicity or even educational level, socioeconomic status, or one's overall degree of familiarity with the internet and social media specifically.

The Role of a Conditional Job Offer

There have been mixed recommendations regarding the best stage for which to incorporate SM screening into the selection process. Some stand firm

that, for the time being, SM should not be used as a screening tool at all (Landers & Schmidt, 2016b), but could be beneficial to recruiting efforts. While others point out that allowing SM use for some processes and not others, can create a sense of confusion and blurred boundaries for employees, especially without explicit policies in place. Further still, it has been recommended that if SM screening is to be incorporated, it should be done at as late a point in the selection process as possible in order to mitigate the potential implicit impact of gaining protected class information (Davison, Bing, Kluemper, & Roth, 2016).

Treating SM screening as a component of the background process could be another option. In the United States, this would likely fall under the Federal Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) guidelines, which currently requires organizations to obtain signed authorization from applicants if they are going to conduct credit checks (Fair Credit Reporting Act, 2012). Further, background checks conducted in California are subject to the requirements of FCRA plus, which require applicant notification and consent to any form of third party or employer background check (Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act, 2014). Additionally, as of July 1, 2014 the State of California enacted LAB § 432.9, which requires that state and local agencies not ask applicants to disclose information regarding their criminal conviction history, “until the agency has determined the applicant meets the minimum employment qualifications” (Section 432.9, a). California is not alone, as the result of the “Ban-the-Box” movement, many public employers are now forbidden from asking or are

proactively choosing not to ask about criminal history, which includes conducting a criminal background check, until after all other job-relevant characteristics have been evaluated and a candidate has been determined to be minimally qualified for the position (O'Connell, 2014). There is a clear legal trend towards the protection of applicants' private information, much of which could potentially be obtained from screening SM. If the organizational goal of SM screening is to avoid negligent hiring (Kittling, 2010), rather than to assess organizational fit or other job-related characteristics of the applicant, then the approach of treating as one component of a complete background check might be the most appropriate. However, even if a hands-off (i.e., using a third party vendor) background check approach were taken, examination of specific SNS's may still violate the platforms terms and conditions, and therefore would not be appropriate.

When it comes to negligent hiring, many other pre-employment screening practices are reserved for a time after a conditional job offer has been made. For example, the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA, 1990) and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA, 2008) require medical examinations, which could include anything from a simple drug screen to a psychological evaluation, take place after a candidate has been determined to be among the most competitive for the position and given a conditional job offer. The only exception to this would be if the medical exam is required to assess an essential function of the job, such as a physical agility test for public safety officers. Further, questions regarding previous or current casual drug use are permitted, but questions

regarding past drug use are not. This is because unlike a long-term history of drug use, casual drug use is not protected as a medical condition by the ADA. A long-standing history of drug use may be indicative of a medical issue, such as alcoholism or addiction, whereas casual use does not, and would therefore be protected. Medical history information, which is a type of personal information, is considered private and is protected from the employer whenever possible.

In line with the law, Stone-Romero, Stone, and Hyatt (2003) found that potential job applicants found the collection of personal information to be the most invasive of all pre-employment procedures. While not explicitly defined, SM screening may be defined as a collection of personal information, some of which may even be protected information under the ADA and ADAAA (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). When the selection procedure was clearly assessing job-relevant information, applicants felt the procedure to be less invasive (Stone-Romero et al., 2003). In general, background checks and medical examinations were found to be more invasive than physical or mental ability tests or filling out an application blank (Stone-Romero et al., 2003). This is in line with a meta-analysis on applicant reactions, which found that in general, interviews, work samples, résumés, and references are all perceived favorably by hypothetical applicants in the applicant reactions literature. Even cognitive ability tests, personality tests, and biodata were moderately favored (Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004). Because of the wide gamut of information potentially available to an employer when conducting SM screening, it is likely that applicants subjected to such

screening will find the practice invasive and perceive it to be an invasion of privacy over those individuals who are not subject to such screening. And while there is clearly a need to assess the legality regarding the most appropriate stage in the selection process SM screening should go, a consideration of applicant perceptions is important. When applicants perceive the selection process to be unjust, they are more likely to take legal action against the organization by filing formal complaints or pursuing litigation (Gilliland, 1993; Truxillo, Steiner, & Gilliland, 2004).

Consistent with the above discussion regarding SM screening, perceived invasions of privacy and procedural justice perceptions, the following hypotheses are proposed: Hypothesis 1: SM screening presence will predict perceived invasion of privacy. Specifically, individuals in the SM screening groups will report higher perceived invasion of privacy than those in the no SM screening groups. Hypothesis 2: SM screening presence will predict procedural justice perceptions, such that individuals in the post-offer SM screening group will have lower procedural justice perceptions than individuals in the pre-offer SM screen group. Hypothesis 3: Stage in the selection process will moderate the relationship between SM screening presence and invasion of privacy, such that individuals in the post-offer SM screening group will have lower perceived invasion of privacy than individuals in the pre-offer SM screen group. Hypothesis 4a: Perceptions of invasion of privacy will negatively predict procedural justice

perceptions. Hypothesis 4b: Perceptions of invasion of privacy will mediate the relationship between SM screening presence and procedural justice perceptions.

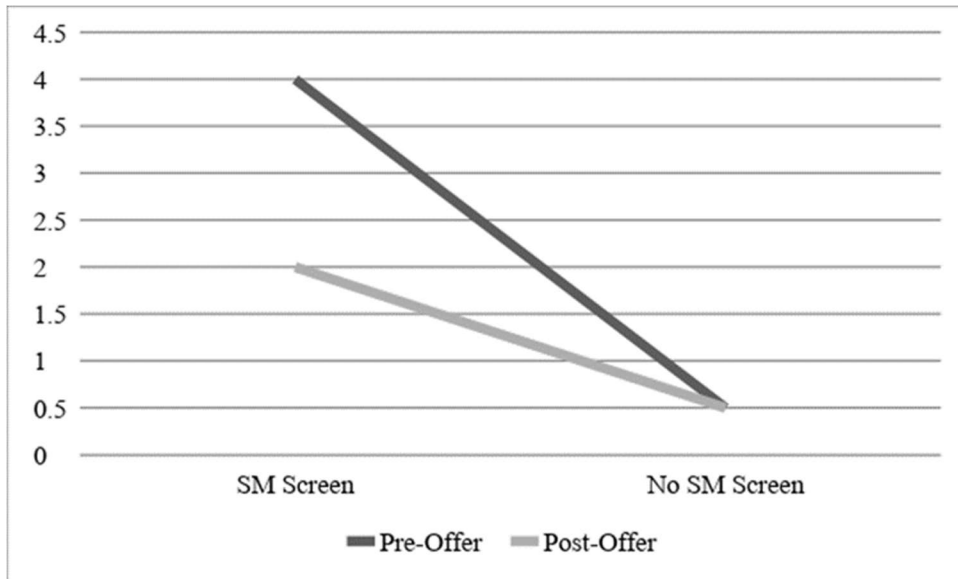


Figure 1. Expected Moderation Effect of Stage in the Selection Process on the Relationship Between Social Media Screening Presence and Invasion of Privacy.

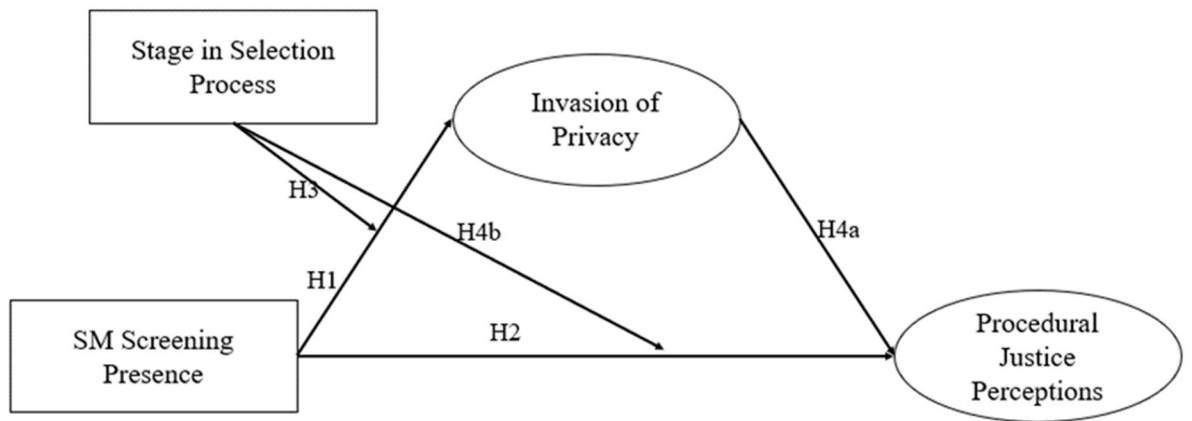


Figure 2. Summary of Hypotheses and Proposed Model.

CHAPTER TWO

METHOD

Participants

Individuals who were employed or were currently seeking employment and over the age of 18 were eligible to participate in this study. Participants were recruited via email and social media using a snowball sampling technique. Known eligible participants were invited to complete the survey and were asked to invite other qualifying individuals to participate as well. Participants were asked to respond with their opinions regarding one of four hypothetical hiring procedures as if they were experiencing it themselves. While it is ideal to use an actual applicant sample for applicant reactions research, evidence suggest that participants responding to simulated scenarios are representative. For example, in their meta-analysis on applicant reactions research, Hausknecht, Day, and Thomas (2004) found that there were no consistent patterns in the differences of correlations between hypothetical and authentic research contexts. However, they do note that correlations are stronger in research between procedural justice and future-oriented behaviors in simulated scenarios.

Design

In this study we utilized a between-groups design with random assignment to conditions. There were two independent variables: SM screening presence and job offer presence. SM screening presence had two conditions: present or

absent. Participants were placed into conditions where they either were (present) or were not (absent) led to believe they were screened in the selection process based on the contents of their SM profiles. Job offer presence also had two conditions: present or absent. Participants were placed into conditions where they either were (present) or were not (absent) led to believe they were offered the job for which they applied. This design led to four study conditions: (a) SM screening absent, job offer absent, (b) SM screening absent, job offer present, (c) SM screening present, job offer absent, and (d) SM screening present, job offer present. It was the intent in the original study design to assess perceived invasion of privacy as a mediator variable and procedural justice (social) as an outcome variable. However, the assumptions for mediation analysis were not met. The requirements for conducting moderated mediation involve first establishing that both independent variables and their combined interaction term correlate with the mediator (path a) and the outcome (path c) and that the mediator also correlates with the outcome (path b) (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Screening Conditions

Participants were asked their opinions regarding a simulated hiring process. Using verbiage adapted from Bauer et al. (2001), all participants were told the following:

“Please think of yourself as a job seeker applying for a job with X Corporation. This company is offering a yearly salary 10% higher than other companies in your industry as well as generous stock options. This company is

located in a town you like. In talking with people hired in the last 5 years, you have discovered that employees received an average of three promotions in that time. The company has also been rated as a leader in the industry in terms of proactive environmental policies and was rated as one of the top 100 places to work by the US News & World Report.”

After reading an introduction to the study, survey respondents were assigned to one of four scenarios that correspond to one of the four selection procedures: a no SM pre-offer screening control group, a no SM post-offer group, a pre-offer SM screen group, and a post-offer SM screen group. After reviewing their selection scenario, participants were asked to respond to a brief survey regarding their perceived invasion of privacy and social procedural justice perceptions. Demographic information, including existing internet knowledge and SM use practices, was collected last so as not to impact perceptions regarding invasion of privacy.

Hiring practice type and stage in the selection procedure were experimentally manipulated such that participants in the ‘no-screen’ group were subject to résumé review for skills assessment, but were fully excluding from any sort of SM screening. In the pre-offer no SM screen condition, participants were told to imagine several weeks have passed, when they receive a letter stating:

“Thank you for applying for a position with X Corporation. You were chosen as a finalist for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application and résumé.

The next step of the selection process involves setting up a time to interview. The hiring manager should be reaching out to you in the next several days to schedule an interview. Should you be provided an offer of employment after your interview, we will be in contact with you to schedule a time for your medical clearance and fill out paperwork for the background investigation. This process includes a drug screening and criminal records check.”

Participants in the pre-offer SM screen group were told that their social media was screened during the job-relevant KSAO assessment phase of the selection process before receiving a job offer. In the pre-offer screen condition participants were told to imagine several weeks have passed, when they receive a letter stating:

“Thank you for applying for a position with X Corporation. You were chosen as a finalist for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application and résumé. Further, in order to corroborate information provided on your résumé and application, human resources examined your social media profiles through the use of an open web search for all finalists, such as yourself. A lack of social media profiles, such as Facebook or Twitter did not disqualify any candidates, only the presence of disqualifying information.

The next step of the selection process involves setting up a time to interview. The hiring manager should be reaching out to you in the next several days to schedule an interview. Should you be provided an offer of employment

after your interview, we will be in contact with you to schedule a time for your medical clearance and fill out paperwork for the background investigation. This process includes a drug screening and criminal records check.”

Participants in the post-offer no SM screen group did not have their social media screened, however they were asked to go through the background check process after they had been provided a conditional job offer. Participants in this post-offer no screening group were told to imagine that they interviewed for the position and now several weeks have passed, when they receive a letter stating:

“Thank you for interviewing for a position with X Corporation. You are the selected candidate for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application, résumé, and successful completion of a pre-employment interview.

Now that you have successfully completed all stages in the selection process, we will need to schedule a time for you to come in for your medical clearance appointment. Upon successful completion of your medical clearance, we will have you fill out paperwork in order to conduct a background investigation. This process includes a criminal records check.”

Participants in the post-offer SM screen group were told that their social media was screened as a component of the background check process after they have been provided a conditional job offer. Participants in the post-offer screening group were told to imagine several weeks have passed, when they receive a letter stating:

“Thank you for applying for a position with X Corporation. You were chosen as a finalist for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application and résumé.

The next step of the selection process involves setting up a time to interview. The hiring manager should be reaching out to you in the next several days to schedule an interview. Should you be provided an offer of employment after your interview, we will be in contact with you to schedule a time for your medical clearance and fill out paperwork for the background investigation. This process includes a drug screening, a criminal records check, and an examination of your social media profiles. Human resources will examine your social media profiles through the use of an open web search for all individuals given a conditional offer of employment, such as yourself. This final screening process is intended to corroborate information obtained throughout the selection process and assess professionalism.”

Measures

Upon conclusion of the selection simulation, study participants were asked to rate their perceived invasion of privacy as a result of the selection procedures utilized and their social procedural justice perceptions to the simulated selection process as a whole.

Invasion of privacy was measured using a five-item scale, originally developed to examine invasion of privacy perceptions in response to workplace surveillance (Alge, 2001; Tolchinsky et al., 1981), that have since been adapted

specifically for social media contexts (Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015). In their study, the scale was found to exhibit acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability, $\alpha = .78$. For the present study, internal consistency reliability levels were also acceptable, $\alpha = .89$. An example item includes, "I felt comfortable with the personal information the hiring organization collected." Participants responded on a 1 (very inaccurate) to 5 (very accurate) Likert type scale.

Procedural justice was measured using the social higher-order factor of the Selection Procedural Justice Scale (SPJS) developed and validated by Bauer and colleagues (2001), augmented for social media screening (Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015). The full measure includes two dimensions, social procedural justice and structural procedural justice, of which only social was utilized for the present research, as the structural component measures test components not applicable to SM screening. Bauer and colleague's explained that the word "test" could be replaced with references to other selection devices or systems. Accordingly, Stoughton et al. (2015) augmented the items to reflect references to social media screening as a selection tool. This scale includes five subscales with a total of twenty items: consistency, honesty (openness), interpersonal treatment/interpersonal effectiveness, two-way communication, and propriety of questions. Additionally, they chose to exclude two items from the honesty subscale as they were deemed irrelevant, leaving 18 items in total. In

this research design, candidates were not given the opportunity to ask questions about the selection procedures.

The sub-scales of the social higher-order factor include: consistency, openness, treatment, two-way communication, and propriety of questions. Response options exist on a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. An example item from the consistency subscale is, “the selection system was administered to all applicants in the same way.” An example item from the honesty subscale is, “the hiring organization did not try to hide anything from me during the selection process.” An example item from the interpersonal treatment subscale is, “the hiring organization was considerate during the selection process.” An example item from the two-way communication subscale is, “I was able to ask questions about the selection process.” And an example from the propriety subscale is, “the selection process itself did not seem too personal or private.”

In the original study by Bauer and colleagues (2001), specific reliability data was not available on each subscale, other than to say that reliability values ranged between .73 and .92 in terms of internal consistency. For the present study, internal consistency reliability was examined for each subscale (consistency, $\alpha = .76$; honesty/openness, $\alpha = .87$; treatment, $\alpha = .87$; two-way communication, $\alpha = .81$; propriety of questions, $\alpha = .84$), as well as for the overall scale, $\alpha = .91$. Bauer and colleagues did assess validity through the use of convergent and divergent validation techniques. The social procedural justice

subscale was found to positively correlate with a different measure of overall procedural justice ($r = .69, p < .01$) as expected and either negatively correlate or not correlate with age, gender, and test score, as expected. The authors felt that this was sufficient preliminary validation evidence. When the procedural justice (social) scale was adapted for use in examining social media screening, it was found to have an internal consistency reliability of .95.

Demographic Information

Gender, ethnicity, age, employment status, job-seeker status, job type, and education level were collected as a last step in the survey process. Two items were included to screen for careless responding. An example careless response item is, "If you are reading this item, please respond with Very Inaccurate". Additionally, due to the nature of this study being related to social media and the internet, respondents were also surveyed regarding their overall internet knowledge (Potasky, 2007). Embedded within the internet knowledge questionnaire were questions regarding SM site usage and frequency of use. As a last step, respondents were also asked one open-ended question about if and how they treat their social media differently during job seeking. Further, information regarding specific SM posting behaviors will be collected. See Appendix A for specific items and response scales.

CHAPTER THREE

RESULTS

Data Screening

Prior to hypothesis testing, all responses were screened for missing or unusable data. Upon survey close, there were 546 responses recorded, 286 responses were deleted due to a lack of response on any single survey item. Participation in the study was completely voluntary, participants were collected via social media and were not compensated for their participation in the study. Participants incorrectly answering one or more careless response items resulted in an additional 33 responses being removed. An additional 16 responses were removed due to very limited and therefore unusable responses on survey items, bringing the final sample size to 210. Any reverse scored items were recoded prior to variable computation and further analysis.

Demographic Information

Participants were primarily female (77.7%), possessed a bachelor's degree or higher (68.3%), and worked in some sort of professional specialty (40%). The average age of participants was 35. On a one to five scale, participants average internet knowledge was 3.99. Further, most participants (N = 107) reported regular (several times a month or more) use of some form of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, or Snapchat). Demographic information is summarized in detail in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Categorical Demographic Variables

Variable	<i>n</i>	%
Gender	198	
Male	31	14.7
Female	164	77.7
Other	3	1.4
Education Level	199	
Less than High School	1	.5
High School Diploma	6	2.8
Some College	30	14.2
Associates or Vocational	18	8.5
Bachelor's	78	37.0
Master's	55	26.1
Professional Degree	6	2.8
Doctorate	5	2.4
Career Type	198	
Currently Seeking Work	9	4.5
Customer Service	13	6.5
Administrative Support	16	8.0
Professional Specialty	80	40
Managerial	17	8.6
Executive	4	2.0
Technical	19	9.6
Sales	3	1.5
Intern	5	2.5
Other	32	16.2

Table 2. Continuous Demographic Variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age	35	10.89	18	72
Internet Knowledge	3.99	.69	1.31	5.00
SM Posting Frequency – Facebook	4.97	1.51	1.00	7.00
SM Posting Frequency – Myspace	1.05	.21	1.00	2.00
SM Posting Frequency – LinkedIn	1.99	1.07	1.00	7.00
SM Posting Frequency – Twitter	2.22	1.58	1.00	7.00
SM Posting Frequency – Instagram	3.53	2.00	1.00	7.00
SM Posting Frequency – Snapchat	2.70	1.86	1.00	7.00

Test of Assumptions

The data was also examined to ensure the assumptions of a moderated mediation were met. The requirements for conducting moderated mediation involve first establishing that both independent variables and their combined interaction term correlate with the mediator (path a) and the outcome (path c) and that the mediator also correlates with the outcome (path b). SM screening positively and significantly correlated with perceived invasion of privacy, $r = .24$, $p < .001$, but not with procedural justice perceptions, $r = .07$, $p = .294$. Stage in the selection process did not significantly correlate with either perceived invasion of privacy, $r = .05$, $p = .510$, or with procedural justice perceptions, $r = .09$, $p = .204$. Therefore, the assumptions of moderated mediation were not met. A summary of correlations among all variables of interest is included in

Table 3. Correlations of Variables of Interest

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. SM Screening	-	-			
2. Stage	-	-	-.034		
3. Perceived Invasion of Privacy	2.63	1.10	.253**	.023	
4. Procedural Justice Perceptions	3.52	.65	.073	.088	-.505**

Therefore, to examine the potential interaction between SM screening and stage, a MANOVA was run instead of the moderated mediation analysis.

Assumptions of a MANOVA were also examined prior to analysis by checking for unequal sample sizes across groups, missing data, univariate and multivariate outliers, and examination of the variance-covariance matrices. Sample sizes were examined for both the main effects and interactions. For the main effect, sample size varied across groups, SM screening presence (N = 118) and SM screening absent (N = 90). When including stage in the selection process as a grouping variable, sample sizes varied slightly across groups, SM screening absent, pre-job offer group (N = 43), SM screening absent, post-job offer group (N = 47), SM screening present, pre-job offer group (N = 60), and SM screening present, post-job offer group (N = 58). Box's M test for homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices produced, $F(9, 35,8616.49) = 1.09, p = .366$, which supported homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices. Two missing values were found on perceived invasion of privacy in the SM screen, pre-offer group, one missing value was found on procedural justice perceptions in the SM screen,

pre-offer group, and one missing value was found on perceived invasion of privacy in the SM screen, post-offer group. An examination of the within cell standard deviations for all groups was examined and provides evidence for homogeneity of variance. This information is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Group Means and Standard Deviations across Outcome Variables

Group	PIOP			PJP		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	SD	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	SD
SM Screening Present	118	2.87	1.11	120	3.56	.70
SM Screening Absent	90	2.31	1.00	90	3.46	.58
SM Screen Present, Pre-Offer	60	2.80	1.07	61	3.44	.70
SM Screen Present, Post-Offer	58	2.93	1.16	59	3.67	.69
SM Screen Absent, Pre-Offer	43	2.32	1.14	43	3.48	.57
SM Screen Absent, Post Offer	47	2.30	.87	47	3.44	.60

Distributions for each group were examined to check for univariate outliers, with values in excess of ± 3.3 on a Z distribution considered outliers. No outliers were found, therefore this assumption was met. Further, all distributions approximated normal. Mahalanobis distance, 12.78, did not exceed the critical value, 13.82, indicating that there are no multivariate outliers and that the data met the assumption of multivariate normality. The assumption of linearity in the relationship between procedural justice perceptions and perceived invasion of privacy across each group was examined through visual inspection of scatterplots. Although, there were no distinct elliptical pattern across the plots, there did not appear to be any box-like shapes either, which would indicate

violation of the assumption of linearity. The assumption of non-multicollinearity was met, in that perceived invasion of privacy and procedural justice perceptions were significantly correlated, but not excessively, $r = .51$, $p < .001$.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 was supported. On average, participants in the SM screening presence group scored significantly higher on perceived invasion of privacy ($M = 2.87$, $SD = 1.11$), than those in the SM screening absence group ($M = 2.31$, $SD = 1.00$). This difference, $-.56$ 95% CI $[-.27, -.85]$, was significant, $t(206) = -3.75$, $p < .001$, representing a small effect size, $r = -.26$.

Hypothesis 2 was not supported. Participants in the SM screening presence post-offer group scored higher on procedural justice perceptions ($M = 3.67$, $SD = .69$), than those in the SM screening presence pre-offer group ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .70$). This difference, $-.23$ 95% CI $[-.48, .02]$, was not significant $t(118) = -1.83$, $p = .070$, representing a small effect size, $r = -0.16$.

Hypothesis 3 was not supported. The interaction effect of SM screen and stage on perceived invasion of privacy and procedural justice perceptions was explored using multivariate analysis of variance in lieu of moderated mediation. Using Pillai's Trace, there were no significant differences in the linear combination of perceived invasion of privacy and procedural justice perceptions by the interaction of SM screening and stage, $V = .018$, $F(2, 203) = 1.844$, $p = .161$. In examining the interaction of SM screening and stage on procedural justice perceptions and invasion of privacy separately, we see a similar trend.

There was no significant interaction effect of Stage and SM Screening on either perceived invasion of privacy, $F(1, 208) = .24, p = .628, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .001$, nor on procedural justice perceptions, $F(1, 209) = 2.16, p = .143, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .008$.

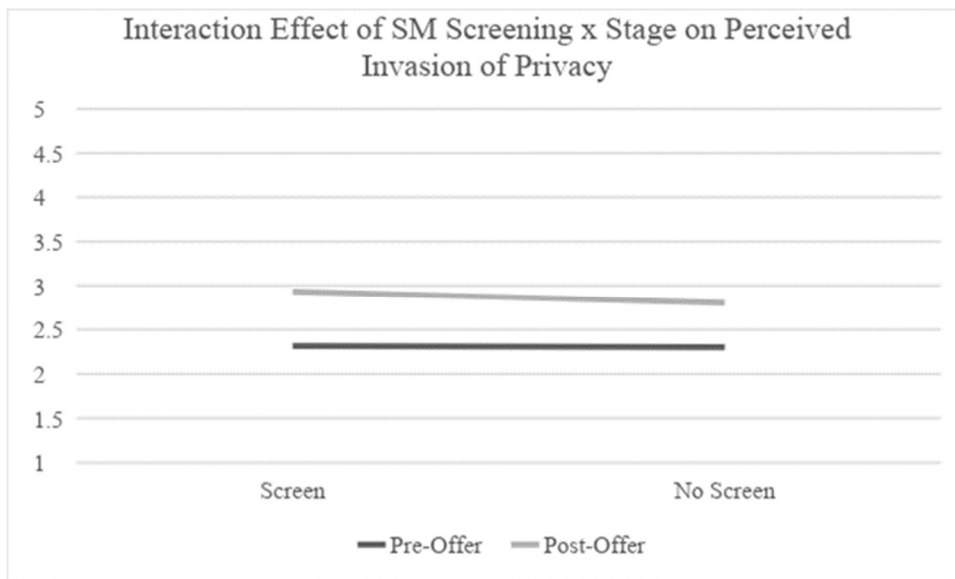


Figure 3. Interaction Effect of Social Media Screening and Stage on Perceived Invasion of Privacy

Hypothesis 4a was supported. Perceived invasion of privacy was a significant predictor of procedural justice perceptions, $b = -.30, 95\% \text{ CI } [-.37, -.23], \beta = -.51, t = -8.39, p < .001$. As perceived invasion of privacy increases, procedural justice perceptions decreases. Specifically, for every one-unit

increase in invasion of privacy, there is a .30 unit decrease in procedural justice perceptions.

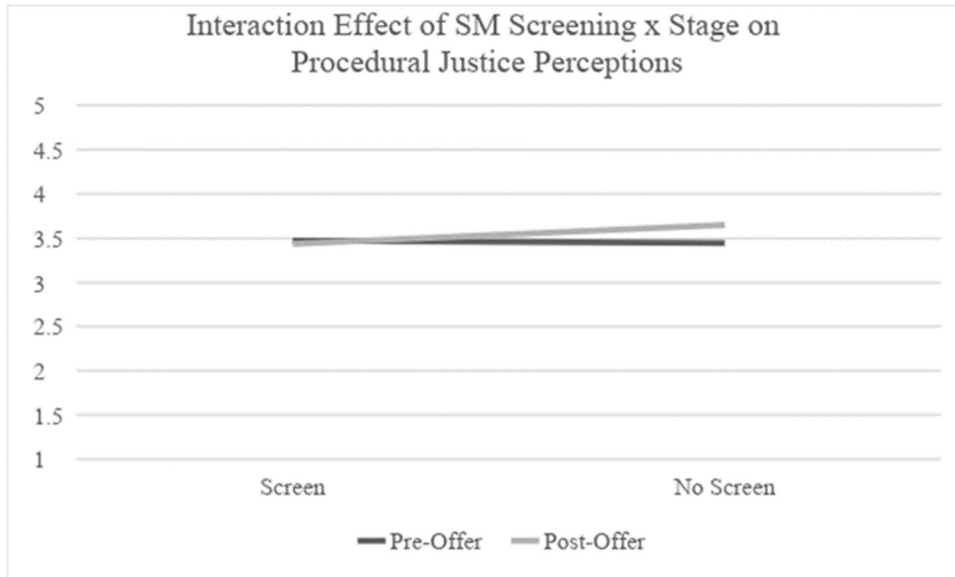


Figure 4. Interaction Effect of Social Media Screening and Stage on Procedural Justice Perceptions

Hypothesis 4b: The assumptions of a mediation analysis were not met; therefore, this hypothesis was not tested.

Ad-hoc Analyses

One additional t-test was computed to explore potential group differences on procedural justice perceptions between SM screening presence and absence groups, which was inadvertently overlooked in designing the hypotheses for the present study. Participants in the SM screening presence group scored higher on

procedural justice perceptions ($M = 3.56$, $SD = .70$), than those in the SM screening absence group ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .58$). This difference, $.10$ 95% CI $[-.08, .28]$, was not significant $t(110) = -1.05$, $p = .130$, representing a negligible effect, $r = -0.07$.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION

The intent of the present study was to examine applicant reactions to the use of SM screening as a tool in the selection process and to determine if applicant reactions, measured by invasion of privacy and procedural justice perceptions, varied depending on when in the selection process this SM screening occurred. Specifically, the present research answers a call to examine potential moderators of an existing model of SM screening and applicant reactions (Stoughton, 2016). Further, this research aimed to add to the body of knowledge which supports evidence-based human resources practices, particularly as they relate to the intersection of SM use and selection processes (Rousseau & Barends, 2011).

As hypothesized, the presence of SM screening did predict perceived invasion of privacy. These findings are consistent with previous research on the topic (Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015), which has found that collecting personal information in the screening process is among the most invasive of selection procedures (Stone-Romero, Stone, & Hyatt, 2003). If we view the selection process as an extension of recruiting, then organizations have an interest in ensuring their candidates perceive the process positively. The current research suggests that when SM screening is used in the selection process, and candidates are aware that it is taking place, they will feel that their privacy has been invaded, which could reflect poorly on the hiring organization. However, this

invasion of privacy did not in turn result in overall negative applicant reactions. Specifically, the presence or absence of SM screening did not have an impact on procedural justice perceptions. Further, there were no major group differences in procedural justice perceptions by stage in the selection process (pre- and post-conditional job offer). Another goal of the present study was to explore potential interaction effects of SM screening and stage in the selection process on procedural justice perceptions. In the current sample, no interaction effect was uncovered. Further, this study also explored potential interaction effects of SM screening and stage in the selection process on perceived invasion of privacy. However, once again, no interaction was detected.

Considering that the presence or absence of SM screening did impact perceived invasion of privacy, applicants may feel that it is an invasion of their personal privacy to examine their social media in the selection process, but may also feel that this screening is justifiable. McFarland and Ployhart (2015) put forward a robust theoretical model for the examination of the cross section between social media, technology, and the workplace that encourages examination of the contextual factors that lead to such cognitive assessments. Their model stresses the importance of considering how elements of the environment can explain differences in cognitive assessments, which are often not accounted for in applicant reactions research. Stoughton (2015) also stressed the importance of examining additional contextual factors, such as individual differences, selection system characteristics, and selection decision

outcomes. Evidence that justifiability of SM screening might vary based on contextual factors has been found. For example, Jeske and Shultz (in press) found that SM screening resulted in either an increase or decrease of job pursuit intentions, dependent upon job type. Specifically, when the job in question involved working with 'vulnerable others,' the SM screening process was considered permissive by the applicant.

Although legislators and policy makers have continued to push for increased privacy to the applicant, by making any selection procedure that collects highly confidential information occur after a conditional job offer has been made (Hopkins, 2018), the current study did not find support for this kind of action. In the current study, SM screening was perceived to be an invasion of privacy, likely due to the collection of personal information. However, from the applicants' perspective timing does not seem to matter, and at least when examining SM screening, it does not seem to impact procedural justice perceptions of this particular selection process. The lack of an interaction effect between SM screening and stage on either invasion of privacy or procedural justice perceptions is not particularly surprising considering that there were no group differences when examining them separately, except for SM screening on invasion of privacy. Being aware of these null results could certainly impact local government agencies and other policy makers, as it implies that there may be unnecessary obstacles being placed on organizations, when candidates for employment do not care either way. The real implication here is that candidates

do not like their social media being screened, and where it happens in the selection process did not matter. Therefore, placing requirements, such as those that exists for medical exams or background checks (ADA, 1990; ADA, 2008) may not be necessary.

Limitations / Future Research

One key limitation to the present study was that participants were not actual active job seekers, but instead were study participants tasked with imagining what it would be like to apply for a job. Further, self-report measures of a hypothesized event were used to measure the key study outcomes of perceived invasion of privacy and procedural justice perceptions. One way to improve upon this study would be to ethically utilize deception, perhaps by posting a real job, and collecting information on study variables at the same time as application information, so that study participants are actual job seekers, creating more salience to the scenario. However, when coupled with real-world limitations of such a study design, vignettes or hypothetical scenario-based research can provide useful insight beyond traditional survey methods. For example, Gould (1996) points out that the debate over the utility of vignette-based research goes back nearly a century and is now considered an accepted research method in the medical community (Evans, Roberts, Keeley, Blossom, Amaro, Garcia, & Reed, 2015), as long as a standard approach is taken to the development of the vignettes. Evans et al. point out that only those components of the vignette that are believed to represent the variable of interest should be

modified from one scenario to another, this recommendation was followed in the present study. Further, in a more recent meta-analysis, Hausknecht, Day, and Thomas (2004) found no consistent patterns in the differences of correlations between hypothetical and authentic research contexts, providing further evidence that vignette-based research is appropriate method for assessing actual human behavior.

Another limitation of the present study was that the theoretical basis was based on limited research across only a few studies (Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015; Stoughton, 2016), that were themselves very limited in nature, focusing only on SM screening and not the larger context within which that process exists. Considering that the only component of the model that was supported was that the presence of SM screening resulted in increased perceptions of invasion of privacy, it may well be that more robust models of communication systems and applicant reactions are needed in order to further explore SM screening in the selection process or at the very least, that the current model requires modification. For example, one's own personal sense of security or confidence in their ability to secure their on-line information may act as a moderator between perceived invasion of privacy and procedural justice perceptions. When asked if they do anything different with their social media when actively job searching, 122 study participants said they would not, while 55 of those stated that there is no need to do so, because they already keep everything related to social media private.

Another possible avenue for future research would be to examine applicant reactions to the use of social media screening under a completely different theoretical model, one that more fully accounts for the myriad of potential contextual and individual factors that could impact applicant reactions. Some scholars have suggested that traditional theoretical frameworks, such as those used to examine applicant reactions in traditional selection contexts and various theories of communication, may not appropriately apply to SM, especially when examining its use and utility in the workplace (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). Using the context framework proposed by Johns (2006), McFarland and Ployhart propose that social media communication exists on a continuum alongside all other types of communication, the Omnibus Context of communication. They also propose eight discrete ambient stimuli (categories of contextual factors) that impact communication via social media, which will mediate and explain how online communication impacts individual attitudes and behaviors. In the case of the present study, the individual attitudes and behaviors being explored were applicant reactions, while contextual variables were largely unexplored. These authors also point out an interesting potential explanation for differences in perceptions about the justifiability of SM screening, which future researchers should consider exploring. Specifically, they point out that with the rise of SM, not only do employers have greater access to the personal lives of job-seekers, but so too do job seekers have greater access and insight into the employer. On sites like Glassdoor, job-seekers can share their experiences

about an organization, including their personal experiences with the selection process of that organization.

McFarland and Ployhart (2015) point out that, integral to understanding human behavior and cognition, we must seek out information regarding the individual as well as the context. Understanding the situation surrounding any given communication, as well as individual differences across people, will be quintessential to understanding the reasoning behind thoughts and actions. For example, both the results of the present study and recent empirical research has shown that applicants who were led to believe their SM had been screened as part of the selection process perceived this act to be an invasion of their personal privacy (Jeske & Shultz, in press; Stoughton et al., 2015). However, current models do not provide much insight into why that is the case, nor do they explain the anomalous results of the present study, specifically the lack of any group differences on procedural justice perceptions. What is it about social media platforms and about the people using them that leads individuals to this conclusion of an invasion of privacy? Future research in this area should consider incorporating the framework brought forth by McFarland and Ployhart (2015) in order to better explain why applicants may or may not be accepting of SM screening as a selection tool.

Theoretical Implications

Traditional models of applicant reactions used to examine reactions to assessments and other more commonplace selection tools do not easily

translate to social media and the online world. As mentioned in the previous discussion, future research should explore the contextual framework proposed by McFarland and Ployhart (2015) as a starting point to examining and explaining factors that impact a person's reaction to the use of SM in the selection process, or attitudes and beliefs related to any cross-section of human resources and social media or online communication. Framing an inquiry, such as those explored in the present study, from within the context of a broader research model provides insight into more appropriate variables of interest. The presence of a job offer is just one of many potential contextual variables that could be categorized into one of the eight broader topics proposed in the model: physicality, accessibility, latency, interdependence, synchronicity, permanence, verifiability, and anonymity. Those contextual variables that might be especially relevant to SM screening and selection include, permanence, verifiability, and anonymity. In SM contexts, permanence refers to the length of time content lives on a social media site, which could very well be indefinitely. This varies greatly from face to face permanence, in which there is likely no record of events outside of human memory. Verifiability refers to, "the extent to which content can be checked or reviewed" (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015, p. 1659). And finally, anonymity refers to the extent to which a person can be identified.

Further, the present study did not support the model of applicant reactions to SM screening proposed by Stoughton and colleagues (2015). However, the practice of SM screening did result in increased perceived invasion of privacy,

which is a pattern that has been found across multiple studies on the topic (Jeske & Shultz, in press; Stoughton, 2016; Stoughton et al., 2015; Stoughton et al., 2013; Stoughton, 2011). Although not explored in the current study, there could potentially be specific contextual cues regarding the platform's that participants were told to consider in the present study as compared to LinkedIn and other SM platforms used in professional environments (e.g., Slack, Microsoft Teams, etc.). Without directly comparing one product or service to another, the model proposed by McFarland and Ployhart (2015) could prove useful in exploring the differences between leisure focused and professionally focused social media and whether those factors then have an impact on employee and applicant attitudes and behaviors toward an organization.

Practical Implications

Considering the state of SM screening and the selection process, there are several insights that could be useful for employers. Firstly, there are still many unknowns regarding the legal landscape of using SM screening as a tool in selection (Jeske & Shultz, 2016; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Second, there is risk involved for increased adverse impact claims anytime an organization enacts new selection practices. Therefore, not having sufficient validity and reliability data to support the practice could put an employer at risk. Further, researchers don't yet understand important issues that can impact the design of SM screening tools, such as level of impression management across various protected classes (Roulin & Levashina, 2016). Currently, researchers are trying

to understand what drives both people and organizations to use SM (Weidner, O'Brien, & Wynne, 2016). In addition to all of this, what is known based on applicant reactions research into SM screening is that, generally speaking, applicants find SM screening in the selection process to be an invasion of their privacy. Knowing that applicants may view a hiring organization negatively and without additional information about what drives usage and the job-relevance of such practices, it is difficult to gauge the true risk involved. Employers should avoid any selection tool that would potentially give them access to protected information early-on in the selection process, one of such practices being SM screening.

Incorporating the use of SM into other areas, such as outreach and recruiting efforts, may be more appropriate given our current state of knowledge. Landers and Schmidt (2016b) point out that without both a standard policy and approach to SM screening and sufficient validity and reliability data to support job-relevance, organizations utilizing such practices may be putting themselves at risk. Further, even if a standard policy were put in place, SM platforms may change on a regular basis. This could hinder an organization's ability to ensure a standardized process. It is likely in the best interest of hiring organizations to avoid SM screening in order to maintain a positive outward facing image. However, Roulin and Levashina (in press) recently explored the reliability and validity of a screening approach using LinkedIn profiles, referred to broadly as professional social media, for employment purposes. Considering that many

organizations today are already using LinkedIn to source and screen applicants, the results of this study are promising. Specifically, they found evaluator ratings of visible skills (e.g., leadership, planning, communication) to be consistent with self-rating of skills, and personality traits and overall cognitive ability to be consistent with objective measures. Further, this study found little to no potential for adverse impact among their sample when exploring gender, ethnicity, and country of residence. Organizations should remain cautious as this trend (little to no risk for adverse impact) could differ by industry and job type and further research is likely needed.

Overall, organizations already utilizing LinkedIn to source and screen applicants should consider tracking applicant demographic data and flow statistics in order to monitor the potential for adverse impact. Information gleaned from such analysis would be useful for augmenting the overall selection process as needed for legal compliance. Hiring organizations should avoid the screening of non-professional SM altogether. Regardless of approach, ensuring standardization of the process is key. Roulin and Levashina (in press) found that itemized assessments of LinkedIn profiles resulted in no significant rating differences between white and non-white applicants, as compared to global assessments. Further, any SM screening should be a single step in a larger selection process, which incorporates well-established selection tools, such as job-specific predictive assessments and structured interviews into the selection processes.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to explore applicant reactions to the use of social media screening in the selection process and to explore whether the presence or absence of a conditional job offer had any impact on those relationships. Overall, it was found that while applicants do perceive SM screening to be an invasion of their personal privacy, they do not necessarily see it as unjust, further, the presence or absence of a conditional job offer did not impact this relationship in any way. Further, regardless of how applicants feel about SM screening, the practice does open organizations to risk by potentially exposing recruiters and hiring managers to protected class information when they are not privy to such information. Therefore, it is in the best interest of organizations both from a talent attraction and risk aversion perspective to avoid utilizing SM screening as a selection tool. Ideally, future researchers should explore the potential differences between professional SM versus all other SM to better understand application expectations and reactions about their inclusion in the selection process. There might be an expectation or anticipation that LinkedIn or other similar SM would be viewed by someone in the hiring organization at some point during the selection process, and therefore job-seekers might welcome that behavior. The model proposed by McFarland and Ployhart (2015) provides a fantastic framework for exploring the contextual differences in these platforms (rather than the platforms themselves, which are ever-evolving) and

how they might lead applicants to different cognitive assessments regarding their use.

APPENDIX A
MEASURES

Invasion of Privacy (Alge, 2001; Tolchinsky et al., 1981)

Please read each statement carefully and then use the rating scale below to indicate the extent to which the various statements describe you.

- 1 = very inaccurate
- 2 = somewhat inaccurate
- 3 = neither accurate nor inaccurate
- 4 = somewhat accurate
- 5 = very accurate

1. It was acceptable for the organization to collect the information that it did during the selection process. ^a
2. It was not necessary for the organization to collect the information it did when deciding who to hire.
3. I felt comfortable with the personal information the hiring organization collected. _a
4. I felt like the manner in which I was screened for employment was an invasion of my privacy.
5. I feel that the information being collected by the organization is none of anybody's business but my own.

^a reverse scored items.

Selection Procedural Justice Scale (Bauer et al., 2001)

The following items measure your reactions to “the selection system” – that is, the process the organization used to decide who to hire. Questions about “the hiring organization” refer to the Corporation X.

Using the scale below as a guide, indicate for each statement how much you feel you agree or disagree with the statement.

- 1 = strongly agree
- 2 = disagree
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = agree
- 5 = strongly agree

Social Higher-Order Factor

Consistency

1. The selection system was administered to all applicants in the same way.
2. There were no differences in the way different applicants were assessed.

Honestly (Openness)

1. I was treated honestly and openly during the selection process.
2. The hiring organization did not try to hide anything from me during the selection process.

Treatment

1. I was treated politely during the selection process.
2. The hiring organization was considerate during the selection process.
3. The hiring organization treated applicants with respect.
4. The hiring organization put me at ease during this selection procedure.
5. I was satisfied with my treatment during the selection process.

Two-way Communication

1. There was enough communication during the selection process.
2. I was able to ask questions about the selection process.
3. I am satisfied with the communication that occurred during the selection process.
4. I would have felt comfortable asking questions about the hiring process if I had any.
5. I was comfortable with the idea of expressing my concerns about the selection process.

Propriety of Questions

1. The content of the assessment did not appear to be prejudiced.
2. The selection process itself did not seem to personal or private.
3. The content of the selection process seemed appropriate.

Demographic Information

Gender:

Male Female Other

Ethnicity:

Asian
African American
White/Caucasian
Middle Eastern
American Indian
Hispanic/Latino
Other

Age: _____

Job Type:

Which of the following options best reflects your current job? Please select only one.

Currently seeking work
Customer service
Administrative support
Professional specialty
Managerial
Executive
Technical
Sales
Intern
Other

Education Level:

Please choose the option that best described your education level:

Less than High School
High School Diploma
Some College
Associate or Vocational Degree
Bachelor's
Master's (MA/MS)

Professional Degree (MD, JD)

Doctorate (Ph. D. / Ed.D.)

Careless Response Checks

The following items will be dispersed throughout the survey to check for careless response patterns of participants.

“If you are reading this item, please respond with Very Inaccurate”.

“If you are reading this item, please response with Strongly Agree”.

Internet Knowledge Questionnaire (Potosky, 2007)

Please read each statement carefully, and then use the rating scale below to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

- 1 = strongly disagree
- 2 = somewhat disagree
- 3 = neither agree nor disagree
- 4 = somewhat agree
- 5 = strongly agree

1. When a computer problem occurs while I am using the internet, I usually know how to fix the problem.
2. I know how to create a website.
3. I know some good way to avoid computer viruses.
4. I am familiar with html.
5. I know how to enable and disable cookies on my computer.
6. I am able to download a “plug-in” when one is recommended in order to view or access something on the Internet.
7. I can usually fix any problems I encounter when using the Internet.
8. I help others who are learning to use the Internet.
9. I download and install software updated from the Internet when necessary.
10. I regularly update my virus protection software.
11. I can design a nice background and/or signature for the email messages I sent.
12. I know what a browser is.
13. I have changed the settings or preferences on my computer that pertain to my Internet access.
14. Which of the following social networking websites do you use on a regular basis? (check all that apply). For social networking sites used, please indicate the frequency of use, using the following scale:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Less than once per month
- 3 = Several times a month
- 4 = Several times a week
- 5 = Several times a day
- 6 = Several times an hour
- 7 = All the time

- a. Facebook
 - i. If yes, how often?
- b. MySpace
 - i. If yes, how often?
- c. LinkedIn

- i. If yes, how often?
- d. Twitter
 - i. If yes, how often?
- e. Instagram
 - i. If yes, how often?
- f. Snapchat
 - i. If yes, how often?
- g. Other (please specify) _____
 - i. If yes, how often?
- h. I do not use social networking websites

Social Media Content Check (Stoughton, 2011)

- 1 = never
- 2 = seldom
- 3 = sometimes
- 4 = often
- 5 = very often

Think about the personal social networking website(s) that you use (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram). Using the above scale as a guide, when posting to your own social networking website(s) during the past year, how often have you:

1. used profanity
2. made comments some people might consider racist?
3. made comments some people might consider sexist?
4. made negative comments about members of a particular religious group?
5. made comments some people might consider anti-gay?
6. made sexual references?
7. posted photos or videos of yourself, which some people would consider unprofessional?
8. posted photos of yourself drinking alcohol?
9. posted photos of yourself using illegal drugs?
10. posted photos of your friends drinking alcohol?
11. posted photos of your friends using illegal drugs?
12. made references to yourself using alcohol?
13. made references to yourself using illegal drugs?
14. criticized your employer or professors?
15. criticized your coworkers or classmates?

Again, using the scale above as a guide, when posting to your social networking website(s) during the past year, how often have your friends:

16. used profanity?
17. made comments some people might consider racist?
18. made comments some people might consider sexist?
19. made negative comments about members of a particular religious group?
20. made comments some people might consider anti-gay?
21. made sexual references?
22. posted photos or videos of you, which some people would consider unprofessional?
23. posted photos of you drinking alcohol?
24. posted photos of you using illegal drugs?
25. made references to your use of alcohol?
26. made references to your use of illegal drugs?

APPENDIX B
PARTICIPANT INVITATION

Hello,

My name is Ashley Gomez and I am a current graduate student in the Master's of Science in Industrial/Organizational Psychology program at California State University, San Bernardino. I would like to invite you to participate in my study by taking a ten minute online survey. This study involves concepts surrounding the use of social media technologies in the selection process. Participants should be over the age of 18 years old and have experience applying for jobs.

I would really appreciate your time and value your participation in my study. It is expected that this survey will only take approximately ten minutes to complete.

Responses to this survey will be kept anonymous and confidential. No personally identifiable information will be requested. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw from the study at any time.

Please click on the link below to be directed to the survey:

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding this study. I can be reached at: ashlg309@coyote.csusb.edu

Once again, thank you so much for your time and participation.

APPENDIX C
SELECTION SCENARIOS

Pre-Offer, No SM Screen:

Several weeks after submitting your application for employment with X Corporation, you receive the following email:

Thank you for applying for a position with X Corporation. You were chosen as a finalist for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application and résumé.

The next step of the selection process involves setting up a time to interview. The hiring manager should be reaching out to you in the next several days to schedule an interview. Should you be provided an offer of employment after your interview, we will be in contact with you to schedule a time for your medical clearance and fill out paperwork for the background investigation. This process includes a drug screening and criminal records check.

Pre-Offer, SM Screen:

Several weeks after submitting your application for employment with X Corporation, you receive the following email:

Thank you for applying for a position with X Corporation. You were chosen as a finalist for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application and résumé. Further, in order to corroborate information provided on your résumé and application, human resources examined the social media profiles through the use of an open web search for all finalists, such as yourself. A lack of social media profiles, such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn did not disqualify any candidates, only the presence of disqualifying information.

The next step of the selection process involves setting up a time to interview. The hiring manager should be reaching out to you in the next several days to schedule an interview. Should you be provided an offer of employment after your interview, we will be in contact with you to schedule a time for your medical clearance and fill out paperwork for the background investigation. This process includes a drug screening and criminal records check.

Post-Offer, No SM Screen:

Several weeks after submitting your application for employment with X Corporation, you receive the following email:

Thank you for interviewing for a position with X Corporation. You are the selected candidate for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application, résumé, and successful completion of a pre-employment interview.

Now that you have successfully completed all stages in the selection process, we will need to schedule a time for you to come in for your medical clearance appointment. Upon successful completion of your medical clearance, we will have you fill out paperwork in order to conduct a background investigation. This process includes a criminal records check.

Post-Offer, SM Screen:

Several weeks after submitting your application for employment with X Corporation, you receive the following email:

Thank you for applying for a position with X Corporation. You were chosen as a finalist for this position. Congratulations! This decision was made after careful review of your application and résumé.

The next step of the selection process involves setting up a time to interview. The hiring manager should be reaching out to you in the next several days to schedule an interview. Should you be provided an offer of employment after your interview, we will be in contact with you to schedule a time for your medical clearance and fill out paperwork for the background investigation. This process includes a drug screening, a criminal records check, and an examination of your social media profiles. Human resources will examine the social media profiles through the use of an open web search for all individuals given a conditional offer of employment, such as yourself. This final screening process is intended to corroborate information obtained throughout the selection process and assess professionalism.

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