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Attracting Applicants Through the Organization's Social Media Page: Signaling Employer Brand Personality

Marieke Carpentier[a], Greet Van Hoye[a], and Bert Weijters[b]

Ghent University, Belgium

Author Note

[a] Department of Marketing, Innovation, and Organisation, Ghent University, Belgium. Marieke.Carpentier@UGent.be, Greet.VanHoye@UGent.be

[b] Bert Weijters, Department of Personnel Management, Work and Organizational Psychology, Ghent University, Belgium. Bert.Weijters@UGent.be

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Marieke Carpentier, Department of Marketing, Innovation, and Organisation, Ghent University, Tweekerkenstraat 2, 9000 Ghent, Belgium. Phone: +32-488-98-41-06, e-mail: Marieke.Carpentier@UGent.be.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine how potential applicants' exposure to an organization's social media page relates to their subsequent organizational attractiveness perceptions and word-of-mouth intentions. Based on signaling theory and the theory of symbolic attraction, we propose that potential applicants rely on perceived communication characteristics of the social media page (social presence and informativeness) as signals of the organization's employer brand personality (warmth and competence), which in turn relate to organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth. Data were gathered in a simulated job search process in which final-year students looked for an actual job posting and later visited an actual organization's social media page. In line with our hypotheses, results show that the perceived social presence of a social media page was indirectly positively related to attractiveness and word-of-mouth through its positive association with perceived organizational warmth. Perceived informativeness was indirectly positively related to these outcomes through its positive association with perceived organizational competence. In addition, we found that social presence was also directly positively related to organizational attractiveness. These findings suggest that organizations can use social media pages to manage key recruitment outcomes by signaling their employer brand personality.

Keywords: recruitment, social media, employer brand personality, organisational attractiveness, word-of-mouth.

Attracting Applicants Through Social Media: Signaling Employer Brand Personality

It has become increasingly difficult for many organizations to recruit the human capital needed to realize their strategy. Due to several trends, such as the population aging and the shift towards a knowledge economy, the competition to attract employees with specific skills and knowledge has risen markedly (Ployhart, Schmitt, & Tippins, 2017). Maintaining a positive employer image has become pivotal and organizations increasingly monitor what is being said about them, for instance on employer review sites (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Consequently, the need to understand how to attract applicants and influence word-of-mouth has increased sharply (Ployhart et al., 2017; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009).

With the emergence of social media, many organizations have created social media pages on which they present their organization, products, brands, and through which they communicate with different stakeholders (Etter, 2017; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015; Neill & Moody, 2015; SHRM, 2016). Because the majority of job seekers (both active and passive) use these platforms, organizations' social media pages seem to be promising devices for recruitment (Adecco, 2015). Moreover, organizations can use social media not only to directly attract applicants, but also to stimulate positive word-of-mouth (SHRM, 2016).

Notwithstanding the widespread use of social media both by organizations and by potential applicants, we know little about its effects on potential applicants' attitudes and intentions towards potential employers and about how these effects take place (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). So far, only a few studies investigated the use of social media as tools to attract potential applicants. Although these studies provide initial evidence that exposure to information about an employer on social media can positively affect potential applicants' perceptions of the organization (Carpentier et al., 2017; Sivertzen, Nilsen, & Olafsen, 2013), we do not yet know

how these effects unfold and can be influenced.

Hence, this paper investigates (a) processes through which a company's social media page relates to potential applicants' perceptions of organizational attractiveness and intentions to spread word-of-mouth, and (b) the role of perceived social media page communication characteristics in these processes. We thus focus on the underlying mechanisms explaining which social media pages are likely to be most effective and why. To this end we rely on signaling theory and the theory of symbolic attraction (Highhouse, Thornbury, & Little, 2007; Spence, 1973).

On the basis of signaling theory (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011; Spence, 1973), we propose that potential applicants interpret an organization's social media page as providing signals of what it would be like to work for that organization. These perceptions, in turn, are expected to influence perceptions of the employer brand personality (Slaughter, Zickar, Highhouse, & Mohr, 2004). Notably, we propose that potential applicants will rely on two specific perceived communication characteristics of the social media page to make inferences of two employer brand personality dimensions (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). We hypothesize that perceived social presence will signal organizational warmth and that perceived informativeness will signal organizational competence.

Further, in line with the theory of symbolic attraction (Highhouse et al., 2007), we propose that perceived organizational warmth and competence induced by exposure to social media page will positively relate to increased organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions. Consequently, we propose that the characteristics of a specific social media page will be indirectly positively related to organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions, through their association with signals of employer brand personality (Connelly et al., 2011).

Since we want to take into account how seeing the organization's social media page changes potential applicants' perceptions of actual organizations, we control for initial perceptions before exposure to the social media page.

To summarize, social media are being used for recruitment and job search by many organizations and job seekers, but we do not know how exposure to social media pages influences potential applicants' organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions. This study fills in this gap by examining the mechanisms underlying the effects of organization's social media pages on potential applicants' perceptions. To this end, we apply insights from signaling theory and the theory of symbolic attraction. Understanding the mechanisms through which social media pages affect potential applicants provides insights into when and how social media can be most beneficial for employers. Such knowledge may allow organizations to better leverage social media for recruitment and employer branding purposes.

Literature Review and Hypotheses

The literature review is structured as follows. First, we discuss social media and the existing research on the use of social media for recruitment. Next, we introduce signaling theory, which is used to explain how potential applicants interpret perceived communication characteristics of social media pages as providing signals about an employer. Further, we discuss employer brand personality and the dimensions warmth and competence. Subsequently, the social media page communication characteristics (i.e., informativeness and social presence) are introduced and we propose two hypotheses, based on signaling theory, linking the perceptions of these characteristics to inferences of competence and warmth. Finally, we discuss the study's outcome variables, attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions, and propose a positive relation between competence and warmth and these outcome variables based on the theory of symbolic

attraction and signaling theory. Table 1 provides an overview of all study's hypotheses.

Social Media and Recruitment

Social media are digital platforms on which users can connect with other users, generate and distribute content, and engage in interactive communication (Boyd & Ellison, 2007; McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). The amount of social media users has increased sharply during the past decade. Facebook and LinkedIn are the two platforms that are used most often for job search and recruitment (Adecco, 2015; Nikolaou, 2014). In June 2018, Facebook had 2.23 billion monthly active users (Facebook, 2018). LinkedIn does not communicate the number of monthly users, but states it has more than 575 million members (LinkedIn, 2018). Social media have the potential to reshape human resource activities, including recruitment (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015).

Many organizations are already investing resources in social media for employer branding and recruitment purposes (SHRM, 2016). Social media are unique settings which give rise to different modes and norms of interaction (Etter, 2017; Papacharissi, 2009). However, little is known about the effects of social media in a recruitment context, so it is not clear whether these social media expenditures are a wise investment. Initial empirical evidence in this domain shows that information about the organization on social media can influence potential applicants' perceptions of an organization (Frasca & Edwards, 2017). For example, Sivertzen et al. (2013) found that people who reported having seen information about the organization on social media, had a more positive perception of corporate reputation. In another study, Kissel and Büttgen (2015) showed that the perceived available information about an organization on social media was positively related with perceptions of corporate image, which in turn was positively associated with employer attractiveness. Further, a study by Carpentier et al. (2017) indicated

that exposure to an organization's Facebook page had a positive influence on employer image and organizational attractiveness. Thus, research so far indicates that exposure to company information on social media can positively influence corporate reputation, corporate image, employer image, and organizational attractiveness. However, we do not yet know much about what underlying mechanisms explain these effects and what characteristics make social media pages effective. The main aim of the current study is to understand the mechanisms underlying the effect of social media on potential applicants' perceptions of organizational attractiveness and intentions to spread word-of-mouth. To examine how potential applicants process information on organizations' social media pages, we rely on *signaling theory* and propose that people use social media pages to infer signals of employer brand personality.

Signaling Theory

Signaling theory is one of the dominant paradigms in recruitment research (Uggerslev, Fassina, & Kraichy, 2012) and is typically applied to explain how recruitment activities can influence potential applicants' perceptions of an organization (e.g., Rynes, Bretz, & Gerhart, 1991; Turban, 2001). Central to signaling theory is information asymmetry (Connelly et al., 2011). Job seekers want to know what it is like to work at an organization to decide whether to apply to or accept a job offer from it (Turban, 2001), but they generally have incomplete knowledge. Hence, information they read, hear, or see related to an organization, is interpreted as providing signals about characteristics of the organization (Uggerslev et al., 2012).

Based on signaling theory, we propose that potential applicants will use an organization's social media page to derive signals about what the organization is like as an employer, which will influence their attitudes and intentions towards the organization (Slaughter et al., 2004). Previous research has described two categories of perceived characteristics of employers:

instrumental and symbolic dimensions (e.g., Lievens & Highhouse, 2003). Instrumental dimensions are perceptions of functional characteristics such as wages and location. Symbolic dimensions concern intangible attributes such as competence, prestige, and sincerity. Although potential applicants' attraction to an organization is influenced by both type of dimensions, research indicates that organizations can more easily differentiate themselves from competitors on the basis of symbolic characteristics (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003).

Furthermore, recruitment sources are likely to differ in the extent to which they can be used to assess each type of characteristics. While certain sources, such as the job vacancy and the company website, may be more useful to assess instrumental attributes, we propose that applicants will especially use organization's social media pages to derive symbolic organizational characteristics. Social media are more interactive and open communication channels (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015), which might allow people to more easily infer symbolic organizational attributes. For example, potential applicants may look at the way an organization communicates with the public and the kind of information they share to derive what the employer's traits are. This study thus focuses on symbolic attributes and proposes that applicants use an organization's social media page to assess its *employer brand personality*.

Employer Brand Personality

Employer brand personality is the set of symbolic attributes that are associated with a certain employer (Slaughter et al., 2004). It concerns the individual's perceptions of the organization's subjective characteristics (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). These subjective characteristics are similar to the personality traits of humans, hence the term *employer brand personality* is used (Slaughter et al., 2004). Scholars propose that employer brand personality provides applicants with signals of what it would be like to work in the organization (Lievens &

Slaughter, 2016). Several studies have examined potential applicants' perceptions of symbolic employer attributes and applied various frameworks and variables to conceptualize employer brand personality. Examples of specific characteristics that have been included in research are the perceptions of the organization's sincerity, trustworthiness, cheerfulness, prestige, and competence (Kausel & Slaughter, 2011; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens, Van Hoye, & Anseel, 2007; Van Hoye, 2008). Because of these various frameworks, opportunities to generalize findings to other settings may be overlooked.

To facilitate the identification of communalities, Lievens and Slaughter (2016) suggested that perceptions of organizational warmth and competence can serve as meta-dimensions of employer brand personality inferences. These two dimensions originate from human interaction research, in which scholars found that people use two universal dimensions when they judge other people or groups (Cuddy, Glick, & Beninger, 2011; Fiske, Cuddy, Glick, & Xu, 2002). Perceptions of warmth concern whether the other party has positive intentions and goals. Perceptions of competence concern the ability to act on these intentions and to reach these goals.

Scholars found that warmth and competence dimensions play an important role in different domains, such as stereotyping, automatic evaluation of faces, leadership styles, and consumer behavior (Cuddy et al., 2011). When consumers judge a brand, they make inferences about how warm and competent the brand is, which relates to different emotional and behavioral reactions, such as brand loyalty or purchase intentions (Aaker, Vohs, & Mogilner, 2010; Cuddy, Fiske, & Glick, 2007; Kervyn, Fiske, & Malone, 2012). Previous recruitment research has successfully applied marketing concepts and theories to better understand recruitment processes (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Similar to how consumers develop perceptions of brands' warmth and competence, potential applicants are proposed to develop perceptions of employers' warmth

and competence. Research has found that during a recruitment interview, applicants' inferences of recruiter warmth and competence influence their perceptions of the hiring organization (Schreurs et al., 2005; Uggerslev et al., 2012). Furthermore, certain dimensions used in previous recruitment research to capture organization personality perceptions are either conceptually similar to warmth (e.g., sincerity and cheerfulness) or to competence (e.g., competence and prestige; Cable & Yu, 2006; Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens, Van Hoye, & Schreurs, 2005). Accordingly, we conceptualize a warm organization as a friendly organization that has positive intentions and goals towards others and has high morals (Fiske et al., 2007; Kervyn et al., 2014; Maehle, Otnes, & Supphellen, 2011). A competent organization is conceptualized as an organization that is intelligent, efficient, prestigious, and is well-known for its ability to reach its goals (Fiske et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2002; Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003).

Based on signaling theory we expect that potential applicants derive signals of employer brand personality from an organization's social media. Specifically, potential applicants will use particular *perceived communication characteristics of a social media page* to create perceptions of organizational warmth and competence.

Social Media Page Communication Characteristics

Social information processing literature shows that in online communication, people rely on informational cues and other available cues in order to shape impressions of the person or entity that they are communicating with (Lim & Van Der Heide, 2015; Walther & Parks, 2002). In a recruitment context, research has found that communication features of recruitment sources such as websites influence attitudes and intentions toward an organization as a potential employer (Allen, Scotter, & Otondo, 2004). Social media, however, represent a different context from these more traditional recruitment communication channels (Papacharissi, 2009). For

example, social media provide more opportunities to share information to a larger audience, they allow for interaction, they are more easily accessible, and their content is more permanent (McFarland & Ployhart, 2015). Therefore, we do not know whether and how communication characteristics studied in previous recruitment research influence perceptions in a social media context. This study focuses on two communication characteristics relevant to a social media context: social presence and informativeness. Social interaction and searching for information are two of the main reasons why people use social media (Azar, Machado, Vacas-de-Carvalho, & Mendes, 2016; Gao & Feng, 2016).

Social presence is defined as the awareness of communicating with another person or entity and has been conceptualized as the extent to which the communication is perceived as personal, friendly, and sociable (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). The initial purpose of social media was to build and maintain social contacts (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), which is likely to influence how people communicate on these platforms. People might therefore expect the communication style on a social media page to be rather informal, interactive, and personal. In other words, they might expect that pages portray a certain level of social presence (Carpentier et al., 2017). Based on signaling theory, an organization's social media page that portrays higher levels of social presence, might lead people to infer that the organization itself is more friendly, has high morals and good intentions, which results in improved perceptions of organizational warmth. For example, imagine a potential applicant who sees a page on which the organization answers peoples' questions in a friendly way, or frequently posts personal anecdotes about employees, accordingly this person might be inclined to think the organization has good intentions and is a warm place to work. In contrast, imagine that a job seeker sees a page on which the posts are quite aloof and distant, this might result in the perception of the organization

as being more distant and a cold place to work. Accordingly, we hypothesize that after viewing a social media page higher in social presence, the organization will be perceived as higher in warmth.

Hypothesis 1: The perceived social presence of a social media page will relate positively to perceived organizational warmth.

The second communication characteristic included in this study is informativeness. We define informativeness as the relevance and usefulness of given information for potential applicants who want to evaluate the organization as an employer (Breaugh & Starke, 2000; Ryan, Horvath & Kriska, 2005; Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). Empirical evidence shows that recruitment sources' informativeness positively influences potential applicants' attitudes towards organizations (Ryan, Horvath, & Kriska, 2005; Williamson, Lepak, & King, 2003). People pay attention to information adequacy, especially if there is little information available (Barber & Roehling, 1993). Since social media pages are tailored for posting short messages rather than elaborated texts, information adequacy might play an important role in managing people's perceptions in a social media context.

In this study, we rely on signaling theory to propose that potential applicants use the perceived informativeness of an organization's social media page to infer organizational competence. Williamson et al. (2003) suggested that the usefulness of information on a web site influences potential applicants' perceptions of a company's quality. In a qualitative study, Barber and Roehling (1993) found indications that job seekers perceive job advertisements with little relevant information as an indicator of "sloppy, disinterested recruiting practices" (p. 853), which might influence the perception of overall organizational competence. For example, imagine a person who is looking for information about a potential employer on social media to

decide whether this would be a good place to work. When she can easily find useful information, the organization is able to fulfill her needs for specific information, resulting in improved perceptions. The organization may be perceived as capable of providing the right information on the right place (i.e., knows how to manage its communication). This might reflect on the organization as being more efficient, prestigious, intelligent, and better able to reach its goals, thus more competent. However, an organization that provides rather irrelevant or vague information may generate perceptions of the organization as being less competent overall. Accordingly, we propose that informativeness will relate to the strength of the social media page's signal of competence, in the sense that organizations will be viewed as more competent after seeing a more informative social media page.

Hypothesis 2: The perceived informativeness of a social media page will relate positively to perceived organizational competence.

In the next section, we discuss *organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions* and describe how organizational warmth and competence relate to these important recruitment outcomes. Additionally, we argue that the communication characteristics social presence and informativeness will indirectly relate to these outcomes through their association with respectively warmth and competence.

Organizational Attractiveness and Word-of-Mouth Intentions

As described before, based on signaling theory we expect that an organization's social media page characteristics influence applicants' inferences about the organization's warmth and competence. These signals allow applicants to form an impression of what it is like to work for this organization, which will influence their perceived attractiveness of the organization as an employer (Cable & Turban, 2001).

To understand the relation between employer brand personality and organizational attractiveness, Highhouse et al. (2007) draw on a functionalist approach of attitudes to develop a theory of symbolic attraction. They propose that attraction to employer brand personality dimensions of a firm might be explained by the idea that such symbolic features allow job seekers (and employees) to communicate to others how they want to be perceived. Thus job seekers' attitude towards or choice for an organization as a potential employer may help people to express themselves and/or to acquire social approval (Katz, 1960). Specifically, Highhouse et al. (2007) proposed that attitudes towards a potential employer may serve two psychological needs: social adjustment and value expression. Social adjustment concerns relate to the need for approval of significant others (as this will influence self-esteem; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). Value expression concerns relate to the need to express one's self-concept ("we find reward in the expression of any attributes associated with our egos", Katz, 1960, p. 173). From a broader perspective, the theory of symbolic attraction builds on the social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) according to which affiliation to groups are an important part of one's identity and may help people to enhance their self-esteem. Accordingly, one's employer can be an important part of one's identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Hence, working for a competent or warm organization may be attractive to potential applicants because they believe that this will help them gain others' approval or because it helps them to express certain values. However, potential applicants may distance themselves from an organization that is perceived as incompetent and/or cold because they might fear it could negatively reflect on their self-concepts (Banks, Kepes, Joshi, & Seers, 2015).

In line with these theoretical assumptions, previous research found that the symbolic dimensions sincerity and cheerfulness (which are conceptually similar to warmth) and the

dimensions prestige and competence (conceptually similar to the organization's ability or competence) positively related to potential applicants' perceptions of organizational attractiveness (Lievens et al., 2005; Slaughter & Greguras, 2009; Slaughter et al., 2004; Van Hoye, 2008). Consequently, based on the theory of symbolic attraction and signaling theory, we expect that an employer's social media page that is perceived as signaling higher levels of warmth and/or competence, will be perceived as a more attractive place to work.

Hypothesis 3: Perceived organizational (a) warmth and (b) competence after seeing an organization's social media page will relate positively to organizational attractiveness.

Further, we propose that when potential applicants derive favorable signals of warmth and competence from an organization's social media page, they will perceive that it is a good place to work in general (not only for themselves) and will be more willing to also recommend the organization to friends, family, or others in order to help them find good employment (Connelly et al., 2011; Van Hoye, 2013). Thus, besides organizational attractiveness, brand personality may influence intentions to recommend an organization to others (Van Hoye, 2008). This recommendation behavior is called word-of-mouth and can help organizations tap into new pools of potential applicants and spread their employer brand (both key aims of organization's social media use for recruitment; SHRM, 2016). However, so far, knowledge on how word-of-mouth can be stimulated is scarce (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009).

In line with the symbolic attraction theory (Highhouse et al., 2007), recommending of an organization that is perceived as warm or competent might allow an applicant to publicly associate oneself with the organisation's values, and satisfy one's value expression concerns. Moreover, by talking positively about an organization that is high on competence and/or warmth,

an individual might believe they can gain social approval, thus satisfying social adjustment concerns.

Previous research shows that perceptions of employer brand personality can predict employees' recommendation intentions (Van Hoye, 2008). Along these lines, we propose that inferences of warmth and competence derived from a social media page will also positively relate to potential applicants' intentions to spread positive word-of-mouth about the organization.

Hypothesis 4: Perceived organizational (a) warmth and (b) competence after seeing an organization's social media page will relate positively to intentions to share word-of-mouth.

To summarize, relying on signaling theory and the theory of symbolic attraction, we proposed that the underlying mechanism through which social media pages relate to important recruitment outcomes is that potential applicants use these pages to infer employer brand personality (Connelly et al., 2011). Specifically, we hypothesized that the perceived social presence of a social media page signals organizational warmth and that its perceived informativeness signals organizational competence (Lievens & Slaughter, 2016). Next, we proposed that the inferred employer brand personality dimensions both relate positively to organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions. Accordingly, we propose that the extent to which a social media page is perceived as conveying social presence will be indirectly positively related to these recruitment outcomes, through its positive association with the signal of organizational warmth. Similarly, we propose that informativeness will be indirectly positively associated with attraction and word-of-mouth intentions through inferences of organizational competence.

Hypothesis 5: The perceived social presence of the organization's social media page will

indirectly positively relate to (a) organizational attractiveness and (b) intentions to spread word-of-mouth through perceived organizational warmth.

Hypothesis 6: The perceived informativeness of a social media page will indirectly positively relate to (a) organizational attractiveness and (b) intentions to spread word-of-mouth through perceived organizational competence

Method

Sample

In total, 198 students participated, however 33 cases were removed because respondents did not consent, referred to a different organization on two different time points, missed multiple variables at Time 1 or 2, (in one case) identically rated all questions, or organizations did not have Facebook or LinkedIn. Our final sample thus consisted of 165 final-year Master's students Business Administration of a Belgian university. This is a relevant sample, since these students are about to enter the labor market and are an attractive pool of new talent for employers (VDAB, 2017). The average age was 21.6 years (*SD* = 1.04), 68% was female, and 95.2% had work experience (including part-time jobs or internships). All participants had a Facebook account (on which they spent on average 10.66 hours per week, *SD* = 8.84) and 62% had a page on LinkedIn (with an average activity of .06 hours per week, *SD* = 1.12).[1]

Design and Procedure

Data were gathered in October 2016 in the context of a career orientation assignment. We used a two-stage design which allowed us to control for initial perceptions of the organization. For the first stage (Time 1), participants who took part in a simulated job search process were asked to look for an actual job posting they were interested in, that is, a job they would consider applying for. They were instructed to look for this job posting on a job site (three jobsites were

listed as examples). After uploading a copy of the job posting on the online learning platform, students rated initial perceptions of organizational attractiveness, word-of-mouth intentions, organizational warmth and competence (these are used as baseline measures and controlled for in the analyses), and some demographic information.

For the second stage (Time 2), one week later, participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups created in an online learning platform. Considering that Facebook and LinkedIn are the social media platforms most often used by organizations as well as job seekers (Nikolaou, 2014), both were included in our study. One group was instructed to visit the Facebook page of the organization of which they had read the job posting. They were asked to look for additional information about the organization as a potential employer on this page, in order to prepare an application. We instructed the other group to visit the LinkedIn page of the organization and gave the same instructions.[2] We did not include a control group without exposure to social media, given that this paper's aim is not to examine the overall effect of social media pages, but the specific processes through which social media relate to recruitment outcomes. After visiting the assigned social media page, participants completed a survey that assessed perceived social presence and informativeness of the social media page, perceptions of the employer's warmth and competence, as well as organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions.

Measures

All measures and items were in Dutch and are listed in Table 2 (translated to English). Unless mentioned otherwise, measures were operationalized with three items and answers were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1=*completely agree*, 7=*completely disagree*). Internal reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) ranged from .77 to .93 and are listed in Table 3.

Organizational attractiveness. We used three items from Lievens et al. (2005).

Word-of-mouth. Items to measure intentions to spread positive word-of-mouth were adapted from previous research (Van Hoye, 2008, 2013; Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996).

Employer brand personality. To measure the employer brand personality perceptions of warmth and competence we started from conceptually related employer brand personality dimensions: sincerity and cheerfulness for warmth, competence and prestige for competence (Lievens & Highhouse, 2003; Lievens, 2007; Lievens et al., 2007; Lievens et al., 2005; Van Hoye, 2008). We used two six-item scales to measure warmth and competence, each item composed of one adjective. Participants rated to which extent the adjectives described the organization. Warmth and competence are both measured using a combination of existing and self-developed items based on the dimensions' definitions (each dimension was measured using three existing items and three self-developed items). To validate the scale we performed an additional test, using a method applied by Yu (2019). The sample of this test consisted of a group of ten researchers, topic matter experts in human resource management and organizational behavior (average age = 28 years, *SD* = 2.45, 8 women). These researchers were first presented with the definitions of warmth and competence, next we asked them to assign each item to one of the two categories. All of the items used in this study were placed in the right category.

Social presence. The social presence items were based on items used by Short et al. (1976) and the media richness scale by Allen et al. (2004).

Informativeness. Items to measure informativeness were based on items used by Williamson et al. (2003) and based on the definition used in this paper: "the relevance and usefulness of given information for potential applicants who want to evaluate the organization as an employer" (Breaugh & Starke, 2000).

Demographics. We requested demographical information including sex, age, social media use (platforms and intensity), and work experience.

Results

Table 3 shows the observed means, standard deviations, correlations, and internal reliabilities. A paired sample *t*-test showed a significant increase in perceptions of organizational warmth from Time 1 (M = 4.87, SD = .68) to Time 2 (M = 5.15, SD = .78; $t(164) = 5.37$, $p < .001$), after exposure to the social media page. Similarly, there was a significant increase in competence from Time 1 (M = 5.43, SD = .88) to Time 2 (M = 5.53, SD = .85; $t(164) = 2.06$, $p = .041$). Furthermore, a paired sample *t*-test showed a significant decrease in organizational attractiveness from the initial assessment at Time 1 (M = 5.57, SD = .71) to Time 2 after viewing the organization's social media page (M = 5.36, SD = .97; $t(164) = -3.08$, p =. 002). Average word-of-mouth intentions increased significantly from Time 1 (M = 4.8, SD = .79) to Time 2 (M = 5.09, SD = .84; $t(164) = 4.52$, $p < .001$). So overall, without considering the specific page characteristics, perceptions of organizational warmth and competence as well as word-of-mouth intentions improved after viewing an organization' social media page. On the contrary, and somewhat surprisingly, organizational attractiveness decreased on average.

Measurement Model

The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in Mplus 7.4. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed using the following variables: social presence and informativeness (both at Time 2), warmth, competence, organizational attractiveness, and word-of-mouth intentions (all at Time 1 and 2). Items that measured warmth and competence were combined into parcels (two items per parcel), because this requires fewer parameter estimates (Little, Rhemtulla, Gibson, & Schoemann, 2013) and we wanted to avoid

having too many parameters estimates relative to the number of respondents. Parceling is appropriate since this study focuses on the relationships between constructs and not on the structure of these constructs (Little et al., 2013).

CFA indicated an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(364) = 583.186$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .060, CFI = .949; SRMR = .057; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Medsker, Williams, & Holahan, 1994). Results of the discriminant validity analysis showed that squared correlations of the variables were smaller than the average variance extracted of the items of each measure (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), therefore the concepts were sufficiently distinct (Bagozzi, Yi, & Phillips, 1991).

Structural Model

The study's hypotheses were tested in a single integrative SEM model (see Table 1 for an overview of the hypotheses). We controlled for warmth, competence, organizational attractiveness, and word-of-mouth intentions measured at Time 1 (before visiting the social media page). This allowed us to examine the change in these variables before and after exposure to an actual social media page. Fit measures indicated an acceptable fit ($\chi^2(382) = 626.617$, $p < .001$; RMSEA = .062; CFI = .943; SRMR = .072; Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Medsker et al., 1994). Since our sample size was quite small ($N = 165$), we used bootstrapping and parceling. A Chi-Square difference test indicates a significant difference between the measurement and the structural model ($\Delta\chi^2$ (18) = 43.431, $p < .001$). First we discuss alternative models that were tested, than we discuss the final model and the hypotheses' findings.

Alternative models

We tested and compared alternative SEM models (see Table 4). First, it might be that the specific social media platform influences potential applicants' perceptions. Therefore, we compared our model with a model including a dummy variable that indicated the social media

platform (*Facebook* = 1, *LinkedIn* = 0). For the fit measures, see Table 4 (*Model A*). In this Model A, paths were included between the dummy variable and all measured variables at Time 2. None of these paths were significant. The model fit is worse in terms of RMSEA, CFI, and SRMR. No Chi-square difference test was performed, as both models include different variables.

Second, we hypothesized a positive relation between social presence and warmth and between informativeness and competence. In an alternative structural model we included a path from social presence to competence (at Time 2) and a path from informativeness to warmth (at Time 2; *Model B*). Path coefficients show that social presence was not significantly associated with competence, nor was informativeness significantly associated with warmth. The change in chi-square model fit was also not significant. The relations were thus not included in the model.

Third, potential applicants' attitudes towards an organization might influence their intention to spread word-of-mouth about that company to others. We compared a model including a path from Organizational attractiveness at Time 2 to Word-of-mouth intentions at Time 2 (*Model C*). Although this new directed path was significant, the model fit indices show that there was no substantial difference in model fit. We were not able to test the Chi-square difference as the models are not nested. Comparing the alternative model fit indices indicates that a non-directional correlation instead of a directional path does not result in a decrease in model fit. In addition, this relation was not hypothesized a priori, nor is the relation between these two variables the focus of our study, we did not include this path in our final model.

Fourth, it might be that people's attraction and word-of-mouth intentions after exposure to social media, are not only influenced by the perceived social media page characteristics and prior attraction, but also by prior perceptions of employer brand personality. In another model we therefore added paths from warmth and competence measured at Time 1 to the outcome

variables organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions at Time 2 (*Model D*). A chi-square test showed a significant change in the chi-square fit index ($\Delta\chi^2$ (4) = 13.54, p = .009). However, none of the new paths are significant, nor did the relationships already in the model or findings change significantly by including these new paths. Therefore, to keep the model parsimonious we do not further include these paths.

Finally, we hypothesized indirect effects of the social media page characteristics on organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions. However, it might be that these characteristics also directly relate to these outcomes. Testing these direct paths can give us more insight in whether the relation between social media page characteristics and recruitment outcomes are fully or partially mediated by warmth and competence. Thus, in an additional alternative model we tested the direct paths between social presence and informativeness and the study's outcome variables organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions (all at Time 2). We first ran a model that included these four paths (*Model E*). The model fit was significantly better ($\Delta\chi^2$ (4) = 26.02, p < .000), but from the new paths, only the path from social presence to attractiveness was significant. For reasons of parsimoniousness, we only kept the significant path in the final model. When comparing the basic structural model with the model including the path from social presence to organizational attractiveness (*Model F*), still a significant change (improvement) in chi-square model fit index is found ($\Delta\chi^2$ (1) = 19.396, p < .000). Moreover, when compared to the measurement model, no significant difference in chi-square was found anymore ($\Delta\chi^2$ (17) = 24.035, p = .119).

Results: Hypotheses

The final model, which besides the hypothesized relationships thus also includes the path from social presence to organizational attractiveness, is shown in Figure 1 (Fit measures: χ^2 (381)

= 607.221, p < .000; RMSEA = .06; CFI = .947; SRMR = .065). In support of Hypothesis 1, the perceived social presence of the social media page was significantly positively associated with organizational warmth (β = .44, *p* < .001), controlling for initial perceptions of warmth at Time 1. Additionally, in support of Hypothesis 2, the perceived informativeness of the social media page was significantly positively associated with organizational competence (β = .30, *p* < .001), controlling for competence at Time 1. As proposed by Hypothesis 3a, the perceived warmth of the organization after viewing the social media page was positively associated with the organization's attractiveness as an employer (β = .22, *p* = .005), beyond initial organizational attractiveness at Time 1. Furthermore, in support of Hypothesis 4a, the perceived organizational warmth after viewing the social media page was positively associated with potential applicants' intentions to spread positive word-of-mouth (β = .30, *p* < .001), beyond word-of-mouth intentions at Time 1. Next, in support of Hypothesis 3b, the perceived competence of the organization after viewing the social media page was positively associated with organizational attractiveness (β = .28, *p* < .001), beyond organizational attractiveness at Time 1. In support of Hypothesis 4b, competence was positively associated with word-of-mouth intentions as well (β = .33, *p* < .001), beyond word-of-mouth intentions at Time 1.

Next, we used a bootstrapping procedure to examine the indirect relationships between social media page characteristics and the study's outcome variables through the employer brand personality signals. The standardized indirect effects and the 95% Confidence Intervals (CI) were computed for each of 5,000 bootstrapped samples. The indirect positive association of social presence with organizational attractiveness through perceptions of organizational warmth was significant (β = .10 , CI = [.024, .175]). As mentioned above, based on a model comparison, we also included the direct path from social presence to organizational attractiveness (β = .30, *p*

< .001). The indirect association of social presence with word-of-mouth intentions through warmth was also significant (β = .13, CI = [.054, .218]). These results support Hypotheses 5a and 5b. Additionally, the indirect association of informativeness with organizational attractiveness through enhanced perceptions of organizational competence was significant (β = .09, CI = [.036, .142]). Finally, the indirect association of informativeness with word-of-mouth intentions through competence was significant (β =.10, CI = [.043, .173]), supporting Hypotheses 6a and 6b.

Discussion

Social media represent a promising tool for organizations to manage potential applicants' perceptions and intentions, yet knowledge of the processes at play is limited. Understanding the mechanisms underlying the effects of social media on organizational attractiveness and intentions to spread word-of-mouth adds to the knowledge on recruitment in the digital era. In line with signaling theory and the theory of symbolic attraction (Highhouse et al., 2007; Spence, 1973), the study's findings show that potential applicants use social media pages' communication characteristics to infer employer brand personality dimensions, which in turn positively relate to attraction and word-of-mouth intentions.

This study sheds light on how potential applicants interpret perceived characteristics of an organization's social media pages as signals about that organization (Da Motta Veiga & Turban, 2014). In this sense, a crucial finding of our study is that perceived communication characteristics play an important role in the process of inferring employer brand personality signals from social media pages (Connelly et al., 2011). Potential applicants rely on perceived communication characteristics of the page to create a mental picture of what the organization is like as an employer. Specifically, perceptions of warmth increased after seeing a social media

page high in social presence. Hence, organizations that are perceived to communicate in a more personal, friendly and sociable way, are perceived as more warm overall. Further, higher perceived levels of informativeness were associated with increased inferences of competence. Potential employers that are perceived to provide more relevant information, are considered as more competent overall, as suggested by Williamson et al. (2003).

These insights in the process of interpreting signals conveyed by a social media page are especially valuable for organizations aiming to recruit employees, since our results show that the perceived social media page characteristics informativeness and social presence indirectly relate to organizational attractiveness through their association with organizational warmth or competence respectively. Hence, this study makes a valuable contribution by showing that potential applicants extrapolate the way an organization communicates on its social media page to infer overall employer brand personality (Turban, 2001), which in turn relates positively to potential applicants' organizational attractiveness. Additional to an indirect effect through warmth, social presence had a direct effect on organizational attractiveness as well. This finding indicates that another mechanism besides the signaling of organizational warmth underlies this effect. Future research should investigate this further. For example, it might be that higher social presence, a more personal and friendly perceived communication on the social media page, makes potential applicants feel they have some sort of personal connection with the organization. In line with social identity theory, this might increase identification with the organization, which can result in increased organizational attractiveness (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Furthermore, results show that social media characteristics indirectly relate to intentions to spread positive word-of-mouth as well. Getting people to spread word-of-mouth is highly favorable for recruitment and employer branding (Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009). However, until

now, very little was known of how organizations can stimulate this. Moreover, the few studies on the determinants of word-of-mouth have mainly examined why current employees disseminate word-of-mouth about their employer, and has largely ignored the word-of-mouth intentions of people outside the organization (Bloemer, 2010; Van Hoye, 2013). First, our findings show that overall potential applicants' intentions to spread word-of-mouth increased after seeing an organization's social media page. This suggests that, in general, exposing people to information about your organization on social media positively influences their willingness to recommend your organization as an employer to others. Second, the findings provide more insight in how organizations can stimulate word-of-mouth most effectively. Specifically, word-of-mouth intentions were higher when the social media page was high in social presence, signaling organizational warmth, and high in informativeness, signaling organizational competence.

We operationalized employer brand personality as warmth and competence, two dimensions that emerged in several research domains (Cuddy et al., 2011; Fiske et al., 2002). Our study indicates that organizations can use social media to manage how they are perceived on these dimensions. Moreover, these dimensions were positively related to organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions. These findings suggest that warmth and competence can play an important role for better understanding potential applicants' reactions towards potential employers. We encourage future research to examine how these dimensions relate to other employer brand frameworks and to other measures of warmth and competence used in different domains (e.g., Judd, James, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005). To understand the positive association of warmth and competence with organizational attractiveness, potential applicants' self-presentation concerns provide a potential explanation in line with the theory of symbolic attraction (Highhouse et al., 2017). Positive attitudes towards a competent and/or warm

organization can help people to gain social approval or to express certain values. Similarly, recommending an organization that is perceived as competent and warm may serve these functions as well. Future research should measure people's self-presentation concerns (i.e., value expression and social approval concerns) and examine whether these moderate the effect of warmth and competence on recruitment outcomes (Highhouse et al., 2007).

Finally, rather surprisingly, the average organizational attractiveness after seeing the organization's social media page was lower than before, even though average warmth and competence perceptions increased. A possible explanation is that participants were instructed to look for a job posting they found appealing, which might have led to high initial organizational attractiveness. When they, afterwards, processed more information about the employer, this may have made them critically reflect on whether this is an appropriate place for them to work, which caused some of them to self-select out of the recruitment process. Therefore, even though they perceived the organization as a good place to work for others (i.e., improved employer brand personality and word-of-mouth intentions), their own attraction had lowered.

Practical Implications

This study provides interesting implications for organizations looking to recruit talent. The findings suggest that organizations can signal their employer brand personality through their own social media page, which in turn positively relates with organizational attractiveness and word-of-mouth intentions. Based on these findings, it is important for organizations to find out which social media platforms their target group uses to look for information about potential employers and to create and maintain a page on those platforms.

Further, two particular communication characteristics of the page relate to the extent to which an organization is perceived as warm and as competent (which consequently relate to

improved organizational attractiveness and increased intentions to spread word-of-mouth). Although these results seem to imply that organizations should aim to be perceived as both highly competent and warm, other things should be considered such as the organization's target group, the desired employer value proposition, and the distinctiveness relative to competitors (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004; Theurer, Tumasjan, Welpe, & Lievens, 2018). With this in mind, we recommend that organizations that want to increase potential applicants' perceptions of the organization as a warm employer, should create a page high in social presence. Future research should investigate specifically how organizations can make their page be perceived as high in social presence. It might be that social presence perceptions increase as the organization communicates with the audience in a sociable manner and posts personal messages, pictures, and stories (e.g., about employees), thus not merely shares business oriented or aloof content. Next, to increase potential applicants' perceptions of the organization as a competent employer, organizations should provide sufficient relevant and useful information for job seekers. More research is needed here as well. In summary, to strengthen the signals a social media page conveys, organizations should deliberate on what and how they communicate on their page and how this can be interpreted by potential applicants. To this end, collaboration between an organization's communication or public relations and the recruitment department seems advisable (Neill & Moody, 2015).

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We now discuss the study's limitations, which might inspire future research. First, we requested participants to go to the social media page of the organization to find out more about it as a potential employer. One can wonder whether potential applicants in reality use social media to gather information on employers. In the first survey, we therefore asked which sources the

respondents would generally use to find out more about potential employers. Results show that 67% would likely use Facebook and 62% would likely use LinkedIn (97% would likely use company's websites, 60% would likely consult friends, and 14 % would likely use Twitter).

Second, our study examined organizations' Facebook and LinkedIn pages, because these are the two platforms most used for job search and recruitment (Adecco, 2015). Social media platforms can differ strongly in terms of content format possibilities, available functions, and type of users. Hence, we do not know if findings can be generalized to other platforms. Future research might examine how different platforms affect job applicants' attitudes and intentions.

Third, given our focus on *how* (rather than whether) social media pages affect potential applicants, we did not include a control group. Based on our results, we thus cannot draw conclusions about the relative effect of social media compared with no recruitment information or other recruitment sources. Future research might investigate social media in comparison with or in addition to other recruitment channels such as job ads and recruitment websites.

Fourth, the study's design does not allow for causal conclusions and might lead to common method variance. We aimed to reduce this by controlling for baseline measures at Time 1 (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To test causal effects and to rule out common method variance, future research could first experimentally manipulate social media page characteristics, next measure employer brand personality, and later measure actual application and word-of-mouth behavior.

Fifth, we relied on naturally occurring variability of informativeness and social presence instead of experimentally manipulating them. This allowed us to use real organizational social media pages, chosen by the participants (more than hundred different organizations). However, we could not investigate which specific features increase perceptions of these characteristics. Future research should examine what kind of content is considered socially present or

informative. Studies can look at specific characteristics and analyze how these relate to perceived page characteristics and eventually to employer brand perceptions. Researchers can, for example, investigate the influence of the number of pictures displayed and the specific content (e.g., people or not) on perceptions of social presence. Such analyses would provide detailed information for organizations that want to convey a specific employer brand value proposition.

Due to our research operationalization, we were not able to control for the time spent browsing a specific social media page. Future research can use a more controlled research setting in which they can measure the time spent on the page and examine whether and how it influences perceptions of the page. Furthermore, in addition to organizational attractiveness, future research might want to measure intentions to apply or actual application behavior.

Our sample consists of 165 final year students, we recommend future research to investigate different (e.g., job seekers with work experience) and larger samples.

Finally, our study shows how an organization's social media presence can increase word-of-mouth intentions. Given the important recruitment outcomes of word-of-mouth about an employer (e.g., Van Hoye & Lievens, 2009), future research should further investigate how social media influences actual word-of-mouth. Researchers can examine word-of-mouth behaviors on social media platforms themselves (such as sharing organization's vacancies) as these platforms increased the possibility for actors outside the organization to share information about their experience with organizations (Dineen, Van Hoye, Lievens, & Rosokha, 2019).

Conclusion

In line with signaling theory and the theory of symbolic attraction, we found that potential applicants use social media pages' communication characteristics to infer employer brand personality, which in turn positively relates to organizational attractiveness and word-of-

mouth intentions. Specifically, social presence relates to these two recruitment outcomes indirectly through its positive association with organizational warmth (and in addition relates directly to organizational attractiveness). Furthermore, informativeness relates positively to these outcomes through its positive association with organizational competence. These findings suggest that organizations can use social media pages to effectively manage key recruitment outcomes by signaling their employer brand personality.

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Footnotes

[1] In an alternative model we included the average weekly amount of time spent on Facebook as a control variable for all paths at Time 2. This model resulted in similar findings (all the same relationships remained significant) and time spent on Facebook had no significant effects, except for a negative association with organizational attractiveness ($\beta = -.14$; $p = .008$). Moreover, we also ran the model controlling for gender, this model also resulted in similar findings and gender was not significantly associated with the study variables.

[2] In case the organization did not have a page on the assigned platform, respondents were requested to contact us for instructions. When the organization did not have a Facebook page (8 cases), respondents were instructed to visit the LinkedIn page and vice versa (6 cases). In the final dataset, 7 participants switched social media platforms. Analyses were also performed without these cases, resulting in similar fit and findings. Cases with no social media page on either Facebook or LinkedIn were excluded (7).

Table 1

Overview of the Study's Hypotheses

		Hypothesized Relationships
H1		Social presence → Organizational warmth
H2		Informativeness → Organizational competence
H3	a	Organizational warmth → Organizational attractiveness
	b	Organizational competence → Organizational attractiveness
H4	a	Organizational warmth → Word-of-mouth intentions
	b	Organizational competence → Word-of-mouth intentions
H5	a	Social presence → Organizational warmth → Organizational attractiveness
	b	Social presence → Organizational warmth→ Word-of-mouth intentions
H6	a	Informativeness → Organizational Competence → Organizational attractiveness
	b	Informativeness → Organizational Competence → Word-of-mouth intentions

Note. We control for baseline measures of Organizational warmth, Organizational competence, Organizational attractiveness, or Word-of-mouth intentions at Time 1.

Table 2

Variables and Items Used

Variables	Items	
Organizational attractiveness	This organization would be a good place to work for me.	
	I think this organization is an attractive employer.	
	A job with this organization appeals to me.	
Word-of-mouth intentions	I would recommend this organization to a friend who is looking for work.	
	If they inquire about it, I would recommend this organization as an employer to others.	
	I would tell positive things about this organization to others.	
Employer brand personality		
Organizational warmth	Cheerful	Sincere
	Warm	Transparent
	Sociable	Has integrity
Organizational competence	Successful	Highly regarded
	Capable	Prominent
	Professional	Renowned
Perceived social media page characteristics		
Social presence	The [Facebook/LinkedIn] page of the organization addressed me in a personal manner.	
	I felt warmly addressed by this page.	
	The communication on the [Facebook/LinkedIn] page was sociable.	
Informativeness	The page allowed me to create a mental picture of this organization as an employer.	
	The page provided useful information to evaluate a potential employer.	
	I think this page gives an accurate view of the organization.	

Note. Items were translated from Dutch.

Table 3

Observed Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, and Internal Reliabilities

	Mean	*SD*	*N*	Correlations and Internal Reliabilities									
Time 1				*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*
1 Warmth	4.87	.68	165	(.77)									
2 Competence	5.43	.88	165	.36**	(.92)								
3 Attractiveness	5.57	.71	165	.38**	.53**	(.83)							
4 Word-of-mouth	4.8	.79	165	.34**	.56**	.55**	(.83)						
Time 2													
5 Social presence	4.33	1.24	165	.23**	.13	.26**	.18*	(.91)					
6 Informativeness	4.43	1.11	165	.24**	.21**	.18*	.18*	.73**	(.84)				
7 Warmth	5.15	.78	165	.59**	.22**	.27**	.26**	.57**	.44**	(.85)			
8 Competence	5.53	.85	165	.26**	.76**	.44**	.51**	.35**	.42**	.40**	(.92)		
9 Attractiveness	5.36	.97	165	.33**	.38**	.47**	.40**	.60**	.46**	.55**	.57**	(.93)	
10 Word-of-mouth	5.08	.84	165	.26**	.38**	.38**	.53**	.43**	.37**	.46**	.57**	.68**	(.88)

Note. *p <.05 **p <.01
Items were rated on a 7-point scale.
Cronbach Alpha's are shown on the diagonal in parentheses.

Table 4

Alternative Structural Models

Model Name	Fit Measures							Chi² Difference Tests		
								Comparisons with Hypothesized Model		
	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR	AIC	BIC	χ^2	Df	$\Delta\chi^2$	ΔDf	*p*
Hypothesized Model	.062	.943	.072	9733	10084	626.617	382			
Model A	.064	.936	.112	9738	10083	691.755	414	/	/	/
Model B	.063	.943	.072	9736	10093	625.388	380	1.229	2	.541
Model C	.063	.942	.072	9737	10088	630.102	382	/	/	/
Model D	.061	.945	.065	9728	10091	613.077	378	13.54	4	.008
Model E	.060	.948	.062	9715	10078	600.597	378	26.02	4	< .001
Model F	.060	.947	.065	9716	10070	607.221	381	19.396	1	< .001

Note. The Chi² difference tests compares all models with the Hypothesized Model.
Dashes are used to indicate when no comparison was possible due to non-nested models.
Model A: paths from dummy social media platform to all variables at Time 2; Model B: paths from social presence to competence and informativeness to warmth; Model C: path from organizational attractiveness to word-of-mouth intentions; Model D: paths from warmth and competence at Time 1 to attractiveness and word-of-mouth at Time 2; Model E: paths from social presence and informativeness to attractiveness and word-of-mouth; Model F: path from social presence to attractiveness
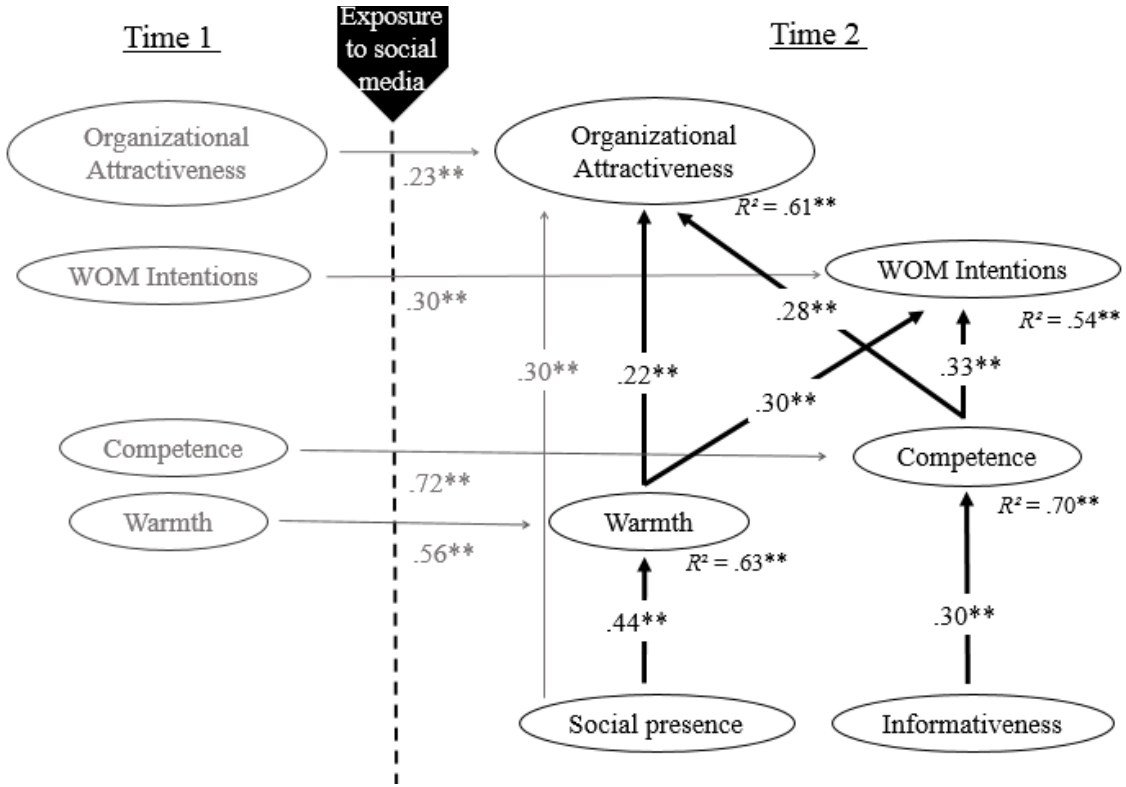
Figure 1. Structural Equation Model. WOM intentions = word-of-mouth intentions. Fit measures: $\chi^2(381)=607.221$, p <.001; RMSEA=.06; CFI =.947; SRMR = .065. Coefficients displayed are standardized results. For each factor, one item loading was fixed at one. Residual correlations are not shown. The indirect effects are (a) the association of social presence with organizational attractiveness through warmth (β =.097, CI = [.024, .175]), (b) the association of social presence with word-of-mouth through warmth (β =.132, CI = [.054, .218]), (c) the association of informativeness with organizational attractiveness through competence (β =.085, CI = [.036, .142]), and (d) the association of informativeness with word-of-mouth through competence (β =.099, CI = [.043, .173]). *p <.05; **p <.01