

## **Influence of Culture (US and Turkey) on Reactions to Social Network Screening**

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## Abstract

Social media has impacted every facet of society, and one implication of this trend concerns hiring practices. The ubiquity, easy access, and wealth of information offered by social media have caught the eyes of recruiters. A survey by Careerbuilder (2018), which suggests 7 in 10 US employers use social media to research job candidates, captures this growing trend. HR departments in favor of social network screening (SNS) argue that it helps avoid negligent hiring, attracts passive job-seekers, and investigates beneficial personality traits. But comparable issues, like lack of validity, legality, and privacy, also accompany it (e.g., Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth, & Junco, 2016).

As businesses expand globally and SNS hiring methods proliferate, an examination of how culture influences applicant reactions to SNS screening becomes exigent. However, while research has explored applicant reactions to SNS (e.g., Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015), little research has explored cross-cultural reactions to this practice. According to Black, Stone, & Johnson, (2015), applicant reactions are influenced by socio-cultural factors, which includes power distance, individualism/collectivism and culture-specific norms of privacy (Hofstede & Bond, 1984). Accordingly, this study uses the privacy model of Black et al. (2015) and Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede & Bond, 1984) to measure the differences in reactions to Facebook screening between US and Turkish applicants.

Social media has impacted every facet of society. Viral campaign ads, targeted advertisements, and "Big Data" reflect this shift. One implication of social media concerns hiring practices. A survey by Careerbuilder (2018), which suggests 7 in 10 US employers use social

media to research job candidates, captures this growing trend. HR departments in favor of Social Network Screening (SNS) argue that it helps avoid negligent hiring, attracts passive job-seekers, and investigates beneficial personality traits. But comparable issues, like lack of validity, legality, and privacy, also accompany it (e.g., Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth, & Junco, 2016). While research has explored applicant reactions to SNS as one potential important outcome (e.g., Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015), no research has explored cross-cultural reactions to this practice. However, with the advent of globalization, familiarity with international applicant reactions to selection methods becomes paramount for retention. Accordingly, this study will use Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Hofstede & Bond, 1984) and a model of the factors affecting applicants' reactions to the use of social networking websites in the employment process (Black, Stone, & Johnson, 2015) to examine the differences in reactions to Facebook and LinkedIn screening between US and Turkish applicants.

According to Black et al. (2015), applicant reactions are influenced by information factors, procedural factors, socio-cultural factors, and individual factors. Hofstede and Bond (1984) theorized that six dimensions are necessary to differentiate cultures (Power Distance Index, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance Index, Long/Short-Term Orientation, and Indulgence/Restraint). The most relevant dimensions of the six are power distance index (PDI) and individualism/collectivism (I/C). PDI represents the extent to which cultures accept inequality and power differences. A culture with a high PDI will err towards strict bureaucracies, are more respectful of superiors, and have centralized hierarchies. Turkey is a country high in PDI, while US is considered a low PDI nation. I/C details how cultures value goals, relationships, and work styles. Individualist countries are motivated by personal goals, are less reliant on those around them and are comfortable working

autonomously, while collectivist countries are motivated by group goals, value long-term relationships, and are comfortable working in a team. US is considered an individualistic country while Turkey is considered high in collectivism. Based on these differences between US and Turkey, we hypothesize that:

**H1)** Turkish participants will have more positive reactions to SM screening via Facebook compared to US participants because of being higher in a) collectivism and b) power distance

**H2)** US and Turkey participants will react similarly to SM screening via LinkedIn because of its non-controversial nature

The proposed study will examine this by using the data collected from samples of US and Turkey college students via an experimental design. Specifically, a pre/posttest design will be used in which participants (US and Turkey students) will receive a survey that will measure PDI and I/C. They will then receive another survey measuring their views on a certain company (organizational attractiveness) after viewing its website. Next, participants will be divided into three groups, a control group, a Facebook group and a LinkedIn group. All participants will be directed to a website page that contains a job ad from the same company. Each group will see an application option specific to their group (The Facebook group will see an “apply through Facebook” option). After viewing the website, all groups will receive surveys measuring invasion of privacy, organizational attractiveness, and related measures. A comparison of how each condition affected US and Turkey applicants will be conducted.

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