

**THE INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK VISUAL IMAGES ON HIRING BY
PROFESSIONAL RECRUITERS**

by

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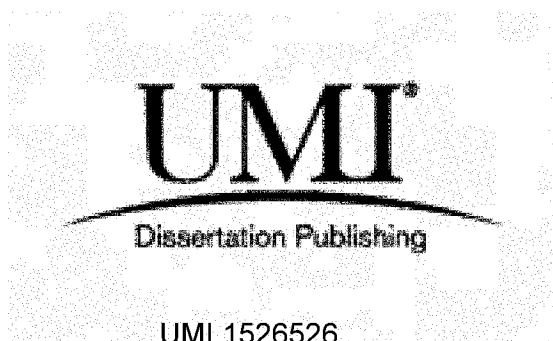
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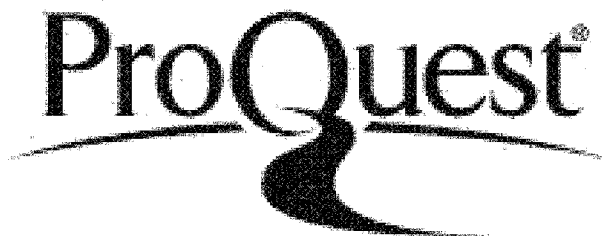


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Abstract

This research is a replication and extension of the study conducted by Bohnert and Ross (2010). In Study One of this research, the exact placement of SNW images on the continuum of desirability for hiring was established. Study Two incorporated these images in an experimental study of the impact of SNW visual images on the dependent variables of hiring suitability and recommended salary. Study Two extended Bohnert and Ross's research by using professional recruiters as research participants. Study Two which used a repeated measures within-subjects design produced strong results when the effect of SNW pictorial images on the dependent variables was tested. In conclusion, it was found that having a positive image on social media may not increase a job applicant's chances of getting hired but a negative image will considerably decrease the opportunities of getting a job offer as well as lower the salary offered to the job applicant.

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Sincerely,

Rahul Poojary

THE INFLUENCE OF FACEBOOK VISUAL IMAGES ON HIRING BY PROFESSIONAL RECRUITERS

Overview

In today's era the Internet is a vast universe in itself that accommodates and encompasses everything that we do in our day-to-day lives. Almost everything related to our lives is connected to the Internet. "The widespread rise of virtual community has changed the way of social interactions" (Wu, Chen, & Chung, 2010). That is why; we try to make an image of ourselves, and of our real lives on the Internet so that other individuals can relate to us and understand us. As cited in (Wu et al., 2010), virtual community comprises a communication platform and a social network through which people with the same interests and concerns can interact with one another in cyberspace (Mcknight, Choudhury, & Kacmar, 2002; Turban, King, Viehland, & Lee, 2006).

To a large extent we do this so that everyone gets a glimpse of either an image of our true selves or an image of what we desire to be. In theory at least this vast reservoir of personal information might be very helpful to hiring managers and professional recruiters during the hiring process. Companies are known to be risk-averse when recruiting new employees and look for all the available information they can find about their potential employees. These include background checks, which may contain criminal record checks, references or a fact most relevant to this thesis, checks through the applicant's Social Networking Website (SNW) page. Thus profiles on SNWs can provide professional recruiters a platform they need to find out honest, unfiltered information about job applicants, which might improve decision making in the hiring process. The traditional methods of hiring include reviewing resumes, cover letters and carrying out interviews. With the arrival

of social media, hiring managers and recruiters have found an additional way of scrutinizing information about their potential employee by reviewing job applicants through their personal SNWs.

The question now arises as to what extent professional recruiters actually use this information available online in the hiring process. If they do rely on such information in the selection process, it is important to know the extent to which SNW images, very commonly posted by job applicants on their social media pages, influence hiring decisions made by professional managers. This question is the subject of Study 2 in this thesis. Before this however the nature of pictorial images found in personal SNWs needs to be investigated, especially as this affects other people's impressions of their desirability for hiring employment. This issue is investigated in Study 1 and selected subsets of pictorial images are identified for inclusion as SNW pictorial images in Study 2. More specifically, the goal of Study 1 is to identify three SNW pictorial images that have two scaling properties: (1) They are located as closely as possible to the most desirable, most undesirable, and neutral points on an underlying scale of desirability for hiring; and (2) The agreement of the placing of the three images on the underlying scale would have the greatest possible agreement for decision makers making hiring choices.

This research is a replication and extension of the study conducted by Bohnert and Ross (2010), in their paper "The Influence of Social Networking Web Sites on the Evaluation of Job Candidates." The current research tries to overcome the two main limitations faced by the previous research. The first one is not having a scale that identifies several images according to their desirability of hiring and the second one is not using professional hiring

managers and recruiters as study participants to find the influence of social media on the hiring process.

Outline Of The Thesis: Studies One And Two

The thesis is arranged into six chapters. The following chapter is a review of the literature around the use of social media, positive influences of social media on society, negative influences of social media and its impact on the hiring process, impact of positive versus negative information in decision-making and the effects of social media on the recommended salary of job applicants.

This is followed by chapter 3, which explains Study 1 in depth and it includes an overview of the methods used in Study one, followed by the results found in Study 1 and finally followed by analysis of these results. Chapter 4 introduces Study 2 and includes an overview of the methods used in this study, followed by the Study 2 results. Chapter 5 focuses on the discussion that will be derived from the results of both studies 1 and 2 and lastly chapter 6 will focus on the overall conclusions of this thesis work along with recommendations for future research.

Literature Review

Five distinct literatures are relevant to this thesis. The first literature pertains to social media and the use of social media by users, with a specific emphasis on Facebook. The second set of literature is related to the positive influence of social media in the larger on-line community. The third line of literature concentrates on the negative influence of social media and its impact on the hiring process. The fourth part of this literature review will explore the impact of positive information versus negative information especially when hiring decisions are being made. Finally, the last section of this literature review will focus on the determination of salary for newly hired employees.

Social Media And The Use Of Social Media: Facebook

Social Media can be defined as different forms of electronic communication through which online users create social communities on the World Wide Web to share information, ideas and other content. Thus, it is a place for people all around the world to communicate, share their experiences and socialize using the Internet. Social media is also defined as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). In today’s world, people do not need to interact in person to be social; the Internet has created opportunities for individuals to connect with each other no matter which part of the world they are in and no matter what they are doing. It has become easier for people with similar interests to connect with each other and share their hobbies and stories and be a part of social media. With a click of a button, an individual can

connect with another individual sitting on the other side of the world. Thus, social media has become a platform through which people communicate and exchange ideas and views about almost everything. Social Media has changed the life of individuals and corporations alike (Hennig-Thurau, et al., 2010). It has made communication possible between organizations, communities and individuals.

The different forms of electronic communication that social media include are Internet forums, web blogs, social blogs, online magazines, micro-blogging, wikis, social networks like Facebook and Twitter, podcasts, videos, pictures social bookmarking and websites- personal, professional and corporate. Kaplan, Andreas, & Michael (2010) classified social media into six different groupings: (1) Collaborative projects like Wikipedia, (2) Blogs and micro-blogs like Twitter, (3) Content communities like YouTube, (3) Social networking sites like Facebook, (4) Virtual social worlds like Second Life, (5) Virtual game worlds like League of Legends, and (6) Internet forums. All these applications have content that is created, updated, and maintained by individual Internet users and provided to other users, often free of charge. In this paper, I will be solely looking at social networking sites. Social networking sites are websites, which let their users post content, photos, videos, blogs and applications and share their life and experiences with other users. The most famous of these are Facebook and MySpace. These sites also allow users to freely express what they feel, which gives consumers a chance and the freedom to exchange their views and express what they feel through photos, videos or through their status.

Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007), have explained how social network sites allow individuals to present themselves, articulate their social networks, and establish or maintain connections with others. The authors also explain how these sites can be oriented towards

work-related contexts like LinkedIn, romantic relationship initiation like Friendster, connecting those with shared interests like MySpace.com, or connecting the college student population like Facebook. Facebook and LinkedIn are the two popular social networking sites used these days. They both differ from each other to a large extent. Facebook has been the most popular social networking site for many years and still continues to be the most widely used. Facebook has always been a casual Social Networking Website (SNW) where users post personal information including photos and videos about family, friends and colleagues. Most of the information on Facebook has always been unfiltered and many users post images that they may later come to regret posting, e.g.: when they apply for a job. Therefore, Facebook is one of the best platforms to find out honest untainted information about an individual. On the other hand LinkedIn has always been a professional SNW. Here, individuals make use of this site to post professional and filtered information about themselves to make them approachable and desirable to employers. Users usually post their educational and professional information and make professional connections through this site. Therefore, between the two SNWs, Facebook would be a more preferable choice for employers to find either negative or positive information about their potential employees.

The other reason for choosing Facebook as the social networking site in this research is its expansive use by people, as May & Kwong (2007), explain: “created in 2004, by 2007 Facebook was reported to have more than 21 million registered members generating 1.6 billion page views each day” (as cited in Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007, p. 1144). Facebook is also used by its users almost every day as part of their daily media practice. This is further cemented by Cassidy (2006), and May & Kwong (2007), who have said that almost two-thirds of users on Facebook log in at least once a day (as cited in Ellison, Steinfield, &

Lampe, 2007). Duggan & Brenner (2013), found out that almost 67% of all SNW users were using Facebook thus being the most used social networking site out of all the social networking sites, while the second was Twitter with only 16% of Internet users, while Pinterest, Instagram, and Tumblr were ranked third, fourth and fifth respectively. Thus we can see how Facebook remains the most used social networking site, and has the largest audience while creating much more user traffic than other comparable social networking websites.

Usually information found on Facebook is posted casually and is not filtered by the user to create a good impression, thus making an easy target of himself or herself to anyone who looks at their social media profile, including future employers. So, Facebook is the social networking site that will be used in this paper to find out how it may influence professional employers and hiring personnel in the screening process. As the authors, Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007), have mentioned, "Facebook constitutes a rich site for researchers interested in the affordances of social networks due to its heavy usage patterns and technological capacities that bridge online and offline connections" (p. 1144). These authors define Facebook as a "social network site that enables its users to present themselves in an online profile, accumulate 'friends' who can post comments on each other's pages, and view each other's profiles" (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007, p. 1143). Facebook also lets its users show their interests and hobbies and information about their education or personal lives to other users, while they can look up all this information about other users as well.

Positive Influences Of Social Media On Society

Social networking sites like Facebook have been a place for individuals to build new

friendships to share their stories and learn new information about the world and other individuals. Thus, it has been a place of knowledge for millions of users where they can share and learn, thus creating a intertwining web of social networks online that is ever growing. Thus social network sites, especially Facebook, have helped increase social capital by helping increase social networks exponentially, which previously without the help of the internet would not have been possible. Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992), define social capital as “the sum of resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network or more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition” (as cited in Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007, p. 14). But what if social media can also reduce social capital? This question is addressed in this thesis.

Increase of social capital has always been perceived to be positive and has been known to add value. But as this thesis shows, this theory is not always true. Adler & Kwon (2002), have said that social capital has been linked to a variety of positive social outcomes, such as better public health, lower crime rates, and more efficient financial markets. With the help of social network sites, it has become easier to increase social capital by creating relationships and networks while also raising awareness through the huge platforms like Facebook and LinkedIn. Some critics like Nie (2001), have complained that social media and Internet use detracts from face-to-face time with others which in turn diminishes an individual’s social capital (as cited in Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007), also addressed that while many researchers have suggested a positive relation between social capital and social media, they have concluded that computer-mediated interactions have had positive effects on community interaction, involvement, and social capital (Hampton & Wellman, 2003; Kavanaugh, Carroll, Rosson, Zin, & Reese,

2005).

It is believed that if people are staying in their homes rather than conversing in cafes, then maybe they are going online: chatting online one-to-one; exchanging e-mail in duets or small groups; or schmoozing, ranting, and organizing in discussion groups such as listservs or newsgroups (Kraut, et al., 1998; Smith, Drucker, Kraut, & Wellman, 1999). Thus, the Internet has been supplementing the conventional ways of communication with new, easy and convenient ways of communicating with people from all over the world without even having to meet them. This movement removed communication boundaries and so improved access to information and opened new ways of communication. Although Hampton & Wellman (2003), mentioned that “while some warned that the Internet could never be fulfilling enough, other negative commentators feared the opposite: the Internet’s immersiveness could be so fulfilling so as to lure users away from real-life community” (p. 280).

Lin N. (2001) and Putnam (2004), explain that social capital is the resource available to people through their social interactions (as cited in Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009). Thus all the new opportunities and new options that have become available to people due to the introduction of social media have in turn helped increase social capital for these individuals. Valenzuela, Park, & Kee (2009), report that, “Individuals with a large and diverse network of contacts are thought to have more social capital than individuals with small, less diverse networks” (p. 877). Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007), state that more social capital leads to a greater commitment to a community and the ability to mobilize collective actions, among other benefits.

Valenzuela, Park, & Kee (2009), also explain how investment in social networks

enables people to develop norms of trust and reciprocity, which are necessary for successful engagement in collective activities. In other words, trust facilitates working with others on common issues (Putnam, 2004), while social capital also allows individuals to access information and opportunities like job openings that are otherwise unavailable (Lin, 2001) (as cited in Valenzuela, Park, & Kee, 2009).

Thus previous researchers have argued that social networks like Facebook and Twitter bridge social capital between different individuals. But what if this is not true anymore? Does that mean Facebook and Twitter can destroy social capital? In the introduction to this thesis, the effect of social capital was summarized as: improving individuals' well being and quality of life as byproducts of social capital. My findings demonstrate an inconsistency in the thinking of these social capital theorists who argue that social media always has a positive influence on the individual, group and community.

Negative Influence Of Social Media And Its Impact On The Hiring Process

So far we have seen how theorists have argued that social networking sites have positively affected lives of many individuals and therefore they remain an ever-spreading phenomenon. They also argue that social networking sites through social media have proved to increase social capital and have helped individuals make friends and also keep in touch with them no matter the distance between them. This may have proved to bridge social gaps that may have existed in the past before the introduction of social media.

It is important to realize that every coin has two sides. Along with its advantages, social media also has its drawbacks. Gross & Acquisti (2005), and Stutzman (2006), have

explained how most of the current academic research on social networking sites like Facebook has been focused on identity presentation and privacy concerns (as cited in Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2007). There have been a lot of privacy issues with regards to all the information that is available about an individual through these social networking sites. All the information that users post on their social networking sites is available for all the people to see. Also any of the photos that are available online on the social networking sites of users, can be downloaded and used or misused by any individual thus putting the user at a risk. Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe (2007), have explained how after looking at the amount of information Facebook participants provide about themselves, the relatively open nature of the information, and the lack of privacy controls enacted by the users, (Gross & Acquisti, 2005) mention that “they may be putting themselves at risk both offline (e.g., stalking) and online (e.g., identity theft)” (p. 1145). In this case, they may also make themselves vulnerable to companies where they apply for jobs.

Along with the background checks that companies conduct to screen job applicants, now they would have a new set of information available, thus offering them information about job candidates which ideally should not have been part of the hiring process. Therefore, in terms of potential employees, social networking sites can influence both the companies hiring as well as the job candidates applying for the job. In terms of job candidates applying for a job, all the information that candidates post on their social networking sites is available for employers and professional recruiters to check before they can make any decisions about hiring.

Hiring managers and recruiters are utilising this new information that individuals display in public platforms through their Social Networking Sites (SNW). SNWs can contain

written information, pictorial images or videos about the user or his/her friends and family. Pictorial images usually stand out in a social media profile and are readily available through the individual's profile. Slovensky & Ross (2012) have explained how Human Resource (HR) managers in this modern era are flooded with many new sources of information. The Internet has an important role to play with the spread of such information. Many individuals post all kinds of information like the daily activities that they conduct on their SNWs. Slovensky & Ross (2012) have described in their paper how SNWs allow individual users to post personal information on the Internet in order to communicate with friends. Picard (2011) and Holt (2011), explain how "Twitter allows short weblog ("blog") messages of 140 characters (called "tweets") and full social network web sites such as Facebook, Google Buzz, and MySpace allow users to post multiple pages and include photos and videos; friends can also make comments" (as cited in Slovensky & Ross, 2012, p. 56). There's also a downside to this as all this information is also available for everyone in the world to access. Slovensky & Ross (2012) mention how much of this information is unprotected and available for anyone to view that finds it – although SNW users can usually adjust their privacy settings in order to allow 'only friends' to see certain information (Boyd, & Ellison, 2007). Thus, SNWs allow managers to conduct extensive background checks (Slovensky & Ross, 2012) during the hiring process thus affecting an applicant's chances to get hired.

Facts such as age, location, relationship status, as well as personal thoughts and pictures are widely available through these media, and allow a level of immediate intimacy that has never before existed. For example, users can access Facebook and find a person they recently met and immediately learn personal details of the person's life – details that may have taken months or years to learn in previous generations (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). What

users do not realize that this information is also available to professional recruiters and with the use of SNWs, these managers can find out all the personal details of a potential employee's life with just a click of a button. Information that generally would have not been available to a hiring manager through resumes and cover letters is now available through social media. Thus the hiring process has become more of a personal affair, as there is access to lots of personal information about an applicant on a SNW. HR managers can easily go on any of these sites and type in an individual's name and find out everything about the applicant, which they would not have been able to find out otherwise.

Haefner (2009) mentions that careerbuilder.com survey statistics suggest the percentage of 2,600 managers who look at SNW profiles as a way to screen candidates has risen from 22 percent in 2008 to 45 percent in 2009 (as cited in Slovensky & Ross, 2012). These numbers suggest that the population of professional recruiters that use social media in the hiring process is increasing exponentially every year. Also, it was found out that "approximately 11 percent more plan to use social media to screen applicants. Approximately 29 percent report using Facebook, 26 percent use LinkedIn, 21 percent use MySpace, 11 percent search blogs, and 7 percent utilize Twitter" (Slovensky & Ross, 2012, p. 56). Slovensky & Ross (2012) also mention that as Facebook is currently the most popular social media site, it is not surprising that American employers visit this site. Further, only 17 percent of employers consider this type of background check to be a violation of an applicant's privacy (Read, 2007). This use of social media is not only limited to finding information about applicants but has also been the reason that applicants have been screened out. Slovensky & Ross (2012) cited that almost 35 percent of US employers in one survey report that they have found content on social networking sites that caused them not to hire an

applicant (Haefner, 2009; Smith & Kidder, 2010). This is a complete change to the traditional ways of hiring, where resumes, cover letters, interviews and references were used in the screening process. Slovensky & Ross (2012) mention that employers have realized that resumes and cover letters are often written to highlight only the best possible characteristics of the applicant; as application forms and interviews also suffer from impression management attempts (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Huffcutt, 2011). Slovensky & Ross (2012) have said that, “information found in cover letters and resumes is often factually incorrect or exaggerated (Hall, 2004); as many as 41 percent of the 5.8 million resumes reviewed by the employment firm ADP contained errors in terms of education, employment experience, or credentials (Levashina & Campion, 2009)” (p. 56). This may be one of the reasons for employers to look elsewhere for information which may be not be controlled and may reflect honest information about the applicant. Thus social media has turned into one of these platforms for employers to find information about applicants, which otherwise would not have been found through their resumes or cover letters. Unlike resumes, Fernando (2008) explains that SNWs are not easily customizable; people may have different versions of their resume for different job applications, but they do not have different versions of their SNW (as cited in Slovensky & Ross, 2012). SNWs are usually created for purposes other than securing a job; HR managers may believe that these sources provide honest and valid information about the applicant (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).

Many applicants are not aware of social media being used in the hiring process. Thus, being oblivious to this fact, they do not manage their impressions on their online profiles. This leads them to display an honest but naive impression about themselves on the Internet. When these SNW profiles of applicants are examined, HR professionals can verify

information on the resume or application form (Brandenburg, 2008). This gives employers and professional recruiters an opportunity to find out unimpaired information about an applicant. This can further lead to the applicant being screened out of the hiring process depending on the information displayed on his social profile. Rowell (2010) reports that 70 percent of HR managers say they have rejected a job applicant for his or her Internet behavior.

SNWs are also subject to comments and information that are provided by friends, relatives and other acquaintances of the online user or the applicant in this case. Some HR managers may pay particular attention to information written by “friends” of applicants on their SNWs (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Thus negative comments or information provided by friends or family may weigh more importance, as they know the individual on a personal level. Slovensky & Ross (2012) have cited that “a survey by Microsoft reports that 43 percent of employers say they will not hire job candidates based on “inappropriate comments” written by relatives and friends (Goodman, 2010)” (p. 57). So social networking sites still seem to have an impact on the hiring process. Parsons and Liden (1984) have suggested that applicant qualifications explain most of the variance in recruiter evaluations of applicants. Thus, resumes, cover letters that display such information play an important role in the hiring process. “However nowadays, other factors like nonverbal cues (Forsythe, 1990) and photographs (Carlson, 1969) can also account for a significant amount of variance” (as cited in Bohnert & Ross, 2010, p. 342). This can include other information found on social networking websites and personal social networking sites. This information can range from written information, to pictorial images, to even videos. Thus all this information can be used in the hiring process. Bohnert and Ross (2010) have mentioned how “it seems reasonable to

anticipate similar effects for applicant photographs found on social networking Web pages: candidates appearing in photographs of themselves in a drunken stupor are likely to be evaluated unfavorably” by hiring managers (p. 342). “(Weiner, 1993) in his research displayed how attribution theory shows that individuals who are seen as causing their own problems [e.g., drunkenness; obesity] are viewed as less desirable employees (Larwood, 1995)” (as cited in Bohnert, & Ross, 2010, p. 342). Smith (2007), said evaluators sometimes make such causal attributions from job applicant photographs (as cited in Bohnert, & Ross, 2010). Thus pictorial images on SNWs can also have a considerable effect in the hiring process. Although this practice may be ethically and legally incorrect, employers still seem to use this method of screening which may change an applicant’s chances to get hired drastically.

The important point to be noted is that this method of selection can work in favor of the applicants or against them. This largely depends on the kind of information that the employers find. Therefore, it is important to find out what kind of effect positive, negative or neutral impressionistic information has on recruiters and employers who are exposed to such information during the hiring process.

Impact Of Positive Versus Negative Information In Decision-Making

Previously, many researchers have tried to find the importance of positive and negative information in general and their influence on individuals. This holds importance on impressions that are formed about individuals due to the positive or negative information that is found about them. Ito, Larsen, Smith, & Cacioppo (1998) have discussed in their paper

how negative information usually influences evaluations more strongly than comparably extreme positive information while also mentioning how impression formation is one area in which this is evident. Fiske (1980) has also stated that negative traits are given greater weight in overall evaluations than are positive traits.

Ito et al. (1998) say, “a greater weighting for negative information than positive information can also be seen in risk-taking research, where the axiom that losses loom larger than gains often holds” (p. 887). Thus many authors have spoken about how negative information will always hold more importance and will have a greater influence than positive information. This may also hold true to a hiring scenario. For example, in this case if an employer sees negative information about a job candidate and notices some positive information about the same candidate, the negative information may prove to hold more weight and have a greater influence than the positive information. Thus, depending on their hiring goals, having the positive information may make no difference to the hiring manager, as the negative information that is displayed about the job candidate may render the positive information irrelevant to the decision maker. This can mean that any kind of negative information found on the social networking page of a job applicant may cause a negative influence on the hiring decisions and all the other positive information available about the applicant may make no difference as the negative information could have a greater effect. This scenario can cause a negative effect on the applicant in a hiring process.

A major part of this research therefore is to find out if negative information in a hiring scenario will carry greater weight than positive information or vice-a-versa. According to all the authors mentioned above, negative information should have more influence in a hiring decision but whether this principle holds true in a hiring process is the question that is being

asked in this research paper. Bohnert & Ross (2010) have said, “SNWs are a double-edged sword. Compared to a control group, an unprofessional Website can significantly hurt a candidate’s chances of being hired” (p. 345). Bohnert & Ross (2010) have also mentioned that, “a positive oriented profile like a professional oriented or family-oriented SNW can increase a candidate’s attractiveness and chances of getting a job relative to a control group” (p. 345). It was seen that a negatively oriented profile showed a decrease in candidate attractiveness and chances of getting a job relative to both positively oriented and control groups. So it is known that a negative social networking site will lead to a negative evaluation of the candidate while a positive social networking site will lead to a positive influence in the hiring process. So the question now is if an employee had to compare the negative and positive SNW to a neutral SNW, would the negative SNW be rated lower than the neutral SNW in a hiring process? Also it will be interesting to find whether the positive SNW will be rated higher than the neutral SNW and eventually will it positively influence the hiring decision of professional recruiters? These questions will be tackled in this research paper.

Effects Of Social Media On The Recommended Salary Of Job Applicants

Salary forms an important part of any job and is given importance by both employers and employees alike. Many job applicants even apply to a certain job after checking if the average salary of that particular job meets their requirements. In such a condition, if a recommended starting salary can vary due to job irrelevant variables that can affect a job applicant, then this practice may not be considered to be ethical. In their paper, Hitt & Barr (1989) have explained how there is a difference in wage or salary between various groups in

the labor force. They have also said “consistent differences were found between men and women and between minorities and non-minorities” (p. 54). Thus we can see that non-job related variables like gender and the status of an individual have affected recommended starting salaries in the past and still continue to do the same. “Concerns about race and age discrimination in compensation has been expressed (Denis, 1985; Golbe, 1985), while Hurd, Murray, & Shaw (1984) described that wage segregation often is not based on education, employee choice, skills, job evaluations, or fair competition but appears to have a cultural base (e.g., based on sex or race)” (as cited in Hitt & Barr, 1989, p. 54). In the past, work places and employers have discriminated employees according to their, color, caste, culture, religion, race and sex, although these practices have been reduced in today’s generation and fair practices are being introduced in many organizations. O’Neill & Polachek (1993) confirm this by stating, “Starting in the early 1980’s, the female-to-male earnings ratio began to increase, reaching close to 72% by 1990” (p. 206). Thus, variables that are considered job-irrelevant are regularly used in managerial selection decisions and may be considered to be more important than job-relevant variables (Hitt & Barr, 1989). This principle might also apply in the hiring context.

Even though managers were directed towards specific job-relevant variables along with proper job descriptions, there were signs of job-irrelevant effects arising, thus proving the existence of discrimination. For example, Blacks were rated lower than Whites, indicating racial bias (Hitt & Barr, 1989). Along with racial bias, there have been biases according to the sex of an individual. As mentioned by Hitt & Barr (1989), “although applicants were equivalent in education and relevant job experience, managers recommended higher starting salaries for men” (p. 59). Also as acknowledged by O’Neill & Polachek

(1993), “their study found that the hourly wage gap between women and men declined at a rate of about 1% per year between 1976 and 1989” (p. 225). There have been instances and attempts to reduce such biased practice and to create equality in the workplace. Therefore, many employers do not ask for a person’s gender and religion or race as part of an individual’s job application. Also people have the right to not disclose these variables to employers or organizations to maintain a fair selection process.

Still, undeterred by this, many organizations are found to discriminate job applicants on other grounds and have victimized them in areas other than their wage, like their starting salaries. Hitt and Barr (1989) state that even if men and women are treated equally in subsequent pay decisions, the gap still remains in starting salaries. When such research suggests that a considerable pay difference exists in starting salaries between men and women, then have these job irrelevant variables extended themselves to social media as well? In today’s generation, it is much easier to find information online and when employers can navigate on social media and find information about a job applicant online, can they discriminate a job applicant on recommended starting salaries using social media? If employers see some kind of negative information about a job applicant, could that be a cause for the employer to offer a reduced starting salary? Bohnert and Ross (2010) have shown that when alcohol-oriented (negative) and family-oriented conditions (positive) on social media were compared, raters expressed that they would offer the candidate with the alcohol-oriented SNW starting salaries that were 7% less than those with the family-oriented SNW. With such a difference occurring on the salary of an applicant due to invalid information found on the Internet, the selection process could then be considered to be unfair and biased about the job applicant. This is made worse because applicants are being judged on materials

found online without their knowledge and not on the basis of their experience or credentials.

Conclusion And Analysis

From the overall observations and the preceding literature review, there are a few gaps that can be seen in the research literature. The fact that there is no way to find out which images or information found on social media would be desirable or undesirable for hiring makes job applicants blind to the fact that social media is being used in the hiring process. Without having such knowledge, job applicants would not know what would positively or negatively affect their hiring chances, thus having no way to manage their online impressions. This would be considered to be unfair and a biased way to perform recruiting. The previous study conducted by Bohnert and Ross (2010) provides valuable information about the effects of SNW images on hiring decisions but there were shortcomings in their research, perhaps most importantly, the visual pictorial images used in their study were selected without acknowledgement of their placement on any underlying scale or continuum of desirability for hiring. There is a need to correct this limitation in the literature by developing pictorial images or experimental stimuli with known scaling properties. These pictorial images or experimental stimuli, once found, can then be used to better test the effect of SNW images on hiring decisions. The other limitation seen in the previous study was the use of university student participants rather than professional hiring managers and recruiters. This design limitation reduces the generalizability of Bohnert and Ross's (2010) study. This limitation needs to be corrected by showing the pictorial images with: (1) known scaling properties to (2) professional hiring managers and recruiters; who can then present us with

real world hiring experience to help us determine whether social media influences the decision making in the hiring process and how this influence is manifested.

Study One: Scaling The Desirability Of Pictorial Images For Hiring

Introduction

This study was created to fill in the gaps from the previous research. In previous research papers, there has not been an effort to precisely define what kind of content is deemed appropriate to post on personal social media pages and what kind of content is deemed inappropriate. As discussed earlier, employers from all over the world use social media to screen job applicants. When such a practice is being conducted, it is important for purposes of substantive research to know how the content of SNW pictorial images impacts others' impressions and to have a means of identifying images with known scaling properties on this underlying dimension of favorability for hiring. Among other advantages, such a scaling exercise allows the researcher to establish the range of effects that SNW pictorial images can have on hiring decisions. A SNW pictorial image alone can create many possible impressions and such images are found in abundance in any social networking site. It is important to have a systematic means of understanding how these images impact others' impressions if rigorous research is to be done.

When employers browse through social networking site content of potential employees, they come across written information, videos and images. Out of these three, images take the least time to browse through and can describe a lot about the person who posted these images. Clicking photos and capturing moments of an individual's life has become a lot easier and more accessible. These images then can be further uploaded within a few seconds to any social networking site using smartphones. Thus, one can find hundreds of images in a person's social media page, which can depict a person's day-to-day life. Employers try to utilize images that are available on publically accessible websites in order

to find out more information about job applicants. So it is very important to find out what kinds of images are reliably considered desirable for hiring of an applicant and which images are considered undesirable for hiring. Thus we come to the basic research question of Study 1: *What kind of a pictorial image is reliably and consistently considered desirable, neutral or undesirable on a social media profile by others viewing a personal website (SNW)?*

This research goal was accomplished by scaling a set of SNW pictorial images on an underlying continuum of desirability for hiring and those three images were retained for Study 2 that had the desired location on the continuum as well as those with requisite scaling properties. This scaling exercise located pictorial images as closely as possible to the extreme ends of the desirability continuum, (very desirable and very undesirable), as well as an image which fell directly in the centre or more neutral point of the continuum. As well, the scaling exercise ensured these three pictorial images had very good consistency between participants as to where they fell on the continuum.

Methodology

This chapter explains the methodology used to conduct Study 1. The geographic scope of the research is Western Canada, primarily conducted at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George, British Columbia, Canada.

Study participants. The participants of this study were students studying at the University of Northern BC. For the purpose of the research, four different groups of students were considered as participants. The four different groups of participants included third-year undergraduate students, fourth-year undergraduate students, fifth-year and above

undergraduate students and graduate students. The reason behind choosing these participants was that the study needed participants that were students and who fell between the ages of 18 to 35 years. Thus, participants included individuals who were young enough to be heavily involved in social networking sites but at the same time they needed to be mature students in order to understand a hiring scenario and make hiring decisions by assuming the role of an employer. Therefore, the demographics of these undergraduate students and graduate students fit very well for this study.

For the purposes of statistical power, I obtained 40 participants, $N = 40$ (21 Female, 18 male and 1 other). Respondents were enrolled in different degrees and were of different age groups with very different orientations. Table 1 shows the sample sizes for each year of study, and also the sizes by gender, by age and by hiring experience within each year of study.

Table 1

Number of students by year of study, and numbers by gender, age and hiring experience

		Gender			Age			Hiring Experience	
Year of	Total								
Study	N	Female	Male	Other	18-25	26-35	36-45	Yes	No
Third									
Year	4	3	1	0	3	1	0	4	0
Fourth									
Year	2	2	0	0	2	0	0	1	1
Fifth									
Year	6	6	0	0	6	0	0	2	4
Graduate									
	28	7	20	1	7	19	2	15	13
Total									
	40	21	18	1	18	20	2	22	18

Stimulus development. In order to find images that would fall as desired on the underlying continuum of desirability (favorability), I developed a number of images that would range a variety of activities along with different social networking sites for every image. I developed 18 different social networking sites for 18 different job applicants. Examples of such social media profiles are given in Appendices L, M and N.

The 18 images embedded in social networking sites were randomized and shown to 40 subjects as part of the scaling exercise. Each profile was labeled with the name of a different individual and these 18 different individuals were depicted as performing a different activity. These images were developed to span as completely as possible the underlying scaling dimension of desirability for hiring. The activity depicted in the image was briefly described in a statement above the image and some background information about the individual was given beside the image. Again, see Appendices L, M and N for examples of SNW profiles used in Study 1.

In order to avoid confusing favorability judgments in Study 1 with factors such as attractiveness, gender, race or other characteristic of the person in the image, one model was portrayed as the job applicant in the activities across all 18 images. The background information on these social media images was also kept constant, including the hometown of the applicant, which was Prince George, British Columbia, Canada and the educational institution where the applicant studied which was mentioned as the University of Northern British Columbia. Thus the favorability impressions of the participants in Study 1 were solely based on the activity being performed in the image.

Eighteen different first and last names were chosen for the eighteen different profiles, and these names being the most commonly found names in the U.S. (Census, 1990; Census, 2005). Thus the 18 applicants were portrayed to be representatives of the male American population. The 18 names that were chosen are as follow: Andrew Lewis, David Miller, Edward Wright, Jack Carter, Kevin Moore, Mike Wright, Richard Davis, Steven Hill, William Jones, Bobby Anderson, Brian Young, Daniel Turner, Frank Evans, Henry Green, James Brown, Mark Collins, Peter Roberts and Shawn Hall.

The 18 different images that were created for this study, ranged in favorability from very positive to very negative. Some of these images were created to portray a positive orientation with activities that are considered to be positive in the ambient culture. Similarly, some images were created to portray activities that are considered negative, while some were created to portray neutral visual images. The stimuli headings can be found in Appendix K.

The description and the headers for these images were created so that they correspond to the actions being performed in the images. It was intended that the participants find these images to be as realistic as possible. The two models depicted in the images were asked to sign consent forms that described them the purpose of the study, the procedures, the potential harms and risks, the potential benefits to them from this study, the confidentiality of the images and their right to participate and withdraw and the conditions related to these. The consent form used in Study 1 for student participants can be found in the Appendix B at the end of the paper.

All possible measures were taken to ensure that the images were strictly identified as research materials and that the images were not associated with the real-life activities of the models by anyone.

Administration of stimulus material to participants. The participants were handed a consent form (see Appendix B) and the consent form was discussed with them. Once the participants signed the consent forms, they were given a pre-questionnaire form (see Appendix C) that asked them for demographic and background information including their gender, their major, their year of study, their age group, and information about their experience with making hiring decisions, if they had been told by employers about the use of

social media to make hiring decisions and whether they owned a social networking web page.

They were shown a job description for the position of sales manager at a Health and Beauty Aids departmental store, adapted from Penny (2014) (see Appendix D). They were then asked to assume the role of a hiring manager and were told that they were going to hire an applicant for the above-mentioned position. They were given a resume and a cover letter (see Appendix D), and were told that all the applicants had the same resume and cover letter and thus they all had the same skill set; however the background information that was found in their Facebook page was different. The resume and cover letter were created to be as neutral as possible in terms of applicant desirability and the educational and work experience that the job required. The study participants were informed that eighteen applicants had applied for the job and they had to see the Facebook page of these applicants and answer one question about each applicant and the question was: "How desirable do you think is this job applicant for hiring?" (See Appendix E).

The participants were provided with a 7-point Likert-type scale, with 1 being "most undesirable", 4 being "neutral" and 7 being "most desirable." The participants were asked to rate the 18 applicants according to their desirability for being hired by an organization. All the images were shown to the participants in random order, to eliminate the potential impact of presentation order on the results of the scaling analysis. A random number generator built by Dr. Mads Haahr of the School of Computer Science and Statistics at Trinity College, Dublin in Ireland in 1998 was used to randomize the order of the images (Haahr, 1998). The participants were told not to compare any of the job applicants while making decisions. Thus each application package had the same three components: the resume, the cover letter and the

social media page. The social media page contained the manipulation of the independent variable. The other two sections of the application package, which were the cover letter and the resume, remained the same. Each application package also contained the job description and the questionnaire.

Once the participants went through all the applicants and rated them, all the materials were collected and the participants were debriefed. Then the participants were informed that the person in the images was just a model and all the images that were shown to them were fictional. They were told that all the materials are for experimental purposes only. They were also clearly informed that the activities performed by the models in the images are purely fictional and at any time the models had not really performed any of the actions depicted in the images. They were informed that the purpose of the study was to create a hiring scenario to find out the effects of social media on the hiring process. Refer to Appendix F.

Results And Analysis

As part of Study 1, all the desirability ratings were submitted to a scaling analysis. The first step was to find the average scores of all the images from image one to eighteen. The average desirability ratings for each image across all the subjects were placed in a table. The standard deviation of all the images were calculated and these figures were also entered into the summary table. These can be seen in Tables 2 and 3 below.

The most desirable image for hiring was found out to be the Leadership-oriented image with an average of 6.325 out of 7, and a low standard deviation of 0.944. This image was chosen to anchor the high end of the desirability continuum. On the other hand the most undesirable image for hiring was found out to be the Violence-oriented image with an

average rating of 1.475 out of 7 and a standard deviation of 0.784. The neutral image was identified as the Outgoing-oriented profile, with a neutral rating of 4.925 out of 7 and a standard deviation of 1.047.

Nine profiles out of the eighteen were positively oriented as they contained activities that were perceived as desirable to hiring. All of these profiles scored a rating of 5 and above out of 7 and they are the Leadership Orientation, Volunteer Orientation, Family Orientation, Professional Orientation, Artistic Orientation, Travel Orientation, Sports Orientation and Social Orientation. These findings are presented in table 2.

Table 2

Scaling statistics for social media images at the higher end of the hiring desirability continuum

Social Networking Website (SNW)	Descriptive Statistics			
	Average	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Professional	5.650	6	6	1.144
Family	5.725	6	6	0.905
Social	5.200	5	5	1.159
Volunteer	5.925	6	7	0.997
Outgoing	4.925	5	4	1.047
Sports	5.200	5	5	1.090
Travel	5.225	5	5	1.025
Artistic	5.625	6	5	0.925
Leadership	6.325	7	7	0.944

It is apparent from this table that the Leadership image produced the strongest perception of desirability among the Study 1 participants. All standard deviations in the table are relatively small compared to the full 7-point range of the desirability scale.

The remaining nine profiles out of the eighteen were classified as negatively oriented as they were found below the mid point of the desirability scale. All of these profiles scored a

¹ **Note:** The highlighted SNWs were chosen for inclusion under the independent variable manipulation in Study Two.

3 or less out of 7. These profiles are the Drug Orientation, Smoking Orientation, Hookah Smoking Orientation, Alcohol Orientation, Illegal Behavior Orientation, Dismissive Behavior Orientation, Abusive Gesture Orientation, Sick Orientation and Violence Orientation. Posting these images on one's social networking site would create a negative impression about the applicants thus making them less desirable for hiring. The results for the negatively oriented profiles are presented in the tabular form in table 3 below.

Table 3

Scaling statistics for social media images at the lower end of the hiring desirability continuum

Social Networking Website (SNW)	Statistics			
	Average	Median	Mode	Standard Deviation
Dismissive Behavior	2.375	2	2	1.390
Smoking	2.875	3	4	1.223
Drug	2.975	3	3	1.250
Sick	2.075	2	1	1.269
Abusive Gesture	2.200	2	1	1.539
Illegal	2.400	2	2	1.516
Alcohol	2.525	2.5	1	1.281
Hookah Smoking	3.050	3	3	1.218
Violence²	1.475	1	1	0.784

² **Note:** The highlighted SNW was chosen for inclusion under the independent variable manipulation in Study Two.

The hookah-smoking oriented profile got the highest score, which is still lower than the scale midpoint and thus considered as negative and undesirable for hiring. The lowest score was given to the violence-oriented profile making it the most undesirable image for hiring. The statistics are graphically presented in Figure 2 below. The average score of all the negative profiles are less than 3 except for the hookah smoking-oriented profile. The standard deviations are low and comparable to those of the positively oriented profiles. The violence-oriented profile has the best scaling properties for inclusion in Study 2 with the lowest scale mean and standard deviation of all the 9 negatively oriented profiles.

In order to test the fit of the original ranking of images by their hiring desirability using the observed mean of the SNW pictorial images, a Non Parametric One-Sample Runs test was conducted (see Table 4). This analysis showed that the original hypothesized ordering of the pictorial images was mirrored to a considerable extent in the actual scaling data collected in Study 1.

Table 4

Non Parametric One-Sample Runs test

Null Hypothesis	Significance	Decision
The sequence of values defined by the average ratings of desirability for hiring ≤ 3.988 and > 3.988 is random	.000	Reject the null hypothesis

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05

A paired sample t-test was also conducted between the most desirable/positive image (leadership-oriented) and the most undesirable/negative image (violence-oriented), the most positive image (leadership-oriented) and the neutral image (outgoing-oriented) and finally

between the neutral image (outgoing-oriented) and the most negative image (violence-oriented). The results of the paired samples test can be seen in table 5 below.

Table 5

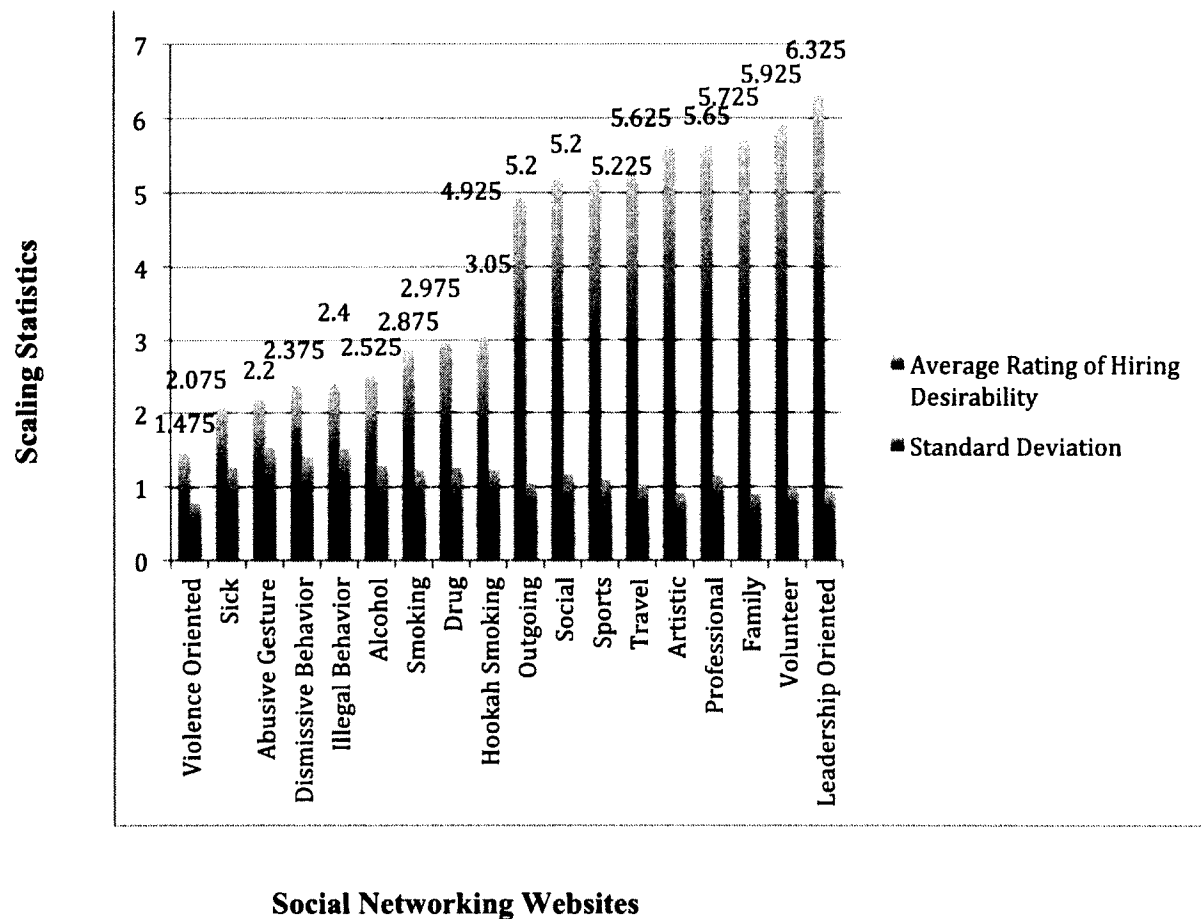
Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Significance (2-tailed)
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 (Positive & Negative)	4.850	1.369	.216	4.412	5.288	22.405	39	.000
Pair 2 (Positive & Neutral)	1.400	1.105	.175	1.047	1.753	8.015	39	.000
Pair 3 (Positive & Negative)	3.450	1.395	.221	3.004	3.896	15.641	39	.000

These analyses demonstrate that the intent of the scaling exercise in Study 1, i.e. to identify widely separated points for the visual stimuli along the hiring desirability continuum, was achieved.

The full results of the scaling exercise in Study 1 can be seen in the figure 1 below, where the 18 average profile means are ranked from lowest to highest.

Figure 1. Ranking of scaling statistics. This figure illustrates the scaling statistics of table 2 and 3 according to central tendency and dispersion



Three profiles from the above figure were chosen for inclusion in Study 2 as they had the best scaling characteristics for the intended purpose in Study 1 and were therefore incorporated into the independent variable manipulation of that study. The three profiles are leadership-oriented profile, outgoing-oriented profile and violence-oriented profile. Thus Study 1 helped identify anchors on either end of the desirability for hiring scale, which can now be used in Study 2. Study 1 is hereby complete and I move onto my report of Study 2.

Study Two: Impact Of Social Media On The Suitability Rating Of Job Applicants By Professional Recruiters

Introduction

From Study 1, we have learnt that there are certain SNW pictorial images that are considered more negative than others and the same applies for positive images. Thus Study 1 has helped us identify a scale for these images depending on their rating of desirability for hiring. Although Study 1 only asked for the views of students and how they perceived images found on an individuals' social media profile in a hiring scenario, it gave us insight into the reaction of different individuals to pictorial images on SNWs with respect to hiring and showed us that different images are perceived in different ways. The only way to find out if these social media images influenced actual hiring decisions was to present them to professional employees in the workplace who had experience with the real recruitment process and determine whether their hiring decisions were affected. Study 2 was developed to answer this very question.

From the literature review, it is seen that a positive impression leads to a positive impact and this is considered in this study with professional employers. To see the effect a positively oriented profile has on the hiring process, we compared it to the effects of a neutral oriented profile and thus found out the degree of influence it had. Thus for a professional employer, it is hypothesized that a positively oriented profile, which contains positive images will have a higher suitability rating for hiring than a neutral oriented profile, which contains neutral images.

Also from the literature review, it was found that a negative impression leads to a negative impact and a negative impact is always greater than a positive impact. Therefore, to see the effect of a negatively oriented profile on the hiring process, we compared its effects to that of a neutral oriented profile and a positively oriented profile and found out the difference in their impacts. Thus, for a professional employer, it is hypothesized that a negatively oriented profile, which contains a negative image, will have a lower suitability rating for hiring than a neutral oriented profile and a positively oriented profile. This leads to the first hypothesis for Study 2: H1: *The images from Study One will influence managers' judgements of suitability of hiring of job applicants in the following linear pattern – Positive Image > Neutral Image > Negative Image.*

Salary plays an important role when a job applicant is being considered as a potential employee. A SNW pictorial image seen during the hiring process may also influence the starting salary offered to the hiree and it is hypothesized that a negatively oriented profile, which contains a negative image, will be offered a lower starting salary than a neutral oriented profile and a positively oriented profile. This leads us to the second hypothesis: H2: *The images from Study One will influence the professional managers' judgements of the recommended salary in the following linear pattern – Positive Image > Neutral Image > Negative Image.*

Methodology For Study Two

The chapter explains the methodology we used to conduct Study 2 to find the suitability rating of job applicants by professional recruiters. The geographic scope of this research is western Canada, primarily the cities of Prince George and Vancouver in the province of British Columbia. As this is a replication and extension of the previous research

conducted by Bohnert and Ross (2010), this study used research material and stimuli from that study. The SNW profiles were created and were independent of the previous study but the resume and the cover letter were adopted from the previous study. Also the questions on the survey questionnaire were adopted and modified from the previous study.

Study Participants. As part of Study 2, 31 participants were selected and all of them were professional employees including managers with recruiting and hiring experience of one year or more. The reason behind these choices of participants gives us an insight into the real world of recruitment and allows us to see how organizational hiring decisions are made when SNW pictorial images are considered in the hiring process. That is why; this demographic of professional employers fits the purpose of this study very well and we will be referring to them as professional recruiters.

The participants were contacted in two ways. The first way was to e-mail professional recruiters and inform them about the study, and then invite them to participate in the survey. The second way was to go to their offices or call them and book an appointment to meet them and then tell them about the study and invite them to participate. Refer to Appendix G. The researcher administered the study to participants on a face-to-face basis; in part, to maintain the privacy and image of the model that volunteered for the scaling exercise in Study 1. For the purposes of statistical power, I attempted to obtain at least 30 participants and I collected 31 completed surveys. Respondents were all professional managers and recruiters who had more than one year of experience of hiring job candidates.

Approach to stimulus development. Three different application packages were prepared for three applicant profiles chosen from Study 1 at the very positive, neutral and very negative points of the continuum of desirability for hiring. Each application package

contained a cover letter and a resume, which was identical to the one provided in Study 1 (Refer to Appendix D). The resume and cover letter were written to be as neutral as possible in regards to the potential future performance of the job applicant. The application package also included one of the three SNW pictorial images scaled in Study 1. Each SNW profile consisted of the same details as presented in Study 1. All three images were shown to each participant as part of a repeated measure within-subjects design. Every effort was made to keep the stimulus materials identical across the three conditions of the within-subjects design, except for a systematic varying of the applicants' name and SNW pictorial images.

First Condition: The applicant representing from Study 1 that was chosen, was Jack Carter, who had the 'most desirable for hiring' profile. This image was 'Leadership' oriented and it contained an image of Jack standing in a classroom behind a reading stand and giving a seminar with the headline- "Giving a seminar on Leadership."

Second Condition: The second applicant was Edward Wright, whose profile was scaled as neutral in Study 1. This profile was 'Outgoing' oriented and it contained an image of him on a beach in the waters wearing shorts with the headline- "Taking a dip in the ocean!"

Third Condition: The third applicant whose profile was presented to the study participants was Peter Roberts and he was previously rated as the 'least desirable for hiring.' This profile was 'Violence' oriented and it involved him smashing the window of a car with the headline: "This is what happens if you park your car next to my backyard !!" The complete profiles of all the three conditions are given in Appendices L, M and N.

Dependent variables. 1. Composite Measure of Applicant Suitability for Hiring: Four questions asked participants to judge the applicants on their professionalism,

desirability for hiring, how likely would they be to offer the job and the likeliness of them calling the applicants for an interview. Please refer to appendix J to see the questionnaire instrument containing the dependent variables in this study. The scores of items 1 to 4, on seven-point Likert scales were summated to yield a composite score of suitability for hiring. The composite was calculated for each one of the three conditions in the study design.

2. Recommended Salary on Hiring: The recommended salary dependent variable was a single question, i.e. question number 5, that was asked of the participant across all three conditions seeking a recommended salary for the job applicant. The options given were: \$30,000, \$32,000, \$34,000, \$36,000, \$38,000, \$40,000 and \$42,000, with \$36,000 being the average salary that was offered to newly hired managers with a deviation of \$2,000.

3. Process Variables: Lastly in order to acquire more information and to learn which of the three elements of the profile (cover letter, resume or pictorial image) had the most effect on the dependent variables, the participants were asked to rate what affected their decision the most. They were given the following options to rate on 7-point Likert scales: cover letter, resume and background information check (social media page). It is important to note that there were no missing data.

Administration of stimulus material to participants. The participants were given a consent form which included the purpose of the study, the procedures, the potential harms and risks, the potential benefits to them from this study, the confidentiality of the images and their right to participate or withdraw. The consent form used in Study 2 for professional recruiters can be found in Appendix H. Participants were debriefed after they completed the dependent measures for the last of the three within-subjects conditions. Once the participants signed the consent forms, they were given a pre-questionnaire form that asked them

demographic and background information, this can be found in Appendix I. This included their gender, their age group, their current position title, number of years working at that position, if they made hiring decision as part of their job, total number of years working in job where they helped make hiring decisions, if they have ever used Internet search engines to screen job candidates and whether they owned a social networking web page.

The third step was to show them a job description for the position of sales manager at a Health and Beauty Aids departmental store, adapted from Penny (2014). They were then asked to assume the role of a hiring manager and were told that they were going to hire an applicant for the above-mentioned position. The participants were informed that three applicants had applied for the job and the application package contained a cover letter, a resume, a screenshot of their social media profile page and a two-page questionnaire that they had to answer for that particular applicant.

Each of the three-applicant profile packages was administered separately from the others so as to separate the three conditions of the within-subjects study into distinct individual trials. These three application packages were given to each participant in random order to eliminate the possibility of order effects. Similar to Study 1, the application package had the same three components as seen in Appendices D, L, M and N: the resume, the cover letter and the social media page. Only the social media page contained the manipulation of the independent variable. The other two sections of the application package, which are the cover letter and the resume, remained the same.

After the participants went through all three applicants' profile packages rating each set of dependent variables in turn, then all the materials were collected and the participants were debriefed. In the debriefing exercise, the participants were informed that the person in

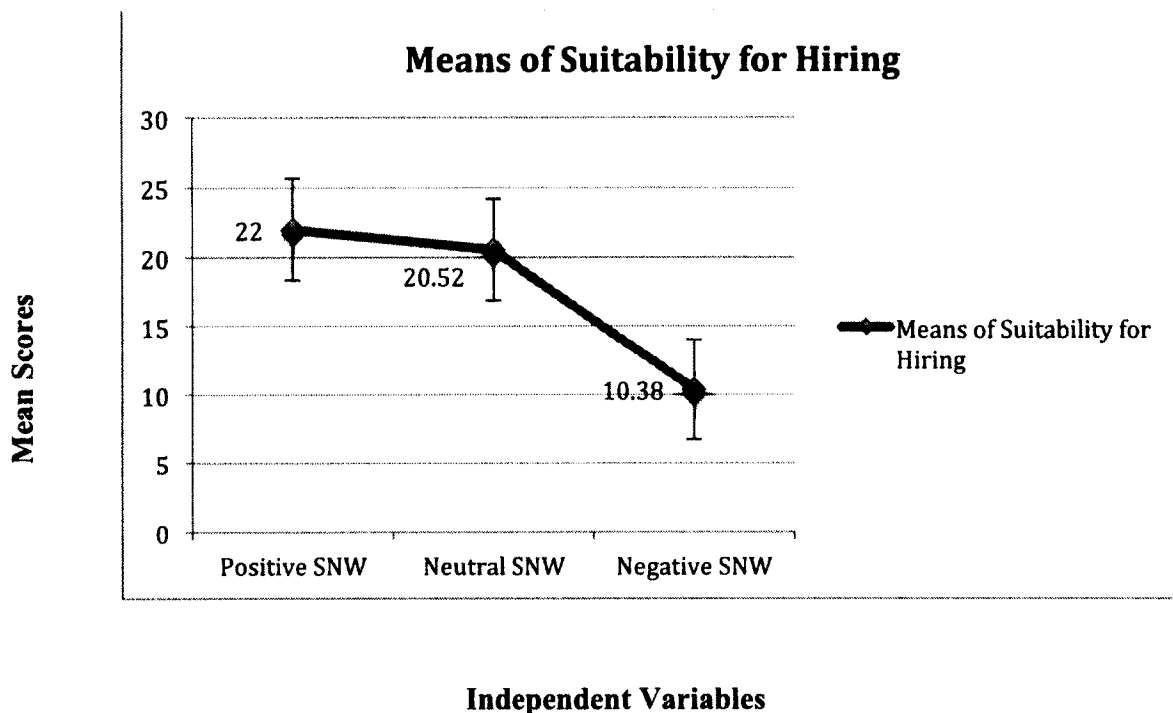
the images was just a model and all the images that were shown to them were fictional. They were told that all the materials are for experimental purposes only. They were also clearly informed that the activities performed by the models in the images is purely fictional and for research purposes and at no time have the models consumed any of the substance shown in the images. Finally the participants were informed about the true purpose of the study and all questions from the participants were answered. Also the participants were drawn into a general conversation as to why they chose what they did and what was their opinion about the survey and the study. They were also asked about their experience as professionals with hiring in their organizations and how they perceived social media in the hiring process. All the feedback was written down and considered in the discussion part of this paper.

Results Of Study Two

Study 2 is a within-subjects design experiment which was used for two reasons: 1) to reduce the time commitments of the busy managers who served as participants, and 2) to maximize the power of the study given relatively few managers who could be recruited.

Tests of study hypothesis for hiring suitability. The study analyses were conducted using the SPSS program. As part of the tests of study hypothesis, tests were run on the first dependent variable, i.e. suitability for hiring to find its descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics for Hiring Suitability are shown in figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Hockey stick pattern of suitability for hiring. This figure illustrates the actual pattern of the judgments of suitability rating for hiring.



From the above figure, we can see that the scores of 31 participants were tested and it was found that the mean scores were gradually increasing from the SNW with the negative image to the one with the positive image. Also the standard error was low across all the variables. Also as we can see above, although the mean scores are decreasing across conditions as suggested in Hypothesis 1, the pattern of differences is seen as a hockey stick pattern, rather than the predicted linear pattern. There was a relatively smaller mean difference between the suitability ratings of the positive and the neutral SNW profiles, but a considerably larger mean difference between the negative SNW profile as compared with the positive and neutral SNW profiles. This “hockey stick” pattern raises some interesting theoretical and practical issues that will be further explored in the discussion section.

Hypothesis 1 of Study 2 was tested by comparing the repeated measures of 'Suitability For Hiring' across the three within-subjects conditions. It also helped find the inter-correlations of the dependent measures. This repeated measures ANOVA was highly significant ($F = 81.9$; $df = 2, 60$; $p < .001$). Table 6 displays the tests of repeated measures of within-subjects for the suitability for hiring across the three job applicants.

Table 6

Tests of repeated measures of within-subjects effects for hiring suitability across the three job applicants

	Mean				Observed
Source	Square	df	F	Partial Eta ²	Power
Suitability for					
Hiring	1189.4	2	81.9***	.732	1.000
Error	14.5	60	-	-	-

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Although the result of the repeated measures ANOVA was significant, the patterning of the results was not as predicted. From the above table, it can be observed that a power analysis was performed for the suitability for hiring variable and the test showed an observed power of 1.000. Thus along with a large effect size, the study also produced high power, as the observed power fell above the Cohen's point of recommended statistical power, which is 0.8.

To further assess the differences seen in this “hockey-stick” pattern, post hoc analyses were conducted. As part of these tests, first the scores for the suitability rating for hiring of positively oriented profile were compared to the neutral oriented profile. This was done by the use of repeated measures test and a significant difference was found ($F = 8.1$; $df = 1, 30$; $p < 0.01$) but the partial eta squared for this difference was somewhat smaller than that for the overall repeated measures analysis.

A post hoc test was conducted to test the relation between the neutral oriented profile and the negatively oriented profile. This difference was highly significant ($F = 83.5$; $df = 1, 30$; $p < 0.001$) and the eta squared showed the over 75% of the variance in Suitability for Hiring is explained by manipulating the favorability of applicant SNW pictorial images. This is represented in table 7 below.

Lastly a repeated measures test of within-subjects contrast was conducted on the contrasts between the positively oriented profile plus neutral oriented profile and the negatively oriented profile. This difference was highly significant ($F = 93.2$; $df = 1, 30$; $p < 0.001$) and the eta squared was close to the second post hoc test above. These results again show a closer correspondence of positive or neutral profile than in the comparison of either of these profiles with the negative profile. Table 7 shows the results of the repeated measures for hiring suitability.

Table 7

Tests of repeated measures of within-subjects effects for hiring suitability between different applicants

Source	Mean Square	df	F	Partial Eta ²	Observed Power
Between Positive and Neutral Applicant					
Suitability for Hiring	29.8	1	8.1**	.212	.786
Error	3.7	30	-	-	-
Between Neutral and Negative Applicant					
Suitability for Hiring	1540	1	83.5***	.736	1.000
Error	18.5	30	-	-	-
Between Positive and Negative Applicant					
Suitability for Hiring	1998.5	1	93.2***	.756	1.000
Error	21.5	30	-	-	-

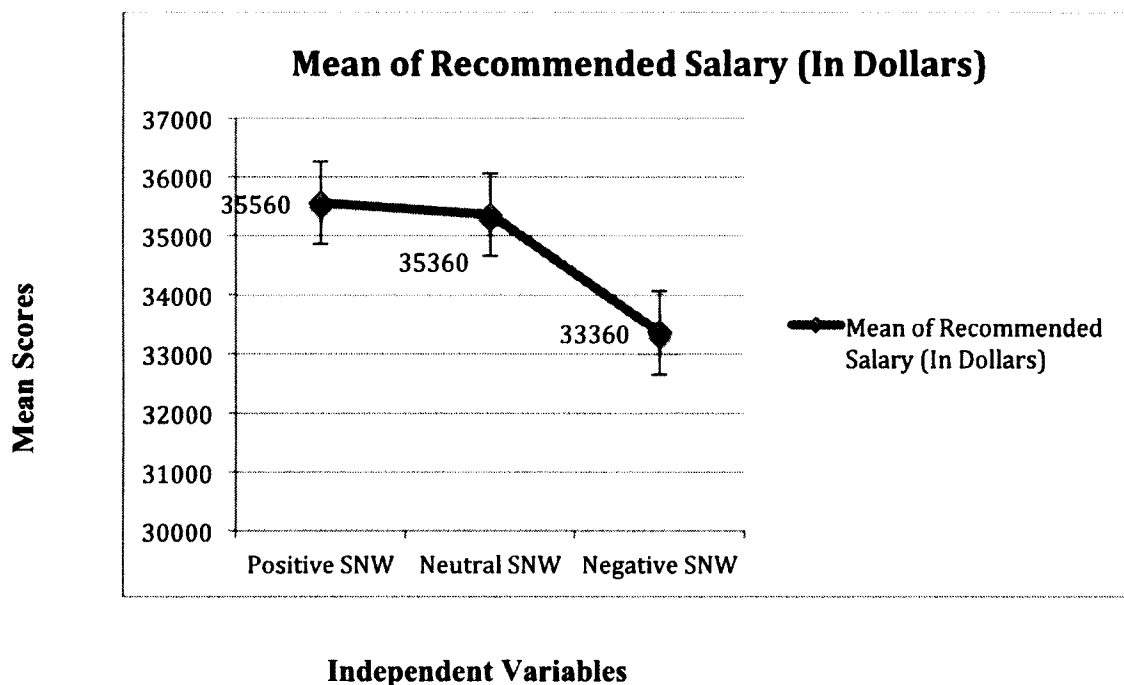
*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

From the above table, we can see that the F value is the highest for the positive vs negative applicants compared to the other repeated measures test. Thus, F value is large because the effect size is large and the error term is low. The second highest F value was for the hiring suitability between the neutral and the negative applicants and this can also be seen

in the hockey-stick pattern in figure 6. The lowest F value is seen between the positive and the neutral profile, thus they are the closest to each other compared to the other profiles. The figure and tables correlate with each other and the hypothesized linear pattern was again not followed and a new hockey-stick pattern is seen.

Tests of study hypothesis for recommended salary. In order to test the second hypothesis, participants were asked a question about the recommended salary that they would be willing to offer the job applicant. Thus participants rated the three applicant profiles as to the salary that they would be offered. The descriptive statistics for this dependent variable across the three repeated measures are given in Figure 3 below. The overall patterning of these three means is similar to that of the ones found for the 'suitability for hiring' dependent variable above. The study analyses were conducted using the SPSS program.

Figure 3. Hockey-stick pattern of recommended salary. This figure illustrates the actual pattern of the recommended salary of hiring for job applicants.



From the above figure, we can see that the scores of 31 participants were tested and it was found that the mean scores were also gradually increasing from the SNW with the negatively oriented image to the SNW with the positively oriented image, as predicted in Hypothesis 2. Although we see the reoccurrence of the 'hockey stick' pattern that was not expected, thus not supporting hypothesis 2.

Again, a repeated measures test was conducted across the three experimental conditions, this time with the recommended salary as the dependent variable ($F = 15.9$, $df = 2, 60$; $p < 0.001$). Two observations now become apparent: (1) The effect sizes across the three conditions are about the same as those for suitability for hiring and (2) the same 'hockey-stick' patterns of measures observed. This can be seen in table 8 below.

Table 8

Tests of repeated measures of within-subjects effects for recommended salary across the three job applicants

	Mean				Observed
Source	Square	df	F	Partial Eta ²	Power
Recommended					
Salary	38462365.6	2	15.9***	.347	.999
Error	2417921.1	60	-	-	-

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

From the above table, it can be observed that a power analysis was performed for the recommended salary and the test showed an observed power of 0.999. Thus along with a large effect size, the study also produced high power, as the observed power fell above the Cohen's point of recommended statistical power, which is 0.8. Thus, even with 31 participants, the study produced strong results.

To further assess the differences seen in this "hockey-stick" pattern, post hoc analyses were conducted. As part of these tests, first the scores for the recommended salary of positively oriented profile were compared to the neutral oriented profile. This was done by the use of repeated measures test and a significant difference was found ($F = 4.2$; $df = 1, 30$; $p < 0.05$) but the eta squared for this difference was somewhat smaller than that for the overall repeated measures analysis. Also we can see that the F value is very low which means the effect size was not as large.

A post hoc test was conducted to test the relation between the neutral oriented profile and the negatively oriented profile. This difference was highly significant than that between the positive and neutral oriented profiles ($F = 14.4$; $df = 1, 30$; $p < 0.01$). Here we can see the F value is larger than the F value in the above comparison, thus it has a larger effect size.

A post-hoc analysis between the positive and negative profiles was conducted on the recommended salary dependent variable and the following results were found ($F = 18.00$; $df = 1, 30$; $p < 0.001$). This difference was highly significant. These results show the highest F value like it did in the 'suitability for hiring' results. This can be seen in table 9 below.

Table 9

Tests of repeated measures of within-subjects effects for recommended salary between different applicants

Source	Mean Square	df	F	Partial Eta ²	Observed Power
Between Positive and Neutral Applicant					
Recommended Salary	790322.6	1	4.2*	.122	.505
Error	190322.6	30	-	-	-
Between Neutral and Negative Applicant					
Recommended Salary	50580645.2	1	14.4**	.324	.956
Error	3513978.5	30	-	-	-
Between Positive and Negative Applicant					
Recommended Salary	64016129	1	18***	.375	.984
Error	3549462.4	30	-	-	-

*p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001

Again, although the results of the repeated measures ANOVA was significant, the patterning of the results was not as predicted. The results of the recommended salary follow the hockey-stick pattern as shown in figure 3.

Thus, Study 2 does not follow the hypothesized pattern and showed a new pattern that differs from the results of previous studies. This study produced large effect sizes with high statistical power throughout the three applicants except for the results between the positive and neutral applicant. The statistical power between these applicants was observed to be 0.505 for the suitability for hiring variable and 0.78 for the recommended salary variable, which falls below Cohen's point of recommended statistical power, but the others have produced strong power. Based on the results of Study 2, I made recommendations to assist future job applicants to create the 'perfect' social media profile in order to manage the impressions, which can help them in the hiring process. Also, I discussed the implications of this research for professional recruiters.

Combined Discussions For Study One And Study Two

Introduction

Three main questions were asked in this study with the first being whether it was possible to create a psychometrically adequate scale that would consistently identify images across the scale of desirability. Use of a selected subset of these images would allow for greater control to distinguish between the most desirable image for hiring and the most undesirable image that an applicant could post which may affect their chances of getting hired. The second and third questions in this study were to find out if there was a difference in the suitability rating for hiring and the recommended salary of applicants between a positive, neutral and a negatively oriented profile. To answer these three questions, several findings will be discussed and contrasted with the literature. This discussion will be focused around three main areas: (1) Which pictorial images are desirable for hiring and which pictorial images are undesirable for hiring? (2) Does a positive, neutral and negatively oriented profile have an influence on the selection of an applicant in the hiring process? (3) Can a positive, neutral or negatively oriented social media profile affect the recommended salary of a job applicant?

Which Pictorial Images Are Desirable For Hiring And Which Pictorial Images Are Undesirable For Hiring?

To answer this question, study 1 was conducted, in which students were asked about their views on different kinds of images on social media with respect to their desirability for hiring. The inspiration for this study came from Bohnert and Ross (2010), who did not scale

their images, for example: their negative image of alcohol consumption. They had no way of finding out the degree of negativity an alcohol-oriented profile had on the hiring desirability and possibly (but to an unknown extent) there were other images that could have been far more negative and impactful than the one they chose. Likewise there is no proof that professional-oriented and family-oriented images used by Bohnert and Ross (2010) are the most positive images found on social networking sites these days. It is fair to say that Bohnert and Ross's (2010) study had limitations due to the lack of external validity; limitations which this study sought to correct. Therefore, with the help of Study 1, it was possible to create a variety of images and scale them and it was found that there were even more negative and positive images than the above mentioned ones that could affect the decisions in hiring.

The most negative image found in Study 1 was the violence-oriented one. In talking to a few participants at the end of the survey of Study 1, I found that although alcohol and drug use was seen negatively, study participants believed that what employees did outside their work hours should not be evaluated in the context of their work or professional lives and they should not be judged for the same. At the same time, if a person is violent then that trait is associated with his/her personality and is dispositional and very likely to appear in work situations, which is very hard to change and makes it very negative. Participants explained how they thought behavioral skills could be taught to a new employee but that the personality of a violent person cannot be changed. Therefore, a person being violent in an image was perceived by study participants to be the most negative and undesirable image found in Study 1.

This finding tells us a lot about how individuals should be careful of what images they post online. Thus an image in which an individual was seen destroying someone else's property was rated as the most negative by professional recruiters. This negative impression could have serious repercussions for the job applicant. Employers may see this job applicant's behavior transitioning into the work place and that scenario is something the study participants wanted to avoid. The violence-oriented profile was thus rated as the most undesirable image. The other images that were in the lower end of the continuum and were considered negative and undesirable for hiring were the images of Sick Orientation, the Hookah Smoking Orientation, Drug Orientation, Smoking Orientation, Alcohol Orientation, Illegal Behavior Orientation, Dismissive Behavior Orientation and Abusive Gesture Orientation. Thus any kinds of alcohol, smoking or drug use were also considered as undesirable in the hiring process. If hiring managers or professional recruiters see these images, there can be serious repercussions for jobs like doctors, nurses or any profession that may require the employee to give medical assistance to other people, as no one would want to be treated by an impaired health professional. This also includes child-care or jobs which require an individual to take care of disabled people. Thus an image can garner a negative response in the hiring process depending on the nature of the job. This can be a reasonable argument and can be an excellent topic for future research. Images that include violence, dismissive or abusive behavior, may be deemed as negative for almost all jobs, which again is an interesting topic for further research. Thus, job applicants need to be more careful of how they use their SNW and whom they make it visible to.

On the other hand, the higher end of the desirability continuum in Study 1 included images that would be considered positive and desirable for hiring. In this research, the most

desirable image was found to be the leadership-oriented image. Previously, in their paper Bohnert and Ross (2010) used a professional-oriented image and a family-oriented image to assess the effects of positive SNW images compared to a negative SNW image on the hiring process. As before mentioned, these SNW images were not scaled. For the scaled SNW images in this study, participants thought that images of family were positive but not overly positive. For individuals with a family, it is very normal for them to post a family image on their social media page, and this image is not very informative for a hiring decision. As for the professional-oriented image similar to the one found in Bohnert and Ross's (2010) study, some participants in Study 1 thought work photos to be positive but at the same time some participants thought the applicant clicking an image while at work is a sign of being idle and inactive or not working hard enough. Thus, it was found that the family and the professional-oriented images were not the most positive or the most desirable and therefore could not be ideally used to find their influence in the hiring process. On the other hand, an image of an applicant giving a seminar on leadership was perceived as the 'most desirable' for hiring purposes as it displayed an additional skill of the job applicant which all the applicants may not possess, thus making this particular applicant more desirable for hiring than the others. Also the volunteer-oriented image was a close second in desirability as it again displayed additional job-related qualities and experience of an individual. The sport-oriented image and the artistic-oriented image were also considered positive and desirable but were closer to being neutral than to the higher end of the desirability continuum. This was because these images represented qualities that may be considered of less value in the work place depending on the type of job.

The most neutral image in Study 1 was found to be the outgoing-oriented image where the applicant was seen taking a dip in the ocean. After talking to the participants, it was found that it was very normal for someone to go swimming or to spend time on a beach or take a vacation and travel, thus the image portrayed a non-working activity that people do in the normal course of their life. The other orientation that was very close to the neutral point was the social-oriented image. Participants' thought playing board games and being socially active was a very common thing to do in non-work settings.

Through this research, people will get an idea of what images should be displayed on social media and what images should be avoided. Especially if individuals are applying for jobs, it is very important for them not to post images that fall on the lower end of the Study 1 continuum. Posting images that are situated in the lower end of the continuum can cause them to lose a job opportunity without being aware of the reason and make them unhireable.

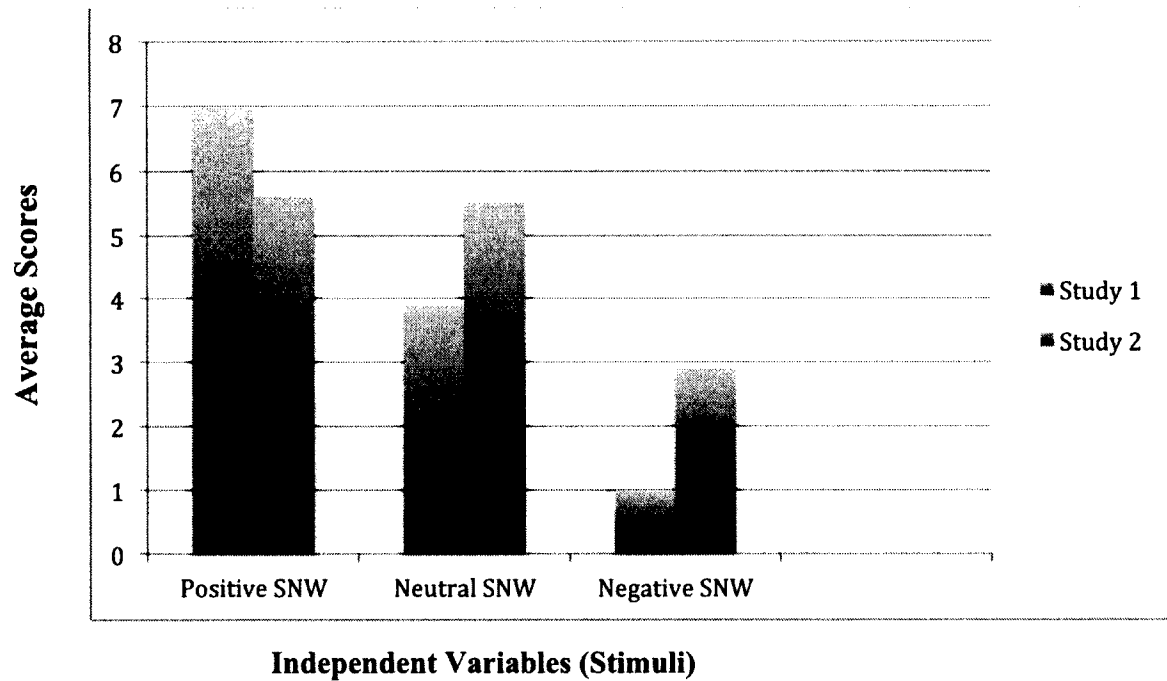
Does A Positive, Neutral And Negatively Oriented Profile Have An Influence On The Selection Of An Applicant In The Hiring Process?

Once the images were scaled according to their desirability, it was easier to choose three images from the continuum, one being on the higher end, one being on the lower end and the last one being the most neutral. The next step was to check whether these three images fell on the same continuum according to professional recruiters as it did for student participants. Thus Study 2 can be considered to be a manipulation check to validate the results of Study 1. With the help of the second study, it was possible to see if a negative image was undesirable for hiring in the real world and whether the positive image had a large impact on the actual hiring process. Through the experiments, it was found that the negative

image created a larger impact compared to the neutral and positive image. Professional recruiters saw it as undesirable for hiring and most of them thought the negative image alone was enough for them to withdraw the job applicant from the selection process. As some recruiters said, “forget offering the job, I wouldn’t even call the applicant with the violence-oriented image for an interview.” This can be proved by the answers of the professional recruiters to the first question of the survey, which asked them how likely would they be to interview the job applicant with the violence-oriented image. The average of their answers was only 2.9 out of 7, thus falling in the lower end of the continuum. With such strong views about the applicant, it is imperative to understand that having such an image can completely negate one’s chances of getting a job, which is alarming especially if the applicant is not aware about this fact. There must be many images like these out there on the world’s social media and individuals are not aware of the consequences of their action. Therefore, it is important for people to be educated about impression management and its effects on the likelihood of being hired, so that they can make informative decisions and manage and control their impressions online. In this way job applicants have a fair chance in the selection process when they apply for jobs.

Figure 4. Average ratings of the three stimuli between Study One and Study Two.

This figure illustrates the comparison of ratings between the desirability for hiring in Study 1 and suitability for hiring in Study 2 across the three stimuli.



The neutral profile from Study 1 was perceived as slightly positive in Study 2. The professional recruiters were between slightly and somewhat willing to call the job applicant for an interview. Because the social media page of the applicant with the neutral image did not have much information to offer to recruiters, they relied more on the applicants' resume and cover letter when evaluating the applicant with the neutral SNW. The neutral applicant was thus more inclined towards being desirable for the job as opposed to the neutral position that would be suggested by the results of Study 1. Thus the participants consciously or unconsciously took a decision and pushed the neutral towards the positive.

A certain dynamic was created by Study 2 that was not seen in Study 1. The applicant with the positive image scored almost the same as the neutral applicant. Before this experiment, from the results of Study 1, it was safe to assume that the positive, neutral and negative would fall at equidistant points on the hiring suitability continuum, as it did on the hiring desirability continuum. We expected to see the same results in Study 2. Professional recruiters did not react this way. For them a negative image created a large negative impact while the positive and neutral images created a similar degree of impact that was inclined towards the positive end of the continuum. Thus the recruiters believed that the positive image that was rated approximately 5.5 out of 7 in Study 2 for hiring suitability was good but not enough to assure the applicant the job. They believed the applicant should be called in for an interview as he was rated 5.8 out of 7 for the likelihood of being called for an interview. The professional recruiters may have wanted to learn more about the individual and the social media page or the resume and cover letter were not enough to make a hiring judgment on him. Therefore, the positive image and the neutral image on the social media page were inclined towards being desirable for hiring but not enough to assure the applicant the job.

The results of Studies One and Two taken together, give us important insights into the world of the hiring process. Future job applicants have to realize that posting a positive or neutral image of themselves on the Internet will create a somewhat positive, but about equal impression in the initial stages of the hiring process. As soon as a negative image is introduced on the social networking site of that individual, it drastically reduces their chances of getting hired. Individuals have to learn to avoid posting such images that harm their chances of getting a job.

Some of the professional recruiters also mentioned in their comments at the end of the experiment that a lot of time, money and effort goes into hiring an individual for a job, so they always want to be careful and absolutely sure about their decision before they decide to hire an individual for a job. Therefore, thorough checks on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter are part of their regular selection procedure.

Can A Positive, Neutral Or Negatively Oriented Social Media Profile Affect The Recommended Salary Of A Job Applicant?

Recommended salary was the other variable that garnered intriguing results. In their paper, Bohnert and Ross (2010), found out that compared to a control group, an unprofessional web site can result in a salary of up to \$1000 lower. It was also seen by the authors that, compared to a positively oriented applicant, the negatively oriented applicant was offered 7% lower salary. This experiment by Bohnert and Ross (2010), had a few limitations, one of which included not having a neutral image to compare the results for recommended salary between the positive and negative images. With my second study, that limitation was removed. It was hypothesized that, compared to a neutral image, the recommended salary would fall as a linear pattern of equidistant points. This hypothesis was not supported and it was found that there was a substantial difference between the recommended salary for the neutral (outgoing-oriented) and negative (violence-oriented) image while there was only a marginal difference in the recommended salary for the neutral (outgoing-oriented) and positive image (leadership-oriented). The means of the recommended salary for the positive SNW was \$35,560, while the same for the neutral SNW was \$35,360. Both these figures were very close to the average pay for a newly hired

manager, which was provided by the researcher as \$36,000. There was only a minute difference of 0.54% between the recommended salary for the applicants with the positive and the neutral SNW. So it can be seen that these two applicants with the neutral and positive conditions were considered as average applicants for hiring and were not assigned a higher pay than the average starting salary. Again, the positive image was not considered to be very positive and did not create the impact on the decisions of the professional recruiters that the scaling exercise in Study 1 would suggest. This result shows the advantage of incorporating a neutral condition, along with the positive and negative conditions used by Bohnert and Ross (2010) in their study.

On the other hand, the applicant with the negative SNW resulted in a considerable difference in the recommended salary compared to the applicant with the neutral SNW. Professional recruiters decided to offer only an average of \$33,360 to the applicant with the negative SNW. This recommended salary was much closer to the lower end of the scale. The recommended salary for the negative SNW was 5% less than the neutral SNW. Thus, from the results, it can be seen that a negative image on social media can be a cause for a lower salary for a job applicant. While the professional recruiters indicated that they would offer the candidate with the violence-oriented (negative) SNW starting salaries that were about 6% less than the leadership-oriented (positive) SNW. This salary difference between the positively oriented SNW and the negatively oriented SNW was lower than that found in Bohnert and Ross's (2010) study, which reported a difference of 7%.

It is therefore important to note that a negative image on social media can not only lower one's chances of acquiring a job but also lower their initial salary offer from an

employer. Thus future job applicants have to be absolutely careful in their use of social media and what kind of material they choose to expose to their friends or the general public.

Importance of Cover Letter, Resume and Social Media Page in the hiring decision

As part of the second study, the study participants, i.e. professional recruiters, were asked three additional questions to find out more information about the reasons for their responses to the earlier questions on hiring suitability and recommended salary. They were asked to rate the importance that the cover letter, the resume and the social media page had on their decision for the suitability for hiring and recommended salary ratings for the job applicants. This assessment was conducted on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 7 and questions were asked to find whether the decision of the recruiters to hire or not to hire the three applicants was based either on the cover letter, resume or the social media page. For the first condition with the leadership-oriented (positive) image, the average score for the cover letter was 4.55, for the resume it was 6.16 and for the social media page it was 5.10. Thus it can be seen that the resume was the most important consideration for the participants in making the hiring decision, while the SNW was considered to be the second choice and the cover letter was the third.

As for the second condition containing the neutral oriented image, the average score for the cover letter was 4.68, for the resume it was 6.03 and for the social media page it was 4.19. We can see that the social media page was the least impactful on the hiring decision of the applicant with the outgoing-oriented (neutral) SNW, while the resume scored the highest rating and the cover letter was the second most important factor. Again, the resume was an

important variable in deciding to hire the applicant as the neutral SNW did not create a large impact on the hiring process and this could be seen in the results of Study 2. So in the neutral condition, the recruiters had to rely more on the resume and the cover letter than the social media page to make their hiring decision.

In the negative condition, it was found that the social media page was the factor that the recruiters relied on more than the cover letter and the resume. Out of a score of 7, depending on its influence on the hiring decision, the cover letter was rated a score of 4.52, the resume had a rating of 5.61, while the social media page had the highest rating of 6.26. Thus it can be seen that the SNW page consisting of the negatively oriented image created the largest impact and had the highest influence on the hiring decision of the recruiters.

Thus, when a violence-oriented (negative) SNW was exposed to the recruiters, they did not rely on the cover letter and the resume and did not give them much importance, as the negative image in the SNW created a negative impact, which led to lower scores of suitability for hiring and the recommended salary in Study 2. This again solidifies our results, which states that the negative image has a larger impact than the positive and the neutral image on the selection process. Overall across these figures, we can see that the impact of social media on hiring changes drastically throughout the three applicants. For the first two applicants, the resume was the most important and for the last applicant i.e. the negative SNW, suddenly the social media page became the most important in the decision-making.

Referring back to the earlier information cited in the literature review, it is proved that in the case of a negative information or in this case a negative image, hiring managers abandon the objective information in the resumes and the social media information had pre-

empted the objective information from the resume. There are other theoretical implications that can be drawn like the positive and neutral, which are two different parts of the continuum can be easily confused and may be undistinguishable, while the neutral and negative had the cast variance, so from the point of view of a hiring manager, the negative stimulus captured their attention. This may cause a vast difference in the perceived hirability of an applicant with negative information.

Other Issues With Negative Social Media

Negative social media has other negative impacts that are not limited to the selection process. It can have other adverse effects on different walks of life especially in one's professional and personal life. Professionally, companies have always been careful of what their employees post online. If there is a leak of important information from the company, then it can affect the company's image to a large extent. That is why many companies monitor their employee's social media content. There have been many cases of a company's stocks falling and rising because of leak of information through a social media site. This especially applies for managers at higher levels at a company. If an individual represents a company or is viewed as the face of a company, even a minuscule negative information or an image or a video about the individual leaked or posted through social media can tarnish the image of the company to a very large extent. This negative information on social media can also destroy the employee's career, as other companies would be very cautious to employ an individual who has created a negative image of himself/herself through social media. This is because it may take a long time for a negative image to fade away as such information is readily available on the internet and can stay there for a very long time. In today's world, it is

very easy to just save an image or a video with a click of a button. Therefore negative information including images and videos can live on the World Wide Web forever, which is a concerning matter.

There have been many instances where a negative image posted on social media has destroyed brands. For example, the Enbridge pipeline that is being proposed in B.C. Canada is undergoing many objections and a provincial wide opposition because Enbridge has created a negative image of themselves due to a few oil spills that became news on social media (Follett, & Skuce, 2013). Thus with the extent of reach of social media, every individual in the world can gain access to the smallest of information which can create a wide spread effect, affecting people and brands alike both in a positive and a negative way.

Limitations Of The Study

This study was designed to address limitations of the previous study Bohnert and Ross (2010), from which this study has been extended. Still there are a few limitations to this study. The first was that Study 1 was conducted with students as study participants. The desirability for hiring scale can be replicated with professional recruiters as study participants. These professionals could thus rate different SNWs according to their desirability for hiring as performed in Study 1. The next limitation was that actual 'hiring managers' i.e., managers who do hiring full-time, could not be recruited as study participants and we had to rely on professional general managers and employees who did the recruiting for their respective companies. This was because companies are trying to be cost-effective and many of them were medium to small sized organizations. Therefore, they either did not have the resources to have a separate human resource department to do the recruitment or

they did not see the need to have hiring managers, as general managers were capable and equipped to do the hiring for the organization. So perhaps future research can aim at recruiting professional 'hiring managers' from large companies whose job responsibility entails only making hiring decisions.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Conclusions

A goal of this research was to create a desirability scale of pictorial images that could be used by both job applicants and recruiters for the purposes of hiring. The second goal of this research paper was to find the influence that positive and negative SNWs have on the hiring process by conducting field research with the help of professional recruiters. This study was conducted as a replication and extension of the research conducted by Bohnert and Ross (2010), in their paper, "The Influence of Social Networking Web Sites on the Evaluation of Job Candidates," and to overcome the study limitations faced by them. The first limitation was that the images used by Bohnert and Ross were chosen without knowledge of their underlying scaling properties. This limitation was overcome by creating a 'desirability for hiring' scale in Study 1 that has known scaling properties. Once the SNW images were scaled, it was easy to find the most negatively oriented SNW, which was rated as the violence-oriented profile, and the most positively oriented profile, which was the leadership-oriented profile.

The other limitation that the previous study had was there was no neutral point with which to compare the positive and negative orientations. In the current study that limitation was overcome and the outgoing-oriented profile was found to be the most neutral in Study 1. In the end result, I was able to create a scale that can be used by both recruiters and job applicants alike to be more sensitive to and careful about the impact of SNW images in hiring. Another major limitation of Bohnert and Ross's (2010) study was that it was a scenario study and the study participants used were not professional recruiters but university students. This limitation was overcome in this study by using professional recruiters as

participants in Study 2. Professional recruiters were asked to screen three job applicants; one being the positively oriented SNW, the other neutral oriented SNW and the third negatively oriented SNW respectively. This use of professional recruiters in Study 2 gave an insight into the real hiring world and the decisions taken in preliminary screening with respect to the effect of different images on hiring practices.

These professional recruiters were also able to give their feedback through the follow-up questions on the decisions they made. Thus it was possible to use a real-world perspective in this research that could be informative for many practical and research purposes. The results of this study were different from what was observed in the previous research. It was observed in this research that negative images on social media have a negative impact on the hiring process, which was also seen in the previous research paper. However, the effect of the SNW images taken as a whole was accentuated in this study over and above Bohnert and Ross's (2010) findings.

The images used by Bohnert and Ross (2010), in their study were not the most optimal as an independent variable manipulation, as were the scaled images in my research found in Study 1. I deliberately included three SNW images that were similar to the three conditions in their study in order to ascertain where these three of Bohnert and Ross's (2010) images would fall on the desirability continuum for hiring. It was interesting to find that none of them met the scaling criteria in Study 1 as the most positive image was found to be the leadership-oriented image and not the professional or family-oriented image, while the most negative image was found to be the violence-oriented image and not the alcohol-oriented image.

Given this situation, it would be expected that the experimental findings of Bohnert and Ross's (2010) study would be weaker than the ones found in Study 2 of this thesis. In fact this was exactly what happened and it can be seen from the differences in the effect size of the 'F' value and the value of R-squared in Study 2. This may be due to the lack of clarity of Bohnert and Ross's (2010) SNW images because the scaling properties of those three SNW images were found to be poor in the scaling exercise. Results of Study 2 thus reflected the maximum effect that a researcher would get when comparing the effects of positive and negative SNW images on desirability for hiring. In conclusion, having a positive image on social media may not increase a job applicant's chances of getting hired by much; but a negative image on social media will surely decrease one's chances of getting a job by a substantial amount.

Recommendations For Future Research

This research study can be further broadened for other future research. There are many questions that can be tested in this area. It may seem normal for younger generations to post images online that may be deemed as negative, as they are still immature and do not understand the full aftereffects of posting such content on the internet. At that age, individuals may think it is appropriate to post such an image or video but as they mature, they realize that their actions have had negative impact on other areas of their life, like their workplace or school. Therefore future research should be conducted to find out whether the content that people post differs with their age and maturity level.

Also the hiring managers and professional recruiters that hire for companies may have different opinions about the content they find online about job applicants. This opinion can again differ with age and the generation of the hiring manager. A younger generation of adults may think it is normal to post some image or video, which may seem offensive for an older generation of adults. Therefore, future research should look at the age of hiring managers that make the decisions to see if there is a difference in their opinions according to their age.

The other area that needs to be further explored is to see if the gender of the job applicant has any role to play in the hiring decision. Recruiters may view an image or a video of a man differently than that of a woman. A negatively oriented image of a woman may seem more negative than a negatively oriented image of a man or vice-versa. Therefore, the gender and sex of the job applicant can be an important factor in the decision-making process for hiring managers. In the same way, different ethnicities and races can also be taken into account to see if they produce different results. It would also be intriguing to find out if the experiment conducted in this research can be conducted in a real-world hiring scenario where there are real job applicants who are getting hired for real jobs. In a real situation, the effect may be more extreme as the scenario would be real and the risks associated with hiring would be extremely high for the hiring managers. Thus the present study has opened a number of different venues into future research that can be built on this current study.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Study One – Invitation For Participants

Hi, my name is Rahul Poojary and I am a M.Sc. candidate for the degree of Business Administration at the University of Northern British Columbia. I am currently carrying out a research that studies the use of social media in the hiring process. As part of this study I am looking to recruit participants from the University of Northern British Columbia to participate in this study. It requires you to fill in a survey, which will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. I would like to invite you to be part of this study. If you wish to participate, please contact me at: (778) 231-7207 or alternatively, you can e-mail me at poojary@unbc.ca. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix B: Study One – Consent Form For Participants**Title of Thesis: “The Impact of Pictorial Imaging Through Social Media Profiles on the Screening of Job Applicants”**

Date: _____

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Rahul Poojary and Steven Cronshaw from the School of Business at the University of Northern British Columbia. The study will take approximately 20 minutes.

Investigators:**Student Investigator:**

Name: Rahul Poojary

Department of Business

University of Northern British Columbia

Prince George, British Columbia, Canada

778-231-7207

E-mail: poojary@unbc.ca

Faculty Supervisor:

Name: Steven Cronshaw, Ph.D.

Department of Business

University of Northern British Columbia

Prince George, British Columbia, Canada

Tel: 250-960-6785

E-mail: steven.cronshaw@unbc.ca

Purpose of the Study

I am a candidate for the Master of Science in Business Administration and I am conducting this research as part of my master's thesis. The main purpose of this research is to study the use of social media in the hiring process. It has been found in previous papers, that hiring

managers use social media in the hiring process. My goal is to find which images on social media profiles are considered as professional or more desirable for hiring and which images on social media profiles are considered as unprofessional or less desirable for hiring. Once the professional social media profiles are differentiated from the unprofessional social media profiles, my next goal is to find which one has more influence on the selection process. You are invited to take part in this study because I am looking to recruit third and fourth year undergraduate students as well as graduate students and you fit this demographic.

Procedures involved in the Research

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: We will be asking you to undertake the role of a hiring manager and look at a job application package and answer questions related to a hiring scenario. The study will take approximately 20 minutes and I will conduct it personally. This is just a one time study and the participation will take place in a classroom at the university. As part of the study, I will ask you to assume the role of a hiring manager and evaluate male job applicants, in their 20s, who have applied for the position of a sales manager.

I will hand you a job application package. The package will include a job description for a sales manager at a departmental store, a resume, a cover letter, and a printout of the social media profile of the job applicant. The printout of the social media profile is provided as a background check that was carried out for the job applicant. After you review the application package, I will hand you a questionnaire to evaluate the job applicant. There will also be another short questionnaire, which will require you to provide some demographic/background information.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. A possible risk is the exposure to materials or questions that you may find embarrassing. These feelings are usually temporary.

Potential Benefits

This study may benefit you in that you may be able to understand how to manage your social media presence online. You may also be able to understand the important role that certain applicant information may play in managerial hiring decisions. If you intend to be a hiring manager in the future, it may help you to understand how people make hiring decisions.

Confidentiality

All the data that is collected from this study will be kept strictly confidential and that only aggregate group data will be presented at professional conferences and/or published. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. No one but my

supervisor, and I will know whether you participated unless you choose to tell them. All the information will be stored securely in my password-protected personal computer and in an encrypted external hard drive. The data will be destroyed when the research study is completed.

Participation and Withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without consequences. If you choose to withdraw, any data collected will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. Please look at the end of the form for options.

Information about the Study Results

I expect to complete this study by approximately January 2015. If you would like a summary of the results, please provide your contact information in the space provided at the end of the form.

Debrief Exercise

Once you complete the study, you will be debriefed about the experiment conducted and the study that is being undertaken.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

Rahul Poojary, Business Major, University of Northern British Columbia at (778) 231-7207 or poojary@unbc.ca; or my supervisor: Dr. Steven Cronshaw, University of Northern British Columbia at (250)960-6785 or steven.cronshaw@unbc.ca

This study has been reviewed by the University of Northern British Columbia Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

Research Ethics Board

c/o Office of Research and Graduate Programs

Telephone: (250) 960-6735

E-mail: reb@unbc.ca

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by RAHUL POOJARY, of the University of Northern British Columbia.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

If you withdraw, do you give consent on any data that is collected to being saved and used for the study?

YES _____

NO _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the study's results, please provide your email address below

or your mailing address:

(If you choose to fill in your details, the results will be sent to your desired contact information when the research study is completed)

Appendix C: Study One – Demographic/Background Information

Instructions: Please fill in the questions below to the best of your abilities.

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

2. Area of Study / Major (s): _____

3. Year of Study:

☐ First Year ☐ Second Year ☐ Third Year

☐ Fourth Year ☐ Fifth Year or above ☐ Graduate Student

4. Age:

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 and above

5. Have you ever held a job(s) where you helped make a decision to hire/not hire someone?

☐ Yes ☐ No

6. Total number of years you worked in jobs where you helped make hiring decisions

7. Have you ever had an employer tell you that they used an Internet search engine (e.g., Google) to screen job candidates (perhaps including you)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. Do you have your own social networking web page (e.g., MySpace, Facebook)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Appendix D: Study One – Experimental Materials

1. Job Description

Job Description: Manager, Health & Beauty Aids Department in a Department Store

Function: Manager plans and directs operations of the Health & Beauty Aids Department. This department sells a variety of products: Pharmaceuticals, Health & Beauty Aids, Grocery-related items, Souvenirs, and Seasonal (e.g., Christmas gift wrap). Manager plans and maintains systems for operating efficiency. Manages staff for optimum performance.

Main Job Tasks and Responsibilities

- determine staffing requirements for pharmacists, sales clerks, and cashiers.
- hire and train new staff
- supervise direct reporting staff according to overall company policy
- set employee goals and objectives
- develop & train staff (e.g., using cash registers) to maximize their potential
- monitor staff performance including conducting six-month performance reviews
- delegate work duties to staff and allocate use of available resources
- evaluate current business processes and systems
- plan and implement procedures and systems to maximize operating efficiency
- establish and maintain controls (e.g., balancing registers daily)
- formulate department/unit policies and practices (e.g., rotating perishable stock)
- co-ordinate financial and budget activities for maximum operational efficiency
- facilitate the preparation and analysis of reports
- review performance data (financial, sales and activity reports) to monitor and measure productivity, goal progress and activity levels
- responsible for the achievement of department productivity and quality goals
- organize and manage business meetings

Education and Experience

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent years of work experience
- knowledge of business and management principles and practices
- knowledge of strategic planning
- knowledge of human resource management principles and procedures
- knowledge of basic accounting and office administrative procedures
- proficient in relevant software applications and equipment (e.g. cash registers)

Interacts With

- Store Manager & Assistant Manager
- Accounting Department
- Human Resources Department
- Other Department Managers
- Vendors, Delivery Persons, and Sales Personnel from supplier organizations

Key Competencies

- judgment & effective decision making
- integrity & honesty
- information management
- planning and organizing
- problem analysis and problem solving; flexibility
- delegating tasks and responsibility
- communicating with & motivating staff; coaching & teamwork

Source: Adapted from <http://www.best-job-interview.com/management-job-description.html>

2. Cover Letter

205 4th Ave.

Prince George, BC

V2N 5H2

250 - 555 - 2222

July 7, 2014

RE: Sales Manager

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to you to apply for the position of Sales Manager. I am an ambitious individual with a very strong interest in your advertised management position in the Health & Beauty Aids Department of your Department Store. Between my education and several years of work in the business world I have developed many strengths that could be put to good use with your company. I have experience with interpersonal communication, excellent organizational skills, and attention to detail. I would welcome the opportunity to implement these skills in a manner that would significantly contribute to your company's goals.

Accustomed to goal-oriented objectives in the workplace, I thrive in situations that rely on self-motivation in order to accomplish tasks effectively and efficiently. Your management position requires an appropriate combination of office skills as well as an ability to interact effectively with customers and co-workers. I am the perfect candidate for this position. My work experience along with my motivation and self-discipline make me well suited to your company.

I am confident of my contribution with my personality and utmost efforts to your establishment. Please find my resume' attached which explains the details of my past experiences and outlines my education. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Anderson

3. Resume

205 4th Ave.

Phone: 250 - 555 - 2222

Prince George, BC

V2N 5H2

OBJECTIVE

To obtain employment at a store management position

SKILLS

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Excellent decision-making and conflict resolution skills.
- Excellent marketing, strategic and analytical skills
- Conscientious, adaptable and coordinated
- Enthusiastic, organized and punctual

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Commerce (May 2011)

University of Northern British Columbia, Prince George, BC

- Completed a Commerce degree with majors in International Business and Marketing
- Overall GPA – 3.00 • Major GPA – 3.33

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2011-2014 Ideal Industries, Inc., Prince George, BC - Sales and Marketing Manager

- Co-ordinate between the client and the creative team to ensure the client's needs and goals are being met on every project
- Managed customer accounts and handled customer questions and concerns
- Set up new accounts, contacted client leads, and supervised four sales representatives
- Attended trade shows and promoted company products
- Assisted Custom Products Department by serving as the primary link between customers and the Engineering Departments

2005-2009 Amy's Books and Company, Prince George, BC - Part-time Assistant

- Responsible for customer care and inventory management
- Responsible for handling cash

VOLUNTEER WORK AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Operation RED NOSE (December 2012 & December 2013)

At Prince George, BC

- Avoid accidents by reducing drink driving
- Safely drive people to their homes in their cars

Orientation Ambassador (September 2010)

At University Orientation 2010

- Lead a group of 20 students through two days of orientation
- Make students feel comfortable and maintain discipline

REFERENCES

Available upon request

Appendix F: Study One – Debrief Information

Once the participants have completed the survey, they will be debriefed. They will be informed that all the images that were shown to them were fictional. All the materials are for experimental purposes only. They will be clearly informed that the activities performed by the models in the images is purely an act and at any time the models have not consumed any of the substance shown in the images and that all the images were produced strictly for research purposes. Finally they will be informed that the purpose of the study is to create a hiring scenario to find out the effects of social media on the hiring process.

Appendix G: Study Two – Invitation To Participate

Hi, my name is Rahul Poojary and I am a M.Sc. candidate for the degree of Business Administration at the University of Northern British Columbia. I am currently carrying out a research that studies the use of social media in the hiring process. As part of this study I am looking to recruit participants from the University of Northern British Columbia to participate in this study. It requires you to fill in a survey, which will take approximately 20 minutes of your time. I would like to invite you to be part of this study. If you wish to participate, please contact me at: (778) 231-7207 or alternatively, you can e-mail me at poojary@unbc.ca. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Appendix H: Study Two – Consent Form For Recruiters

Title of Thesis: “The Impact of Pictorial Imaging Through Social Media Profiles on the Screening of Job Applicants”

Date: _____

You are invited asked to participate in a research study conducted by Rahul Poojary and Steven Cronshaw from the business department at the University of Northern British Columbia. The study will take approximately 20 minutes.

Investigators:**Student Investigator:**

Name: Rahul Poojary

Department of Business

University of Northern British Columbia

Prince George, British Columbia, Canada

778-231-7207

E-mail: poojary@unbc.ca

Faculty Supervisor:

Name: Steven Cronshaw, Ph.D.

Department of Business

University of Northern British Columbia

Prince George, British Columbia, Canada

Tel: 250-960-6785

E-mail: steven.cronshaw@unbc.ca

Purpose of the Study

I am a candidate for the Master of Science in Business Administration and I am conducting this research as part of my master's thesis. The main purpose of this research is to study the use of social media in the hiring process. It has been found in previous papers, that hiring managers use social media in the hiring process. My goal is to find which images on social media profiles are considered as professional or more desirable for hiring and which images on social media profiles are considered as unprofessional or less desirable for hiring. Once the professional social media profiles are differentiated from the unprofessional social media profiles, my next goal is to find which one has more influence on the selection process. You are invited to take part in this study as I am looking to see how professional hiring personnel perceive social media in the hiring process.

Procedures involved in the Research

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things: We will be asking you to undertake the role of a hiring manager and look at a job application package and answer questions related to a hiring scenario. The study will take approximately 20 minutes. This is just a one time study and the participation will take place personally with me. As part of the study, I will ask you to evaluate male job applicants, in their 20's, who have applied for the position of a sales manager.

I will hand you a job application package. The package will include a job description for a sales manager at a departmental store, a resume, a cover letter, and a printout of the social media profile of the job applicant. The printout of the social media profile is provided as a background check that was carried out for the job applicant. After you review the application package, I will hand you a questionnaire to evaluate the job applicant. There will also be another short questionnaire, which will require you to provide some demographic/background information.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. A possible risk is the exposure to materials or questions that you may find embarrassing. These feelings are usually temporary

Potential Benefits

This study may benefit you in that you may be able to understand how to manage your social media presence online. You may also be able to understand the important role that certain applicant information may play in managerial hiring decisions.

Confidentiality

All the data that is collected from this study will be kept strictly confidential and that only aggregate group data will be presented at professional conferences and/or published. I will not use your name or any information that would allow you to be identified. No one but my supervisor, and I will know whether you participated unless you choose to tell them. All the information will be stored securely in my password-protected personal computer and in an encrypted external hard drive. The data will be destroyed when the research study is completed.

Participation and Withdrawal

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without consequences. If you choose to withdraw, any data collected will be destroyed unless you indicate otherwise. Please look at the end of the form for options.

Information about the Study Results

I expect to complete this study by approximately January 2015. If you would like a summary of the results, please provide your contact information in the space provided at the end of the form.

Debrief Exercise

Once you complete the study, you will be debriefed about the experiment conducted and the study that is being undertaken.

Questions about the Study

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

Rahul Poojary, University of Northern British Columbia at (778) 231-7207 or poojary@unbc.ca; or my supervisor: Dr. Steven Cronshaw, University of Northern British Columbia at (250)960-6785 or steven.cronshaw@unbc.ca

This study has been reviewed by the University of Northern British Columbia Research Ethics Board. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

Research Ethics Board

c/o Office of Research and Graduate Programs

Telephone: (250) 960-6735

E-mail: reb@unbc.ca

CONSENT

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by RAHUL POOJARY, of the University of Northern British Columbia.

I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested.

I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw from the study at any time. I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in the study.

Signature: _____

Name of Participant (Printed) _____

If you withdraw, do you give consent on any data that is collected to being saved and used for the study?

YES _____

NO _____

If you would like to receive a summary of the study's results.

Please provide your email address below:

(If you choose to fill in your details, the results will be sent to your desired contact information when the research study is completed)

Appendix I: Study Two – Demographic/Background Information

Instructions: Please fill in the questions below to the best of your abilities.

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Other

2. Age:

☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46 and above

3. Current Position Title:

Years working in that position: _____

a. Do you make hiring decisions as part of your job?

☐ Yes ☐ No

b. Total number of years you worked in jobs where you helped make hiring decisions

4. Have you ever used an Internet search engine (e.g., Google) to screen job candidates?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unspecified

c. Do you have your own social networking web page (e.g., MySpace, Facebook)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank You!

Appendix J: Study Two – Questionnaire

Instructions: After looking over the job description and all of the applicant materials, please answer the questions below:

Whose application did you review?

1. How likely would you be to interview this applicant for the position in question?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being very unlikely, 7 being very likely and 4 being neutral)

[illegible]

2. How professional do you think the applicant is?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being very unprofessional, 7 being very professional and 4 being neutral)

[illegible]

3. How desirable do you think the applicant is for hiring?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being very undesirable, 7 being very desirable and 4 being neutral)

[illegible]

4. How likely do you think you would be to offer the job to this applicant?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being very unlikely, 7 being very likely and 4 being neutral)

[illegible]

5. The salary for this position ranges from \$30,000 to \$42,000. The pay distribution across all managers is normally distributed. The average pay for newly hired managers is \$36,000 with a standard deviation of \$2,000.

Given this information, assuming the position is offered to this applicant, what starting salary should this applicant be offered?

Please choose from the options below:

30 32 34 36 38 40 42

Pay (thousands of dollars per year)

\$_____.

6. How important do you think was the cover letter in the hiring decision?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being not at all important, 7 being very important and 4 being neutral)

Not At All Important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Important
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

7. How important do you think was the resume in the hiring decision?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being not at all important, 7 being very important and 4 being neutral)

Not At All Important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Important
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

8. How important do you think was the background information check (social media page) in the hiring decision?
(Please check the box that best corresponds to your answer; with 1 being not at all important, 7 being very important and 4 being neutral)

Not At All Important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Very Important
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

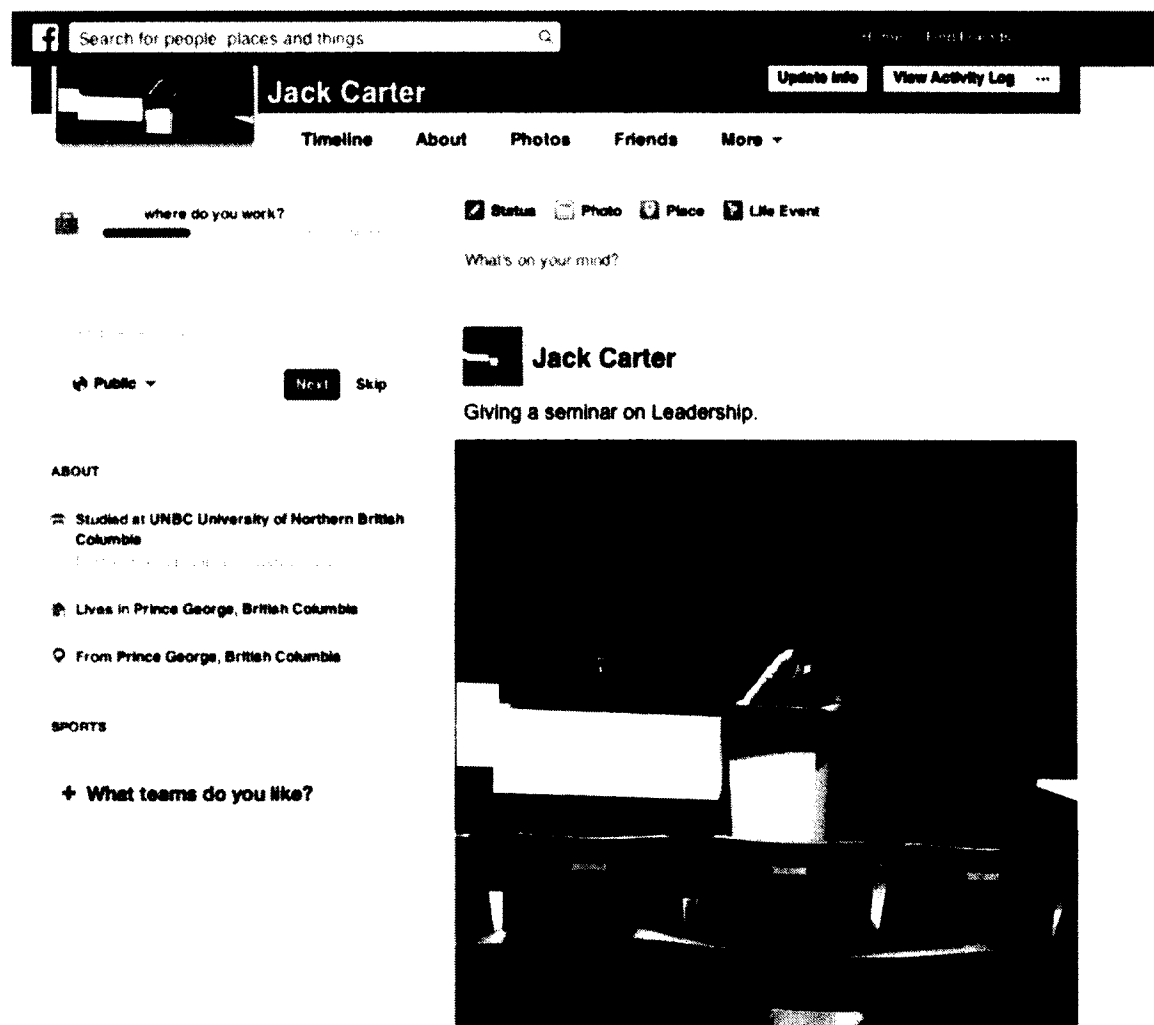
Thank You for Completing the Questionnaire!

Appendix K: From Study One: Stimuli Headings

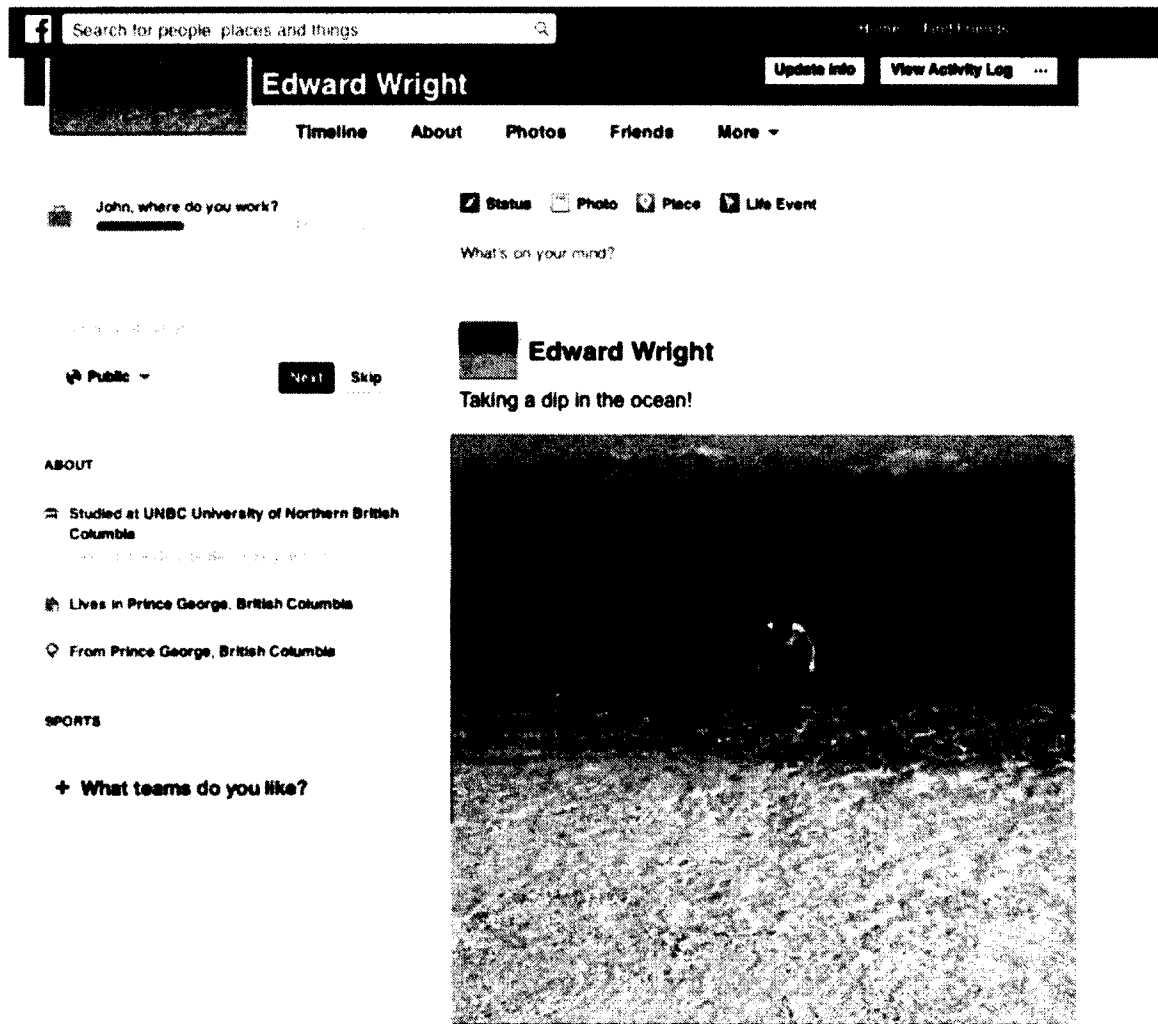
1. Family Orientation – “With the Wife on our Anniversary!” (It consists of a male model and a female model standing together portraying a family).
2. Professional Orientation – “Busy Day at the Office” (The image consists of the male model wearing formal attire and sitting behind a office desk and working).
3. Volunteer Orientation – “Garbage Collection Drive – Helping the local community” (It consists of the model collecting garbage as part or community service).
4. Travel Orientation – “I love travelling – sailing in the Bahamas” (It consists of the model standing on a sailboat in the sea).
5. Sports Orientation – “Practicing for the game tomorrow. . .” (It consists of the model playing basketball in an indoor basketball court).
6. Social Orientation – “Board Game Night With Friends” (The model is seen sitting and playing board games).
7. Artistic Orientation – “I love painting! It helps me relax” (The model is seen painting on a canvas).
8. Leadership Orientation – “Giving a seminar on Leadership” (It consists of the model standing in a class behind a desk giving a seminar on leadership).
9. Outgoing Orientation – “Taking a dip in the ocean!” (The model is seen on a beach in the waters only wearing shorts).
10. Alcohol Orientation – “Downed a whole bottle last night. . oh yeeaaah!!!” (The model is seen drinking alcohol straight from the bottle).
11. Smoking Orientation – “Smokes anyone?” (The model is seen holding a cigarette to his mouth and smoking).

12. Hookah Smoking Orientation – “After work I like to smoke this little baby” (The model is seen holding a hookah to his mouth and smoking from it).
13. Drug Orientation – “A pipe helps me relax” (The model is seen smoking from a pipe, which is intended to look like a marijuana pipe).
14. Abusive Gesture Orientation – “Fu*k you !” (The model is seen to be making obscene and abusive hand gestures by holding both his middle fingers up in the air).
15. Sick Orientation – “Had too much to drink last night.. Feeling sick! (The image consists of the model being sick throwing up in a toilet bowl while holding an alcohol bottle).
16. Illegal Behavior Orientation – “This place stinks !” (The model is seen spray painting walls and thus destroying public property).
17. Dismissive Behavior Orientation – “Found this TV outside, so I broke it!” (The model is seen breaking a TV with a golf club out in the open).
18. Violence Orientation - “This is what happens if you park your car next to my backyard!!” (The model is seen breaking the glass of a car that is parked outside a backyard with a golf club).

Appendix L: Positive Stimuli



Appendix M: Neutral Stimuli



Appendix N: Negative Stimuli

