Invasive Job Hiring Practices and Social Media Data Usage Knowledge on Job Intentions

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Social media data are being used to evaluate job applicants. Its use is controversial and widespread. Facebook users' job intentions to accept a position were reduced when invasive data usage was employed. Users who were more knowledgeable about how social media data can be utilized exhibited higher intentions. An interaction revealed less knowledgeable users about how social media data is used had reduced job intentions when confronted with an invasive hiring practice. This relationship is not present for more knowledgeable users when invasive hiring practices are practiced.

Keywords: social media; hiring practices; Facebook; job intentions

S ocial media creates virtual communities linking friends in private and creating public personas (Pikas & Sorrentino, 2014). Creating these communities means revealing personal information (Cho et al., 2009). This virtual community enhances trust, making users more likely to divulge personal information (Ellison, Steinfield, & Lampe, 2011). Trust may be misguided and there are downsides to posting personal information. Information may be embarrassing, and people want to control information that is negative, embarrassing, or stigmatizing (Stone-Romero et al., 2003). This is only part of the problem. How data is used is critical also. Social media users are uncomfortable: having sites buying and selling their data; social media sending them targeted ads; and with government legislation inadequate in addressing the issue (Sun, 2018). Unauthorized use of personal data may occur along with identifying theft, online surveillance, and unwelcome contact (Debatin et al., 2009). The Facebook-Cambridge Analytica debacle illustrates this. Private data was accessed by a third-party,

along with information from their friends (Davidson, 2018). Another potential downside to divulging personal information on social media is lesser known—its effect on the workplace. An applicant's hireability and organizational fit are being assessed by employers based upon his/her social media accounts and the information shared.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Hiring Using the Internet

Traditional sources of job applicant vetting, such as references from prior employers have become harder to acquire because of potential litigation (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Organizations have sought alternatives over traditional forms of due diligence (Elmer, 2012). Organizations obtain job applicants' information online through web searches and reviewing applicants' websites and blogs (Levinson, 2010; Preston, 2011). Social media searches are free, quick, and applicants need not be present or approve (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Elmer, 2012; Van Iddekinge et al., 2016). They are different from traditional searches because they may not yield job-related information, and information gathered is difficult to standardize (Roth, Bobko, Van Iddekinge, & Thatcher, 2013).

Many use it because they believe it provides a more accurate portrayal of personality than a resume (Davidson, Maraist, & Bing, 2011). A survey of over 2,000 hiring managers and human resource professionals found more than 70 percent use social media for an applicant, and 54 percent did not hire an applicant based on information found (Salm, 2017). Research confirms that social media aids the hiring process (Karl, Peluchette, & Schlaegel, 2010; Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). Fairly global assessments are made from social media about an applicant's hireability (Preston, 2011). Human resource professionals assess an applicant's social media for fit, interpersonal skills, and hiring (Alarcon et al., 2019).

The social media information may reveal whether they are results-oriented (Willis, 2006), professional (Grasz, 2012), make sound judgments (Palank, 2006), their personality (Back et al., 2010; Kluemper et al., 2012; Meinert, 2011), or an organizational fit (Grasz, 2012). Tweets have been shown to reveal personality (Golbeck et al., 2011; Rosen et al., 2018; Sumner et al., 2012). For example, extroverts had many followers, group pictures, and conversations with others. Customized backgrounds, interesting headers and profile photos, travel pictures, and following wisdom-sharing accounts indicates an openness to

experience (Rosen et al., 2018). First impressions were found to be consistent with Facebook personalities (Weisbuch, Ivcevic, & Ambady, 2009). Conversely, social media are used to find reasons not to hire (Salma, 2017). Sixty-nine percent of hiring professionals in one study found information through social media that led to a candidate's rejection (Reppler, 2011).   Unprofessional social media content reduces the probability of hire and salary offers (Bohnert & Ross, 2010).

Applicants' Perceptions

There is a disconnect between the importance of social media information (used by the reviewer) and how it is handled by the potential applicant. Students were almost split between those unaware employers and recruiters could view a job candidate's profile (51%) to those aware of the practice (45%) (Vicknair et al., 2010). Students were neutral about employers or strangers viewing their online profiles but were okay with family, friends, and classmates viewing it (Peluchette & Karl, 2008). When asked whether prospective employers would view applicants' Facebook profiles, almost 80 percent of students believed they did (Root & McKay, 2014), but 77 percent thought it was unethical (Curran et al., 2014).

Among college students, over 75 percent were "fairly comfortable" and 8 percent "not at all comfortable" with potential employers viewing their Facebook page (Curran et al., 2014). Almost 90 percent viewed themselves as a good candidate for a position based on a view of their Facebook page, and almost two-thirds planned no changes to their account when on the job market (Curran et al., 2014).

Consumers' understanding of how their data are used online is comprised of two dimensions, subjective and objective knowledge, which are negatively correlated, but the focus should be on the objective when trying to understand privacy (Fox & Royne, 2018). Objective knowledge measures what you know and subjective what you think you know (Fox & Royne, 2018).

Evaluating Applicants Based on Social Media

A second issue is what data are relevant to predict future performance. One study used a hypothetical job description and undergraduate students' Facebook profiles to assess students' personality and hireability and compared them to supervisors' ratings (Kluemper, Rosen, & Mossholder, 2012). The results were mixed. A study among

recruiters found their ratings were generally "unrelated to graduates' subsequent job performance, turnover intentions, and turnover" (Van Iddekinge et al., 2016, p. 1828). The authors concluded "we strongly encourage organizations to refrain from using social media (e.g., Facebook) and other Internet information (e.g., Google searches) until methods for collecting and evaluating such information are shown to be reliable and valid" (Van Iddekinge et al., 2016, p. 1829). Many studies concur that the validity of social media data must be established before it is used in the hiring process (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Davison et al., 2011; Lucero et al., 2013).

A comparison of student and HR professionals' assessment of Facebook pages for an insight into job-related skills showed the latter believed that they could gain significantly more than students believed possible (Curran et al., 2014). Students were asked whether they would want an HR professional to review their Facebook pages. If so, they were asked to friend a site created by the researchers. On 11 dimensions ranging from political and sexual orientation to work habits, HR professionals rated the amount of information available higher than students (Curran et al., 2014). Job applicant's social media content was evaluated differently based on the gender of the recruiter (El Ouirdi, Pais, Segers, and El Ouirdi, 2016). Female recruiters evaluated professional information on an applicant's social media profiles more than male recruiters. Finally, in another study, students were asked to assume the role of a hiring manager in a professional services firm. Students, mostly with no hiring experience, were reluctant "to extend an interview offer to candidates with respectable resumes and inappropriate Facebook page" (Williams & Almand, 2014, p. 67).

Facebook

Worldwide Facebook has 2.50 billion monthly active users, with 1.66 billion logging in daily (Zephoria, 2020). "Every 60 seconds on Facebook: 510,000 comments are posted, 293,000 statuses are updated, and 136,000 photos are uploaded" (Zephoria, 2020). Facebook has replaced much of the face-to-face interaction of college students (Hurt et al., 2012). Its perceived anonymity has contributed to the posting of inappropriate content (Peluchette & Karl, 2008). It was not designed for prospective employers to evaluate applicants (Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade, 2015). As such, Facebook users may post different job-related information than LinkedIn, which is designed for the workplace.

Legal Issues

The legal system has upheld an organization's right to review public information on social media (Elzweig & Peeples, 2009; Ezold, 2012). It is illegal under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to make hiring decisions based on protected classes such as national origin, race, religion, and sex (Blount et al., 2016). Information posted online publicly not related to a protected class is legal. Because of the plethora of information available through social media, implicit bias is more likely to occur. If that bias validates existing stereotypes based on protected classes, it would be illegal (Blunt et al., 2016). Even innocuous information online could trigger this outcome. Companies should have pre-employment social media use policies since there is a digital history on computer devices of websites visited, and information would be revealed during a trial's discovery (Reinsch, Ross, & Hietapelto, 2016). An applicant for a teaching job at the University of Kentucky had information about intelligent design on his website (Reinsch et al., 2016). A university employee circulated that information at the school. The applicant was not hired and sued. The school settled out of court for $125,000.

Many states have enacted "password protect" laws that prohibit potential employers from requiring applicants to release their accounts and passwords as a requirement for employment (Reinsch et al., 2016). In states without these laws, an applicant's perception of the company and job intentions could be influenced when asked for social media login information. One study documented a negative relationship between this invasive hiring practice and job pursuit intentions (Menzies, 2014). The more invasive, the lower the job pursuit intentions. Perceptions of an organization are influenced by hiring practices (Smither et al., 1996). Those perceived as unfair or irrelevant negatively affect job intentions. The strongest predictor of job intentions, in a meta-analysis, was work type and an organization's reputation.

Students in a study were told they were applying for a real research position at the university (Stoughton et al., 2015). One group was told that the hiring organization had reviewed their social networking sites for professionalism. The students felt an invasion of privacy and lower organizational attraction. Similar results were found with non-students. Other students have found a negative relationship between social network data and job pursuit intentions (Madera, 2012).

Theory

Privacy, according to Stone and Stone (1990), is "an individual's ability to control personal information, and the impressions about them that garnered from it" (p. 354). It is defined as autonomy over "when, how, and to what extent information about them is communicated to others" (Westin, 1967, p. 7). The expectancy theory model suggests that information, procedural, socio-cultural, and individual factors influence an individual's ability to control information and invasion of privacy perceptions. Black, Stone, and Johnson (2015) provide a comprehensive model for privacy using social networks that build upon Stone and Stone (1990). A job applicant's reaction to the use of social media in the hiring process is guided by: i) information (e.g., type of information, data collection method, purpose of collection, and how information is used); ii) procedural (e.g., data validity, transparency of data collection and authorization, and advanced notice of data release); iii) sociocultural (e.g., individualism-collectivism and power distance); iv) individual factors (e.g., age, potential stigmas: ethnic and racial minorities and LGBT, and sex); and v) perceptions about privacy. The first four influence "beliefs about and consequences of controlling or not controlling SNS data" (p. 142). These lead to a motivation to control social media data and the perceived invasion of privacy. The model suggests negative outcomes when data is collected without an individual's permission.

When data is collected without an individual's permission, it leads to negative outcomes. This inability to control data results in negative attitudes and behaviors (Black et al., 2015). People feel an invasion of privacy, especially if sensitive information is revealed. It also may result in a job rejection. This model also addresses recent research that states that privacy is situation-specific (Margulis, 2003; Solove, 2008).

Privacy

Almost 70 percent of respondents in a recent survey were very uncomfortable or somewhat uncomfortable with brands buying and selling their data (Sun, 2018). Over eight in 10 Americans believe the risks of collecting personal data by companies outweigh the benefits (Auxier, 2019). Only 9 percent of social media users were very confident that social media companies would protect their data (Rainie, 2018). Social media users can vary their public and private disclosure (Fox & Royne, 2018). Many do not use privacy

settings in social media to protect their data from potential employers (Peluchete & Karl, 2008; Price, 2012).

The difficulty is many social media users do not know what a site's privacy statements is. When they do, they may not understand them. Part of the problem is how privacy statements are written. They are written "with the threat of privacy litigations in mind rather than a commitment to fair data handling practices" and consumer protection (Pollach, 2007, p. 106). Consumer understanding of social media privacy policies is influenced by presentation modality. "The use of numerous presentation cues in social media privacy policies could more accurately describe what happens to consumers' personal information when they become members of social media sites" (Fox & Royne, 2018, p. 83).

People with heightened privacy concerns prefer Facebook because of its flexibility in privacy settings (Shane-Simpson et al., 2018). Facebook users in a five-year study used more sophisticated privacy settings for public consumption while sharing more information within their network (Stutzman, Gross, & Acquisti, 2013).

Hypotheses

Based on the objective of this study and the literature review, the authors have developed and tested the following hypotheses:

H_1: There is a significant negative relationship between job pursuit intentions and the most invasive hiring conditions.

H_2: There is a significant positive relationship between job pursuit intentions and objective knowledge about privacy on social media.

H_3: There is a significant positive interaction between invasive hiring conditions and objective knowledge about privacy on social media.

METHODS

The survey was created through a literature review in a graduate marketing class by a faculty member and students. The students pretested the survey through protocol analysis. IRB guidelines were adhered to and all participants had informed consent. A link to a Qualtrics survey was provided through students' Instagram accounts. SPSS version 24 was used for the analysis. An ANOVA (2x3) was estimated with the dependent

variable being job intentions, and the first independent variable is three Facebook conditions: like a potential employer, provide your login information, or nothing. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions. Job pursuit intentions is a five-item seven-point Likert scale (Highhouse, Lievens, & Sinar, 2003). The second independent variable is an objective measure of social media privacy (Fox & Royne, 2018). It is a seven-item seven-point Likert scale. The scale was dichotomized by its median. This scale was measured before the manipulation (i.e., Facebook condition). Scales were created by summing the items.

Two tests for identifying an interaction were used. The file was split on the dichotomous objective measure of social media privacy, and two one-way ANOVAs were estimated for high and low for the independent variable: Facebook conditions. The main effects and interaction were tested since they provided additional information if both were statistically significant (Grace-Martin, 2019).

RESULTS

Two hundred and 11 respondents completed the survey with 19 not having a personal Facebook page and being removed from the analysis. Nine outliers were identified for the six conditions and removed from the analysis. Outliers were identified through SPSS 24 Explore using the interquartile range. There are 183 subjects. Sixty-five percent are female. They are divided among rural (32%), urban (28%), and suburban (40%) residences. Thirty-eight percent are parents. More than half (56%) have never been married compared to 36 percent that is currently married. The average age is 33, with a range from 28 to 87. They work an average of 38 hours, with a range from none to 80. During the week, they are on social media five hours a day (range 0 to 16) and slightly less than five on weekends (range 0 to 16).

The objective knowledge scale is a seven-item scale with a coefficient alpha of .907. This exceeds the threshold for factor reliability (i.e., internal consistency) of 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The job intentions scale is a five-item scale with a coefficient alpha of .958. Scales were created by summing the items. Lower values on the job intentions scale indicate a preference for the position. A manipulation check found 79 percent of

respondents indicated that they were interviewing with a company they wanted to work for.

A two-way ANOVA was estimated. The Levene's test of equality of error variances of the dependent variable across the six groups was statistically significant (p<.000). A logarithmic transformation was used for the dependent variable, and the Levene's test was rerun; it was not statistically significant (p<.11) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). The overall model is statistically significant (p<.000, $F(5)=7.365$). The adjusted R^2 is .149 (Table 1). Both main effects are statistically significant (Facebook: p<.000, $F(2)=7.984$; objective knowledge: p<.028, $F(1)=4.917$). The interaction between the two also is statistically significant (p<.043, $F(2)=3.213$).

Table 1

ANOVA

| Source	SS(df)	F(sig)	Partial Eta Square
Facebook conditions	.556(2)	7.98(.000)*	.083
Objective knowledge (median split)	.171(1)	4.92 (.028)*	.027
Interaction	.224(2)	3.21(.043)*	.035

Significantly different at α=.05
*** Not significant at α=.05*
R^2=.172 (Adjusted R^2=.149)

The means for the control and most invasive Facebook condition (providing your login information) (p<.001) and the most invasive and least invasive (like the company on Facebook) (p<.005) are statistically significant (Figure 1). The means between the control and the least invasive are not statistically significant (p<.950). The most invasive had the lowest job intentions followed by the least invasive and control. This supports hypothesis one.

Figure 1: Main Effects
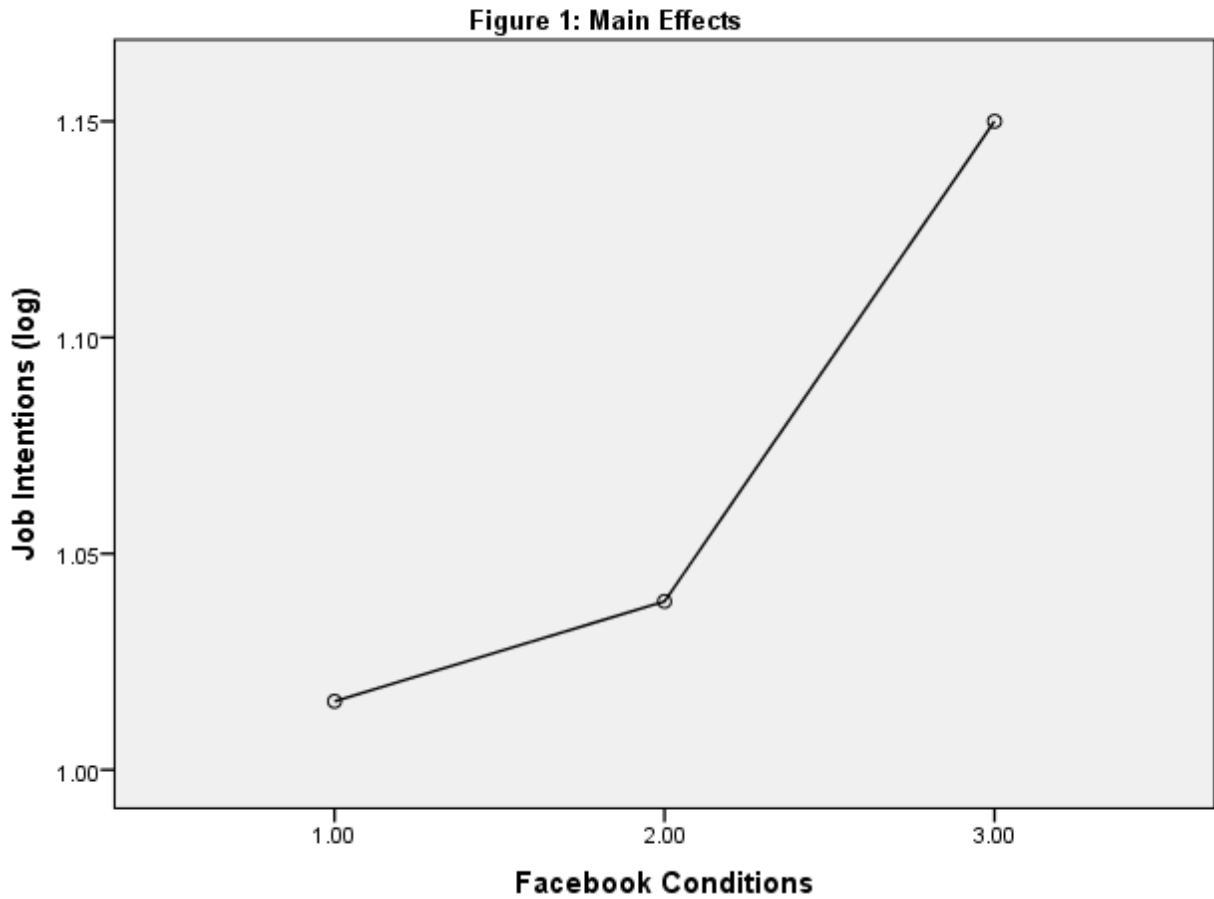
On objective knowledge about social media data usage, the means between high and low knowledge are statistically significant (p<.028) (Figure 2). The more knowledgeable (lower values or one) have higher job intentions (lower values), while those less knowledgeable (higher values or two) have lower job intentions (higher values). This supports hypothesis two.

Figure 2: Main Effects
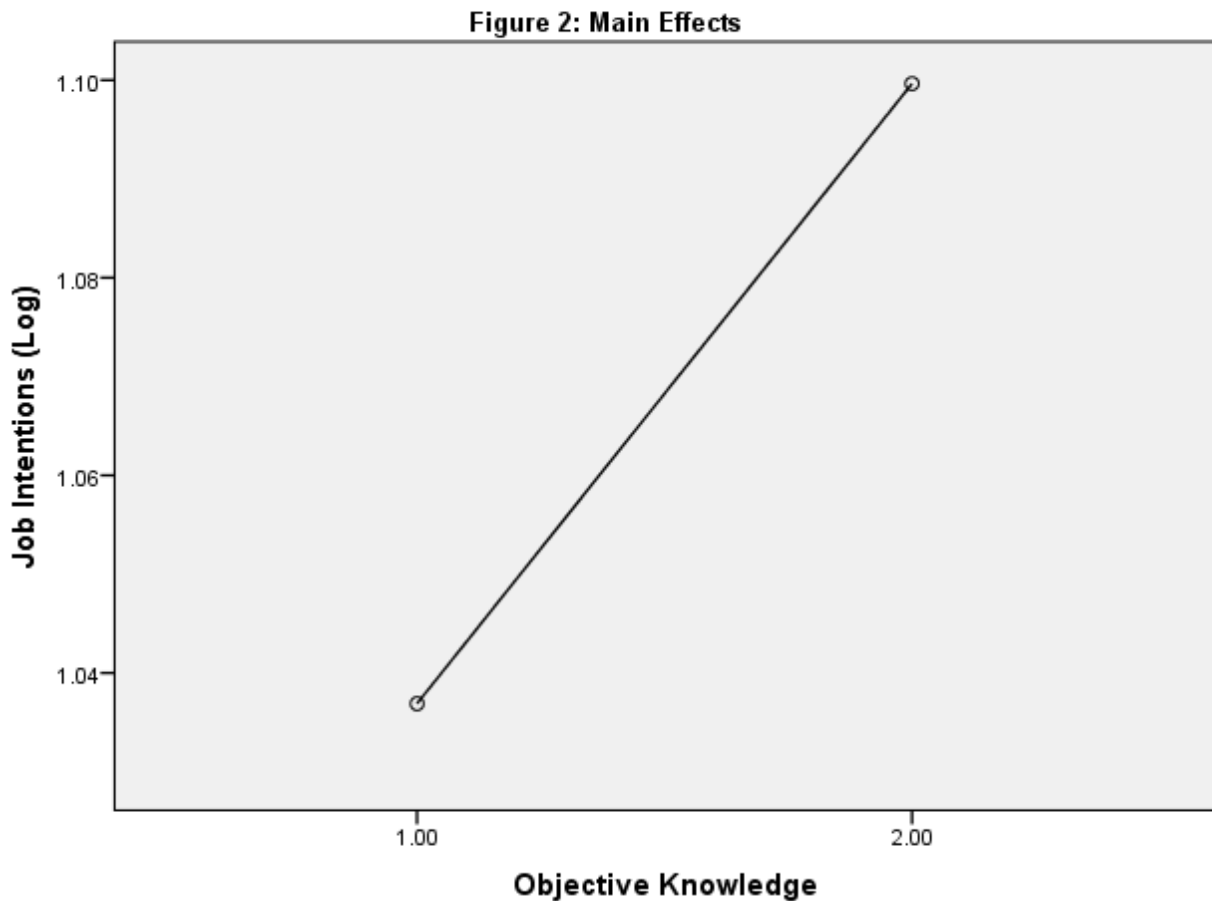
Since the variables in the graph intersect, an interaction is present. To understand the interaction, separate ANOVAs are estimated for high and low objective knowledge, with the independent variable being the three Facebook conditions and job intentions the dependent variable. The model is not statistically significant ($p<.614$, $F(2)=.490$) for high objective knowledge on how personal data is used by social media sites. The model for low objective knowledge is statistically significant ($p<.000$, $F(2)=13.496$). The Facebook condition is statistically significant ($p<.000$, $F(2)=13.496$). The pairwise comparisons (Tukey HSD) show differences between i) the control and the most invasive practice of requesting an applicant's login information and ii) asking an applicant to like the company and the most invasive practice.

Figure 3: Interaction
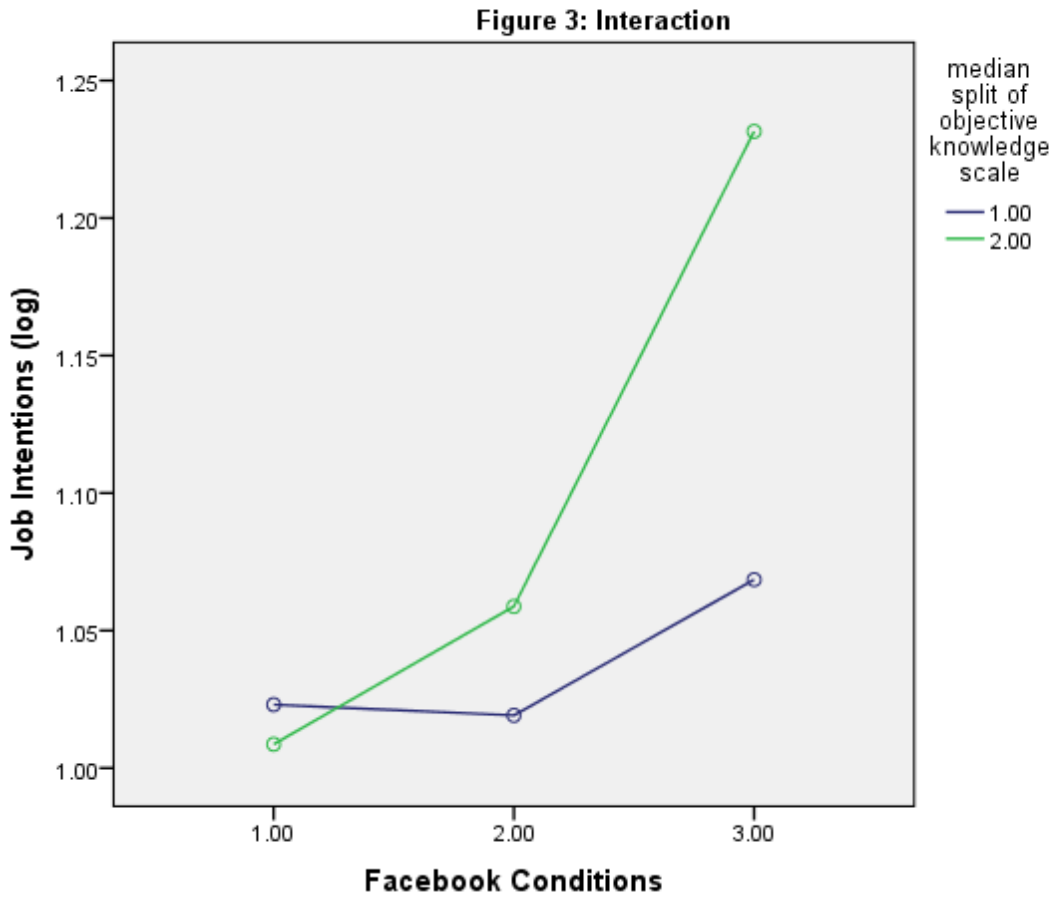
CONCLUSION

Job intentions are negatively influenced by invasive hiring practices related to social media. Respondents value privacy and are reluctant to provide potential employers with login information for their social media accounts. This supports the research of Black et al. (2015), where an inability to control data results in negative attitudes and behaviors. The inability to control data is the pressure exerted by a potential employer to reveal the information. The less knowledgeable social media users are about how their data is being used by sites the higher their job intentions. These main effects do not reveal the entire story.

Social media users who are less knowledgable about how social media data is used have reduced job intentions when confronted with an invasive hiring practice related to social media: access to an applicant's Facebook account. Because applicants lack of knowledge, their Facebook accounts may include inappropriate material that is

detrimental to their hiring. They may falsely believe that material is shielded from the public. They adhere to an antiquated approach to privacy. Regardless of whether this is through obfuscation by social media companies in their privacy statements or ignorance among users, the results have consequences (Pollach, 2007). Those aware of how social media traffic in personal data may not post inappropriate material knowing that their privacy is questionable.

Social media users must understand that privacy online is difficult to ensure. Information posted regardless of your privacy settings may become public. Friends may release it, or third parties granted access by the site. Regardless, hiring companies will try to access it. They are using social media information for vetting applicants (Karl, Peluchette, & Schlaegal, 2010; Levinson, 2010; Preston, 2011; Wilson et al., 2012). Coupled with former and current employer's reluctance to provide anything more than cursory information because of potential litigation, social media use in the hiring process will continue (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Social media searches are free, quick, and usually do not require your consent (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). Although questions remain about its validity for use in hiring (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Davison et al., 2011; Van, Iddekinge et al., 2016; Lucero et al., 2013), many believe in its effectiveness (Back et al., 2010; Golbeck et al., 2011; Reppler, 2011; Sumner et al., 2012; Weisbuch et al., 2009). If social media users are unwilling to reveal information publicly, they may not want to post it on social media.

LIMITATIONS and FUTURE RESEARCH

A convenience sample was used dealing with perceptions. Respondents did not have to choose literally from a paying job or a moral decision (i.e., failure to provide login information and potentially lose a job offer). Faced with not being able to pay your mortgage may make working for a company that has questionable vetting practices more palatable. Data are self-reported, and respondents may provide socially desirable responses. External validity may be reduced. Internal validity could be enhanced through experimental design. Many states have outlawed potential employers requiring applicants to surrender their Facebook login and password.

Black et al. (2015) provide a plethora of variables, such as gender, age, and individualism/collectivism that influence an applicant's reaction to the use of social media in the hiring process.   Gender differences only have been found with Facebook usage (Perju-Mitran & Budacia, 2015). Interactions could be tested based on respondent's and a hypothetical recruiter's gender. Female recruiters evaluated professional information on an applicant's social media profiles more than male recruiters. Female respondents may think more about professional content on their social media pages than male respondents (El Ouirdi et al., 2016). Another avenue for future research is whether a user's Facebook importance or usage moderates results.

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