

SPECIAL ISSUE

The Influence of Social-Media Sites on Job-Seeker Intentions: Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter

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Little is known about the role that company social media networking sites play in job seeker attraction. This research helps address this gap. Subjects in this study evaluated the websites of three potential employers and then selected one employer to follow on social media in subsequent weeks. Each week subjects evaluated content, the activity of the recruiter who managed each site, and the activity of other users. In addition, at the end of each week subjects evaluated the usefulness of the social networking site and reported their attitudes and intentions towards the company. The results showed no differences in job seekers' attitudes toward the

company across different companies before social media was used. Yet, after social media was used there were meaningful differences in these attitudes. Additional analysis showed that the social media forms of Facebook and LinkedIn had significant influence on job seekers' attitudes toward the company while Twitter demonstrated no such influences.

Keywords: Job-seeker intentions; Web 2.0, Social networking sites; Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

Given the competitive nature of the labor market, significant improvements in technology and job seekers' information-seeking preferences, organizations rely heavily on their websites for attracting job seekers (Allen, Mahto & Otondo, 2007; Dineen & Allen, 2013; Maurer & Cook, 2011; Thompson, Braddy, & Wuensch, 2008). While much is known about the role that websites play in initiating contact with potential applicants and influencing initial attraction (Allen, Biggane, Pitts, Otondo, & Van Scotter, 2013; Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, & Keeping, 2003; Eveleth, Baker-Eveleth, & Stone, 2015; Uggerslev, Fassina, & Kraichy,

2012) little is known about the role that company social-networking sites (SNS) play in maintaining job-seeker interest. The current research is designed to help fill this gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Recruiting is often described as a set of activities that help an organization develop relationships with job seekers (Breugh & Starke, 2000) with a goal of attracting, acquiring and retaining talent that can serve as a source of sustainable competitive advantage. In early stages of the relationship little is known by either party about the other (Walker, Bauer, Cole, Bernerth, Field, & Short, 2013) and interaction between each party is often relatively impersonal. If, for example, a talented job seeker withdraws from the process after viewing an organization's website then the organization loses an opportunity to use more personalized recruitment activities (e.g., email messaging, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews, site visits) to influence attraction (Allen, et al., 2007; Van Hove & Lievens, 2009; Walker, et al., 2013). This is one reason why companies try to encourage job seekers to visit their social media sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) and then to click "follow" or "like" on the SNS, thereby allowing the company to regularly 'feed' updates to the job seeker's social media accounts. Companies attempt to influence this behavior by including links directly from their website by using phrases such as '*Follow us to find jobs*', '*Chat and follow our news*', '*Join us*', and '*Stay in the loop*'.

There is also some evidence from previous, non-job-seeker-oriented studies (Cheung, Chiu, & Lee, 2011; Krishnan & Hunt, 2015; Ramírez-Correa, Arenas-Gaitan, & Rondan-Cataluna, 2015; Sandvig, 2016) that users of social media sites also prefer to use SNSs for the purpose of relationship development and maintenance. Job seekers, in particular, look for signals to help reduce uncertainty they feel early in the process about how they will be treated if they were to accept a position at the company (Walker, et al., 2013). The unique nature of social-media sites offers opportunities for companies to communicate interpersonal and informational signals to job seekers to help reduce uncertainty and therefore to develop a relationship with the job seekers beyond generating initial interest via a traditional website or other form of less personal communication (e.g., job posting).

While there is currently a dearth of SNS research addressing job-seeker reactions to an organization's SNS, the research that does exist provides some initial evidence that an SNS can play an information-signaling role for job seekers. Carpentier, Van Hoye, Stockman, Schollaert, Van Theemsche, and Jacobs (2017), for example, found that nurses who visited a specific hospital's social media site reported more positive perceptions of the hospital than nurses who did not view the SNS. In addition, da Motta Veiga, Clark, and Moake (2019) found that organizations that had a job-dedicated SNS had more positive reputations than organizations that did not have a job-dedicated SNS. Further, Carpentier, Van Hoye, and Weng (2019) recently found that subjects in an experiment who were assigned a SNS message that exhibited high informativeness and high social presence (e.g., message used personal pronouns, friendly language) rated a fictitious organization's attractiveness higher than subjects in other conditions. Taken together, these initial job-seeker-related SNS studies suggest that information on an organization's SNS can affect job seekers' attitudes towards the organization; a conclusion that is well grounded in signaling theory (Spence, 1973) and gratification theory (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973).

Previous SNS research in other contexts supports the conclusion that the 'social' nature of SNSs makes them well-suited for developing (Pentina, Gammoh, Zhang, & Mallin, 2013; Pronschinske, Groza & Walker, 2012; Steijn & Schouten, 2013) and maintaining (Ellison, Vitak, Gray, & Lampe, 2014; Tong & Walther, 2011) relationships. With a few exceptions (e.g., forms, contact emails, chat features) career websites are largely technology for communicating in one direction (i.e., from company to job seeker). Content, layout and aesthetics, which are controlled by the company, can be well-crafted and typically change infrequently. An SNS, on the other hand, draws upon the social aspects of Web 2.0 (e.g., openness, conversation, interactivity), and therefore the content and the interactions on the site are controlled by all users (e.g., job seekers, company recruiters, other employees, and customers). Content is updated each time a user of any type posts on the site and thus, it can change frequently. Posts are listed from newest at the top to oldest at the bottom. Communication is possible from company to job seeker (e.g., posting a video, asking a question, responding to a job seeker's question, 'liking' a job seeker's post), from job seeker to company (e.g., posting a question or comment), and from

job seeker to job seeker (e.g., replying to a comment), creating opportunities for significant interaction between users and for some level of personalization that is less possible with traditional career websites.

Extant literature on job seeker reactions helps us conclude that a job seeker's attitudes and intentions toward a potential employer (and therefore, their willingness to develop or maintain a relationship with the company) are influenced by such factors as information about the company and its jobs and by job-seekers' perceptions of recruiter and other employee behaviors and perceptions of the selection process. Job seekers value organizations that have a reputation for treating employees fairly (Walker et al., 2013) and organizations that exhibit a positive social environment (Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980). In addition, they value jobs that seem interesting and provide opportunities (Cable, Aiman-Smith, Mulvey, & Edwards, 2000; Irving & Meyer, 1994; Turban & Cable, 2003; Uggerslev, et al., 2012); and job seekers value recruiters and other employees who exhibit warmth toward job seekers and who are knowledgeable about the jobs and the company (Rynes, et al., 1980). A company's SNSs can be useful tools for conveying much of this information to job seekers in a more personalized, customized and timely fashion than can be conveyed by a traditional website. Further, a company's SNSs can also be useful for job seekers to draw inferences about the company by observing the behaviors of recruiters, other employees and other users who interact on the sites; observations that are helpful for discovering information that they value but that is not easy to learn from reviewing a traditional website. Job seekers can draw conclusions from such things as the frequency and appropriateness of posts by the recruiter who is managing the site, by the recruiters' responsiveness to user questions, and by their reactions to user posts. They can also draw inferences from the types of other users who are active on the sites (e.g., other employees, job seekers, customers) and from the level and form of engagement exhibited by other users. As with past research on technology acceptance, in general (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000), and website usability specifically (Braddy, Meade, & Kroustalis, 2008; Green & Pearson, 2011; Gregory, Meade, & Thompson, 2013), the extent to which a job seeker finds the company's SNS usable also affects their attitudes and intentions towards the company (Constantinides & Lorenzo-Romero, 2013; Veland, Amir, & Samije, 2014). This result helps us conclude that SNS's provide some utility beyond traditional websites.

Leonardi and Treem (2012) and others (Bazarova & Choi, 2014; Ellison & Vitak, 2015) suggest that social media ranks high relative to many forms of communication on the kinds of uses SNSs 'afford' to its users, affordances that can play a significant role in helping job seekers discover information about the company and its agents that will affect their attraction to the company. Leonardi and Treem (2012) identified four affordances of social media use in organizations upon which social media is consistently high: visibility, persistence, editability, and association. *Visibility* refers to the extent to which a type of communication can make "previously invisible information visible" (Ellison & Vitak, 2015, p. 206). For example, when a job seeker comments in response to an employer's post on the company's Facebook site, the comment and the employer's post become accessible to both parties and to their networks; something that is not possible when a job seeker uses a chat function, for example, on a traditional website. By making these comments or posts visible it "affords users the ability to make their behaviors, knowledge, preferences and communication network connections" (Leonardi & Treem, 2012, p. 10) visible to other users. If, as previous research suggests, a job seeker values recruiters who are warm and display knowledge of the company and jobs, then the visibility of a recruiter's behavior on an SNS provides opportunities for the job seeker to learn such information that was not 'visible' to them when using the company's website. In addition, the communal nature of social media and the affordance of *persistence* allows other users, who may not have posted a comment or question to gather information about the knowledge and warmth of a company representative by reviewing the behaviors and interactions of users who have posted. Because posts remain over time, job seekers can learn about levels of warmth, knowledge, fairness and other attraction-related criteria from content and posts that took place in the past and, if they so desire, can enter a conversation that was started before they visited the site.

The *editability* of social media refers to the ability of a user to compose a question, response or other form of communication in isolation from other users before posting it to the SNS, and to make changes after a message has been posted (e.g., to correct a spelling error). This affords a SNS manager, for example, the ability to communicate clear messages without the potential hindrances of non-verbal cues and to tailor messages to the specific users. Because career-oriented websites and social-media sites are used to

attract job seekers for a wide array of jobs and potentially in geographically-dispersed locations, editability affords a recruiter an opportunity to “time when they present information and reshape messages based on the perceived responses from” (Leonardi & Treem, 2012, p. 27) different types of job seekers.

In addition, the ability of job seekers to observe *associations* between different users and between a user and specific posts affords job seekers the ability to make judgments about the credibility and usefulness of information on an SNS for determining such things as the company’s social environment or how job seekers are treated during the recruitment process. For example, being able to see that a series of positive comments and responses on an SNS is between current employees of the company helps a job seeker reach positive conclusions about the company culture; increasing their level of relational certainty about the workplace environment. The fact that associations between each post and a user are visible allows a job seeker to judge a set of negative comments on the SNS differently if the comments were made by a single job seeker or by many. In addition, on sites such as LinkedIn a job seeker can see detailed information about users (e.g., job titles, education, past experiences) who are associated with the company and, potentially associated with the job seeker through connections with someone in the job-seeker’s current network. Seeing these associations affords job seekers the opportunity to assess the extent to which their backgrounds fit the backgrounds of others who work for the company, to learn more about the likely social environment in the company and discover more information about specific jobs and the extent to which the jobs are interesting to them. Given this foundation of previous research we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis One (H1): Job seekers’ attitudes toward the company are influenced by their use of the company’s social media networking sites.

Hypothesis Two (H2): Different forms of social media have different influences on the job seekers’ attitudes toward the company.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Participants in this study were junior and senior undergraduate business students in a U.S.-based medium-sized, four-year public university. All participants were either

actively seeking internships or permanent positions, intended to begin searching soon, or had recently completed a search. More specifically, the course is a requirement for those students majoring in Management and Human Resources and an elective for students in other majors in the College of Business and Economics. The class focuses on recruiting and selecting talent and the majority of the enrolled students were nearing graduation. Thus, they can be viewed as active job seekers, which given the context of the research is a critical issue.

Procedure

The data were collected from four homework assignments required in the course across four consecutive semesters. The assignments were completed in subsequent weeks beginning the second week of the semester. All four of the homework assignments were graded by the course instructor and included in the calculation of the course grade. The assignments were designed to focus on students' perceptions of social media's influence on the recruitment process. We screened a variety of corporate websites looking for ones providing appropriate recruitment opportunities along with the use of social media. Companies were drawn from a list of Fortune 100 companies that were listed as "good places to work" and that were actively using Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn for recruiting job seekers. Many companies on the Fortune 100 list were eliminated from consideration because: 1. They did not have SNSs that were specifically targeted at job seekers, 2. They had few SNSs directed at job seekers, or 3. Their level of activity on the SNSs was limited (e.g., the most recent posts were weeks or months old). Through the screening process, six companies (i.e., eBay, Google, Guidewire, Starbucks, Stryker, and Zappos) and their corresponding websites were identified and used for the homework assignments. Subjects were assigned three company sites to evaluate.

Subjects were given the following instructions at the beginning of Time Period 1: *"Imagine that you are a student at a university in the United States. You are starting your search for a job that will help you get started in your career. Three companies look interesting to you and today you are visiting their company websites to look for information about each company and to see if they have any job openings that might fit your interests and skills."*

Subjects were instructed to start their evaluation at each company's home page, and then to search for specific jobs and for information about the company that would help them decide whether or not to apply for a job at this company now or in the future. In addition, subjects were asked to identify the social-media sites that the company included on their website in the form of links to the SNSs. After searching each website subjects were routed to a questionnaire to submit information about the jobs, the company and the site and then to respond to questions about their attitudes toward the site and their attitude and intentions toward the company.

One week following their evaluation of each site (i.e., Time Period 2) subjects were given the following instructions: *“Recall that you first visited the websites of three companies to learn more about each company. When you were on each site you noticed that the companies encourage job seekers to ‘follow’ the company’s social-media activities. Now, select one of the companies that most interests you as a possible place to work, check out the social-media sites for that company and then decide to ‘follow’ the company’s activities on social media for the next four weeks so that you can learn more about the company.”* Subjects were also given instructions to describe specific content posted on each site during the week, the behavior of the recruiter during the week and the behavior of other users during the week. The following definitions were given to each subject: *“Recruiter Behavior – assume that each social-media site is managed by one or more human resources professionals at the company (i.e., recruiter); decisions about what to post (i.e., content), whether/how to respond to comments, or whether/how to react to comments (e.g., like, retweet) are made by these individuals. Thus, when you are asked questions about ‘recruiter behavior’ assume that this is a reference to the person or people who are managing the site(s). Users – while we would expect that the most active users on a career-oriented social-media site are job seekers, it is also possible that people who follow, post or react to a company’s career sites could include employees, customers or people with some other interest in the company (e.g., someone who has a political interest in the company). Thus, when you are asked questions about ‘users’ assume that this is a reference to the people who are follow the company’s social-media activity.”* After searching the SNSs subjects were routed to a questionnaire to submit information about the recruiter behaviors, the content and the activity of users and then to respond to

questions about their attitudes toward the site and their attitude and intentions toward the company. Identical instructions and data collection occurred two weeks following their evaluation of the career sites (Time Period 3) and four weeks following their evaluation of the career sites (Time Period 4).

Measures

The measures to operationalize and empirically test the hypotheses were formed by collecting responses to specific questionnaire items. The response scale used by the subjects were anchored by 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree'. The measures were adapted from previous work on website usability (Feldman, Bearden, & Hardesty, 2006; Green & Pearson, 2011), service quality (Devaraj, Fan, & Kohli, 2002), and job seeker intentions (Turban & Keon, 1993). The specific questionnaire items used in week one of the experiment, prior to social media use are shown in Table 1. In each subsequent week, after observing the social-media sites, subjects responded to items about each site and about the company. The following items were used to assess subjects' attitudes and intentions toward the company: My overall attitude toward the company is positive; in the future I will tell friends that the company would be a good place for job seekers to look; if the company offered me an interview I would accept. Items used to assess attitudes towards each social-media site (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) included the following: Overall, I find the company's (Facebook) site useful; the recruiter's behavior on (Facebook) during the week was excellent; the majority of the content that was posted on the (Facebook) site this week was helpful; the majority of the content that was posted on the (Facebook) site this week was interesting; the recruiter on (Facebook) was reliable this week; the recruiter on (Facebook) displayed a high level of assurance this week; the recruiter on (Facebook) displayed a high level of empathy this week; the recruiter on (Facebook) was very responsive this week.

Table 1

Questionnaire items in time period one

1. Gender (Male 0, Female 1)
2. Company followed (eBay, Google, Guidewire, Stryker, Starbucks, Zappos)
3. Overall, I find the company's web site useful.
4. Searching for a job on website was easy.
5. The site has an attractive design.
6. There was enough detail on the website for me to decide whether the job openings would be a good fit for me.
7. The website is an effective way for job seekers to find information that they need.
8. The website is visually pleasing.
9. The website was easy to navigate.
10. There were a few things on the website that were annoying.
11. I was never confused while performing the assigned tasks on the website.
12. The content on the website was helpful to me.
13. An experienced job seeker would say that the website is one of the best career sites he or she has visited.
14. My overall attitude toward the company is positive.
15. Overall, I was satisfied with the experience on the company's website.
16. In the future I will tell friends that the company would be a good place for job seekers to look.
17. I plan to revisit the site in the future.
18. If the company offered me an interview I would accept.
19. I will keep my eyes open for more information about the company in the future.
20. What type of device did you use to perform the required tasks?
21. Which Internet browser did you use to perform the required tasks?

Sample

A total of 108 students participated in the required assignments across the consecutive semesters (i.e., 33, 29, 24, and 22). Any student with a missing assignment or missing responses on an assignment were eliminated from the study. After deleting these students, the sample contained 65 sets of complete student responses. Furthermore, we chose to only use data from the first three assignments in our analysis. We knew from previous research on social media that 'fatigue' was possible from users becoming "overwhelmed with information" or reaching a "saturation point" (Bright, Kleiser, & Grau, 2015, pg. 150).

Demographic characteristics of students in the sample were similar to those of all respondents. For example, the percentage of females in the sample relative to the overall group (i.e., 53.7% and 55.4%, respectively) and the cumulative grade point average (GPA) for the sample students and the overall group (i.e., $M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.45$; $M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.49$, respectively) were similar. Table 2 displays other characteristics of the 65 students

in the sample, as well as these same characteristics for all 108 respondents. The cumulative GPA categories showed a high concentration of students in the higher GPA categories among the sample than in the all respondent group. This observation has some intuitive appeal as not fully or accurately completing assignments for some students is likely a recurring pattern, leading to lower GPAs. In addition, the sample does not contain any student who did not complete the course and the grades of A and B had greater concentration of students in the sample as compared to all the respondents.

Table 2

Characteristics of all respondents and the sample respondents

Semester		All Respondents		Sample Respondents	
Semester	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Fall 2014	33	30.56	27	41.54	
Spring 2015	29	26.85	21	32.31	
Fall 2015	24	22.22	17	26.15	
Spring 2016	22	20.37	0	0	
Total	108	100	65	100	
Course Grade		All Respondents		Sample Respondents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
Withdrew	3	2.78	0	0	
F	4	3.70	3	4.62	
D	10	9.26	4	6.15	
C	24	22.22	6	9.23	
B	40	37.04	28	43.08	
A	27	25.00	24	36.92	
Total	108	100	65	100	
Companies		All Respondents		Sample Respondents	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	
eBay	5	4.63	3	4.62	
Google	16	14.81	12	18.46	
Guidewire	10	9.26	8	12.31	
Starbucks	13	12.04	0	0	
Stryker	30	27.78	18	27.69	
Zappos	34	31.48	24	36.92	
Total	108	100	65	100	
Total	108	100	65	100	

The observation of note for the respondents' semester participating in the study is that none of the students from the final semester were included in the sample. For whatever reason, these students did not complete all the assignments or partially completed a questionnaire for at least one of the assignments. As a result, the percentages of students from the remaining three semesters in the sample of 65 observations adjusted

accordingly. The interesting observation for the companies across all 108 respondents compared to the sample of 65 was that no respondents in the sample followed Starbucks on social media while 12% in the all respondent group choose this company. This indicates that those students selecting to follow Starbucks either did not complete all the homework assignments or did not fully complete all items on one or more questionnaires. There is no obvious explanation for this observation. One intuitive explanation is that due to Starbucks's strong retail brick and mortar presence in the United States students were very familiar with the company. As a result, it is possible that students did not believe they could or would learn much from following Starbucks on social media and did not take the assignments seriously. Closer examination of the responses from the students enrolled in the fourth semester showed that of the 20 students who completed the course, 13 choose to follow Starbucks on social media. This was all of the students selecting to follow Starbucks among all 108 respondents. In other words, 65% of the students in the fourth semester selected Starbucks as their company and did not satisfactorily complete the assignments. Thus, both unusual sample results in responses by semester and company followed on social media are interrelated and traceable back to the students in the fourth semester class.

RESULTS

Sample representativeness

The research question examined is whether social-media interaction by job seekers with potential employing companies influences the job seekers' perceptions of the company. In order to empirically examine this research question, it is desirable to assure that if the sample demonstrates the social-media effects these are not due to a characteristic inherent in the sample. It is in this context that the term *sample representativeness* is used.

The investigation of sample representativeness was performed using multiple analysis of variance with repeated trials in PC SAS version 9.4. The dependent variable was formed by averaging the three attitudes toward the company questionnaire items, shown in Table 1, which subjects answered in each week of the study. The resulting dependent variable was on a 100-point scale. The explanatory or independent variables in

the analysis were the categorical variables of gender, grade in the course, and cumulative GPA category. The detail results of this multiple analysis of variance with repeated trials are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Multiple analysis of variance results for sample representativeness

Time Period 1					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	8	2191.53	273.94	0.98	0.463
Error	56	15688.85	280.16		
Corrected Total	64	17880.38			
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type I Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Gender	1	10.35	10.35	0.04	0.85
Grade	4	1265.71	316.43	1.13	0.35
GPA Category	3	915.47	305.16	1.09	0.36
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Gender	1	290.32	290.32	1.04	0.31
Grade	4	272.96	68.24	0.24	0.91
GPA Category	3	915.47	305.16	1.09	0.36
R-Square	Coefficient of Variation	Root Mean Square Error	Week 1 Attitude Toward Company Mean		
0.123	19.46	16.74	86.03		
Time Period 2					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	8	1771.33	221.42	0.54	0.82
Error	56	22967.09	410.13		
Corrected Total	64	24738.42			
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type I Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Gender	1	223.60	223.60	0.55	0.46
Grade	4	622.61	155.65	0.38	0.82
GPA Category	3	925.12	308.37	0.75	0.53
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Gender	1	0.009	0.009	0.00	1.00
Grade	4	864.71	216.18	0.53	0.72
GPA Category	3	925.37	308.37	0.75	0.53
R-Square	Coefficient of Variation	Root Mean Square Error	Week 2 Attitude Toward Company Mean		
0.072	25.01	20.25	81.00		

Time Period 3					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	8	707.18	88.40	0.23	0.98
Error	56	21764.61	388.65		
Corrected	64	22471.78			
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type I Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Gender	1	28.46	28.46	0.07	0.79
Grade	4	565.30	141.32	0.36	0.83
GPA Category	3	113.42	37.81	0.10	0.96
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Gender	1	1.97	1.97	0.01	0.94
Grade	4	262.90	65.72	0.17	0.95
GPA Category	3	113.42	37.81	0.10	0.96
R-Square	Coefficient of Variation	Root Mean Square Error	Week 3 Attitude Toward Company Mean		
0.03	24.36	19.71	80.92		
Hypothesis of No Trial Effect					
Statistic	Value	F-Value	Numerator DF	Denominator DF	Pr>F
Wilk's Lambda	0.93	1.94	2	55	0.15
Pillai's Trace	0.07	1.94	2	55	0.15
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.07	1.94	2	55	0.15
Roy's Greatest Root	0.07	1.94	2	55	0.15
Hypothesis of No Trial Effect*Gender Effect					
Statistic	Value	F-Value	Numerator DF	Denominator DF	Pr>F
Wilk's Lambda	0.99	0.38	2	55	0.68
Pillai's Trace	0.01	0.38	2	55	0.68
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.01	0.38	2	55	0.68
Roy's Greatest Root	0.01	0.38	2	55	0.68
Hypothesis of No Trial Effect*Grade Effect					
Statistic	Value	F-Value	Numerator DF	Denominator DF	Pr>F
Wilk's Lambda	0.78	1.78	8	110	0.09
Pillai's Trace	0.22	1.74	8	112	0.10
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.27	1.83	8	76.28	0.08
Roy's Greatest Root	0.24	3.39	4	56	0.01
Hypothesis of No Trial Effect*GPA Category Effect					
Statistic	Value	F-Value	Numerator DF	Denominator DF	Pr>F
Wilk's Lambda	0.87	1.29	6	110	0.27
Pillai's Trace	0.13	1.30	6	112	0.26
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.14	1.29	6	71.58	0.27
Roy's Greatest Root	0.11	2.06	3	56	0.12
Hypothesis of Between Subjects Effects					
Source	Degrees of	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F

	Freedom						
Gender	1	112.21	112.21	0.14		0.71	
Grade	4	252.65	63.16	0.08		1.00	
GPA Category	3	1053.74	351.25	0.44		0.72	
Error	56	44470.32	794.11				
Hypothesis of Within Subjects Effects							
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F	Adj Pr>F (G-G)	Adj Pr>F (H-F-L)
Trial	2	310.00	155.00	1.09	0.34	0.32	0.32
Trial*Gender	2	180.08	90.04	0.63	0.53	0.48	0.48
Trial*Course Grade	8	1147.91	143.49	1.01	0.43	0.42	0.42
Trial* GPA Category	6	900.27	150.05	1.05	0.39	0.39	0.39
Error	112	15950.23	142.41				

These results have significant detail which is reported in the table and will not be duplicated here. However, a summary is provided below. No meaningful effects on attitude toward the company due to the three independent variables of gender, course grade, and GPA category for individual weeks (i.e., the analysis of variance) were found. In addition, the results across all three weeks together (i.e., the multiple analysis of variance results) found no meaning influences on attitude toward the company. Additionally, no trial effect was identified nor were similar effects found for the interaction terms of trial and each independent variable (i.e., trial by gender, trial by course grade, and trial by GPA category). These results also indicated that there were no between subject effects nor were there any within subject effects found. In summary, the results indicate that if later analysis shows meaningful influences on attitudes toward the company, these influences are not driven by differences in the contextual or demographic variables of gender, course grade, or GPA category.

Social media influences on attitudes toward the company

The research question examined (i.e., Hypothesis 1) is whether or not social-media interaction by job seekers with potential employers influences these job seekers' attitude toward the company. The empirical investigation of this research question was performed using multiple analysis of variance with repeated trials in PC SAS version 9.4. The dependent variable was the previously used measure of the job seekers' attitude toward the company. The explanatory or independent variable in the analysis was the company which the student or job seeker selected to follow across the three time periods. The

detailed results from this multiple analysis of variance with repeated trials are shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Multiple analysis of variance results for company effects

Time Period 1					
Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Company; Independent Variable: Company					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	4	667.44	166.86	0.58	0.68
Error	60	17212.94	286.88		
Corrected Total	64				
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type I Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	667.44	166.86	0.58	0.68
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	667.44	166.86	0.58	0.68
R-Square	Coefficient of Variation	Root Mean Square Error	Week 1 Attitude Toward Company Mean		
0.037	19.69	16.94	86.03		
Time Period 2					
Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Company; Independent Variable: Company					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	4	5326.96	1331.74	4.12	0.005
Error	60	19411.46	323.52		
Corrected Total	64	24738.42			
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type I Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	5326.96	1331.74	4.12	0.005
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	5326.96	1331.74	4.12	0.005
R-Square	Coefficient of Variation	Root Mean Square Error	Week 2 Attitude Toward Company Mean		
0.215	22.21	17.99	80.98		
Time Period 3					
Dependent Variable: Attitude Toward the Company; Independent Variable: Company					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	4	6168.24	1542.06	5.68	0.001
Error	60	16303.54	271.73		
Corrected Total	64	22471.78			

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type I Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	6168.24	1542.06	5.68	0.001
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	6168.24	1542.06	5.68	0.001
R-Square	Coefficient of Variation	Root Mean Square Error	Week 3 Attitude Toward Company Mean		
0.27	20.37	16.48	80.92		

Hypothesis of No Trial Effect

Statistic	Value	F-Value	Numerator DF	Denominator DF	Pr>F
Wilk's Lambda	0.923	2.48	2	59	0.093
Pillai's Trace	0.077	2.48	2	59	0.093
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.084	2.48	2	59	0.093
Roy's Greatest Root	0.084	2.48	2	59	0.093

Hypothesis of No Trial Effect*Company Effect

Statistic	Value	F-Value	Numerator DF	Denominator DF	Pr>F
Wilk's Lambda	0.764	2.12	8	118	0.039
Pillai's Trace	0.239	2.03	8	120	0.048
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	0.304	2.22	8	81.995	0.034
Roy's Greatest Root	0.291	4.36	8	60	0.004

Hypothesis of Between Subjects Effects

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Company	4	9023.22	2255.81	3.54	0.012
Error	60	38245.78	637.43		

Hypothesis of Within Subjects Effects

Source	Degrees of Freedom	Type III Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F	Adj Pr>F (G-G)	Adj Pr>F (H-F-L)
Trial	2	822.17	411.08	3.36	3.36	0.05	0.05
Trial*Company	8	3139.42	392.43	3.21	3.21	0.01	0.01
Error	120	14682.17	122.35				

The empirical results shown in the table are very detailed and this detail will not be duplicated here; what is presented below is a summary of the key results. The examination of the results on the individual weeks of the experiment (i.e., the analysis of variance) showed that there were no meaningful differences in the attitude toward the company across companies by these job seekers in the first week of the study. However, in time periods two and three these results indicated significant differences in these job seekers' attitudes across companies. These results are important since the job seekers did not follow the company on social media in the first week of the study, but did so in time period two and time period three of the study. These results indicate that social media interaction does appear to influence job seekers' attitude toward the company.

The empirical results across all three time periods of the study (i.e., the multiple analysis of variance) provided other insights. Based on a 5% level of significance and a one-tailed test, meaningful results were identified. First, there was no meaningful trial effect, but a meaningful effect for the interaction of the trial and the company. The implication of this result is that the job seekers' attitudes varied differently across the trials and the companies being followed on social media. Similarly, a meaningful between subjects effect was identified implying that different job seekers' attitude toward the company changed differently and were influenced by social media differently from job seeker to job seeker. Finally, a meaningful within subjects influence was identified implying that a job seeker's attitude toward the company changed from time period to time period of the experiment. Presumably this change was at least in part due to their interaction with the company using social media.

Importance of social media types

The prior results indicated that job seekers' interaction with a prospective company through social media influences these job seekers' attitudes toward the company. Based on these results, the next question (i.e., Hypothesis 2) is which social-media forms produce these influences. As indicated earlier, the students participating in the experiment followed their selected company on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Data on their use of these media were collected during time period two and time period three. These data were then used to examine the influences of each social media on the job seekers' attitudes toward the company they followed.

This investigation began with a factor analysis using the questionnaire items focused on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn described in section 3.3. The factor analysis was performed using PC SAS version 9.4 with varimax rotation and forcing three factors to be extracted. A set of four questionnaire items were identified that were in common across all three social media types. Similar to what was done earlier, each social media type was measured by averaging the respective scores on its four items. These questionnaire items are displayed in Table 5. Also shown in Table 5 are the three questionnaire items averaged to form the measure of job seekers' attitudes toward the company. This is the same measure of these attitudes used in the earlier analyses.

Table 5

Questionnaire items forming each measure

Attitude Toward the Company	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn
My overall attitude toward the company is positive.	The majority of the content that was posted on the Facebook site this week was helpful.	The majority of the content that was posted on the Twitter site this week was helpful.	The majority of the content that was posted on the LinkedIn site this week was helpful.
In the future I will tell friends that the company would be a good place for jobseekers to look.	The majority of the content that was posted on the Facebook site this week was interesting.	The majority of the content that was posted on the Twitter site this week was interesting.	The majority of the content that was posted on the LinkedIn site this week was interesting.
If the company offered me an interview I would accept.	The recruiter on Facebook displayed a high level of assurance this week.	The recruiter on Twitter displayed a high level of assurance this week.	The recruiter on LinkedIn displayed a high level of assurance this week.
	The recruiter on Facebook displayed a high level of empathy this week.	The recruiter on Twitter displayed a high level of empathy this week.	The recruiter on LinkedIn displayed a high level of empathy this week.

The empirical analysis of which forms of social media influence job seekers' attitude toward the company was done using two regressions, one on time period two data from the experiment and the other using time period three data. Both regressions used the job seekers' attitude toward the company as the dependent variable and the three developed social media measures as the independent variables. Both regressions were performed in PC SAS version 9.4 using ordinary least squares regression. The results from these regressions are also displayed in Table 6.

Table 6

Regression results of social media effects on attitude toward the company.

Time Period 2					
Analysis of Variance					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	3	12293	4097.68	20.08	0.0001
Error	61	12445	204.02		
Corrected Total	64	24738			
Root MSE	Dependent Variable Mean	Coefficient of Variation	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	
14.28	80.98	17.64	0.50	0.47	
Parameter Estimates					
Variable	Degrees of Freedom	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	t-Value	Pr> t
Intercept	1	34.35	6.29	5.46	0.0001
Facebook	1	0.35	0.10	3.56	0.0007
Twitter	1	0.10	0.11	0.93	0.3540
LinkedIn	1	0.26	0.10	2.67	0.0097
Time Period 3					
Analysis of Variance					
Source	Degrees of Freedom	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Value	Pr>F
Model	3	12018	4006.15	23.38	0.0001
Error	61	10453	171.37		
Corrected Total	64	22472			
Root MSE	Dependent Variable Mean	Coefficient of Variation	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	
13.09	80.92	16.18	0.53	0.51	
Parameter Estimates					
Variable	Degrees of Freedom	Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	t-Value	Pr> t
Intercept	1	42.71	5.15	8.30	0.0001
Facebook	1	0.23	0.11	2.12	0.0382
Twitter	1	0.10	0.08	1.26	0.2133
LinkedIn	1	0.27	0.08	3.41	0.0012

The regressions had very similar results. Both F-values were statistically significant at a one percent level with adjusted R-squares of 49% and 51%. Furthermore, the parameter estimates which were meaningful at a 5% level or less, besides the intercept term, were Facebook and LinkedIn. The variable measuring Twitter was not statistically significant in either regression using a 5% significance level. The implications are that job-seeker interactions with a potential company using Facebook or LinkedIn can

influence their attitudes toward the company. Additionally, these results indicate that the use of Twitter had no such influences.

DISCUSSION

As when a job seeker interacts with a company website, it is logical to assume that a job seeker's perceptions of the company's SNS, and subsequent attitudes and intentions towards the site and the company, will in part be a function of such factors as the aesthetics of the site (Cugelman, Thelwall, & Dawes, 2009; Robins & Holmes, 2008), how easy the SNS is for them to use (Lin, 2010) and the perceived usefulness of the site to discover the information that they seek (Stone, Baker-Eveleth, & Eveleth, 2015). While a job seeker might evaluate his or her experience with an SNS on the extent to which the site content and design meets their extrinsic-motivation needs, Agarwal and Karahanna (2000) suggest that users' attitudes and beliefs about technology use, in general, may also be explained by intrinsic-motivation that derives from "their holistic experiences with the technology" (p. 666). Intrinsic-motivation-type constructs, such as engagement (Webster & Ho, 1997) and absorption (Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000) have been found to influence users' attitudes toward and use of technology. By logical extension, the extent to which a job seeker is engaged with a company's social-media site and finds the site useful should influence their attitudes toward the site and the company. Davis (1989) argued that perceived usefulness creates an instrumental motivation to use the technology because of the user's belief of a link between using the technology (e.g., the company's SNS) and a desirable outcome (e.g., finding an employer that is a good fit), which was confirmed by Lin (2010) who found that perceived usefulness is positively correlated with job seekers' intentions to use job-search websites. Results of the present study contributes to this growing body of knowledge by providing some support for the conclusion that job seekers see utility from using a company's SNSs as part of their job-search activities.

Specifically, this study contributes to our knowledge of job seekers' reactions to recruitment efforts by beginning to fill a gap in the literature. While much is already known about the role that traditional websites play in affecting job seekers' attitudes and intentions towards a company, less is known about the role of SNSs. This study documents

evidence that job seekers' reactions to company SNSs explains unique variance in job seekers' attitudes and intentions beyond that explained by reactions to traditional sites.

SNS affordances (i.e., visibility, persistence, editability and associations) provide companies the opportunity to continue developing a relationship with a job seeker at a time in the relationship when a job seeker's uncertainty about the company makes the relationship tenuous. The company's contributions to the SNS, through posting content, reacting to questions and posting comments, can send targeted signals to job seekers about the company, its jobs and its employees. In addition, these same affordances allow job seekers the opportunity to discover information about the company and its employees prior to committing to the time and effort that is needed to submit application material or to participate in career-fair sessions, interviews, personality tests, site-visits and other forms of selection activities. SNSs provide interpersonal and informational signals that help the job seeker draw conclusions about the warmth and knowledge of employees, the nature of jobs in the company and likely social environment in the company, for examples. Prior to the use of SNSs for this role, much of the information needed to form such conclusions would not be visible until later in the recruitment and selection process at a time when a job seeker has already invested a significant amount of time and effort to the process.

Another contribution this study makes to the extant literature is identifying differences between job seekers' reactions to Twitter and other forms of SNS (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn). Anecdotal evidence from opened-ended comments that subjects submitted at the end of the study suggests that Twitter may not have the same affordances as the other forms of SNS. For example, comments and reactions by other users are less visible to a user than the other forms of media; additional effort or 'clicks' are required to look at other users' comments, for example. In the case of LinkedIn and Facebook at least a portion of comments and reactions is visible to every user without additional effort and buttons such as "See More" or "Comments" are easy to see and use to gather more information. Others (Praveena & Thomas, 2014; Shang, Wu, & Li., 2017) have noted that different SNSs are characterized by different forms of utility. While Facebook, for example, may be used more for social interaction, and thereby serve an important role in the development of relationships between job seekers and companies,

Twitter may not be as well suited to play a similar role. A recent study by Neubaum and Krämer (2015) concluded that subjects' positive emotional outcomes after interacting with other users on Facebook was resulting from the 'social closeness' they felt with other SNS users. The limited affordances of Twitter relative to the other SNSs in this study may have limited subjects' perceptions of closeness with the recruiter and other users on Twitter, which might also help explain our findings.

Furthermore, some subjects from the present study reported that companies often struggled to communicate complete information within the character limit of Twitter, often resorting to using the 140 characters to direct the user to go elsewhere for recruitment-oriented information; instructing users to click a link to a video (e.g., on YouTube) or to an article (e.g., on a blog site). In this case companies were using Twitter as a method for directing users to another SNS or to a traditional website rather than using it as an SNS. Thus, in addition to possible differences in affordances between Twitter and the other forms of SNS, the results we found here may be related to companies' inability to use the tool effectively or possibly to the less rich nature of Twitter, relative to the other sites.

A recent study by Frasca and Edwards (2017) that drew upon Media Richness Theory (Daft & Lengel, 1986) found differences in job seekers' reactions to company recruitment efforts when such efforts were communicated via a traditional career website, a YouTube video and a Facebook post. Frasca and Edwards (2017) found that media richness features "were ranked more highly across Facebook and YouTube media" (p. 134) than for the traditional website. Thus, the rich nature of communication on Facebook and LinkedIn may be another reason why subjects' attitudes and intentions toward the company were related to their perceptions of these sites, but not so with Twitter.

CONCLUSIONS

Just as companies use job seekers' social-media sites to make hiring decisions (Black & Johnson, 2012; Black, Johnson, Takach, & Stone, 2012; Bohnert & Ross, 2010; El Ouiridi, El Ouiridi, Segers, & Pai, 2016), the present study helps us conclude that job seekers do use company social-media sites to make job-choice decisions. However, this study is just a start. For examples, it would be interesting to assess the relative

importance that job seekers place on SNS content, recruiter behaviors and the behaviors of other users, and to test the relative utility of each social media at signaling factors that affect job-choice decisions. We know that job seekers use information about the company, the job(s), the recruiter and other employees and about the selection process in order to make job-choice decisions (Rynes, et al., 1980). We don't yet know if an SNS such as Facebook is better at communicating information about some of these factors, while LinkedIn is better at communicating information about other factors. We encourage future research in this area.

One limitation of this study provides another avenue for future research. In this field study we used websites and SNSs from existing companies. Using sites of companies who were actively managing multiple SNSs to engage job seekers provided a valuable context for evaluating the extent to which viewing SNSs explains unique variance in job seekers' attitudes and intentions beyond viewing a traditional website. However, to gain a better understanding of the specific aspects of SNSs that explain these findings it may be useful to implement an experimental design in future studies that allows us to control for some factors while manipulating others.

Another interesting area for future research would be to investigate the extent to which expectations formed by viewing a company's SNSs are confirmed by post-SNS interactions which occur later in the recruitment and selection process (e.g., an interview) and how those expectation confirmations affect job seekers' attitudes and intentions toward the company. The editability of traditional websites and SNSs, for example, gives companies a significant amount of control over the messaging that they send via these communication media, thereby giving the company much more control of the impressions that job seekers form about the company than face-to-face forms of interaction where editability is low.

As stated earlier, previous research has found social media fatigue occurs when users become overwhelmed with information (Bright, et al., 2015). A potentially valuable area for future research is to investigate the factors that affect job-seekers' continuance intentions with respect to the career-oriented SNSs. In order to attract talent when it is needed companies rely on a constant flow of interest by job seekers; and a job seeker's attraction to any organization is likely a function of the job seeker's current status (i.e.,

actively or passively looking for a new position) and the extent to which the company has openings at the point in time when the job seeker is reviewing the SNSs. Thus, it is useful to better understand factors that determine a job seeker's continued use of the SNSs. At this point little is understood about continuance intentions in this specific SNS context, though there is a wealth of recent information upon which to build future research (Bright, et al., 2015; Chang & Zhu, 2012; French, Shim, Otondo, & Porter, 2016; Guo, Shim, & Otondo, 2010; Huang & Lin, 2011; Khan, 2017; Srivastava, Saks, Weed, & Atkins, 2018; Tarute, Nikou & Gatautis, 2017; Zhang, Zhao, Lu, & Yang, 2015).

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