

COULD SOCIAL MEDIA BACKGROUND CHECKS DISCOURAGE QUALIFIED JOB APPLICANTS?

by

Baylea Nichole Sorto

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Mark C. Frame, Chair

Dr. Michael B. Hein

Dr. Richard G. Moffett, III

## **ABSTRACT**

Social media platforms have consistently increased in popularity over the years. While many established workers from a variety of organizational levels may have or maintain a social media presence, many of those entering the workforce have spent much of their lives on social media. As professionals from this generation enter the workforce, employers might have to reconsider company policies in terms of social media usage and background checks in order to stay competitive and attract top talent. This study explores participants' attitudes toward social media background check procedures and the notion that social media background checks will significantly influence applicants' perception of and their interest in working for the organization. The study also examines these factors and how they relate to the amount of social media usage. The results indicated that organizations that conduct "invasive" social media screenings (i.e. requesting social media logins and passwords) could potentially experience negative applicant reactions, decreased organizational attractiveness, and consequently discourage qualified job applicants. These results, however, should be interpreted within the context of the quasi-experimental design.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In the 2014 Cisco Connected World Technology Report, 42% of the 2,912 professionals surveyed reported that they would choose internet access over their sense of smell. Notably, there was no difference between the 1,388 professionals making up the Generation Y group (age 18-30) and the 1,524 professionals in the Generation X group (age 31-50). Even more shocking was that approximately one third of the professionals surveyed reported that they would rather lose electricity for one week instead of giving up their smartphone for the same amount of time (Cisco, 2014). These findings paint a clear picture of a society that has come to depend upon technology and the internet. More notably, social media has found a way to wedge itself not only into our personal lives, but also into the workplace, and the effects of social media on talent acquisition have become an increasingly interesting topic of conversation.

Similarly, the 2011 Cisco Connected World Technology Report found that 56% of the 1,441 college students surveyed reported that they would decline a job offer if the company did not allow employees to access social media during work hours or they would at least find a way to get around the policy. Likewise, one third of the college students also said that salary was not the most important aspect of a job offer, but that working remotely, using social media at work, and having the freedom to use personal devices were more important (Cisco, 2011). As newer generations enter the workforce,

understanding the talent landscape and how they perceive their environment becomes increasingly important.

### **Social Media**

With the rapid development of technology, it can become difficult to provide a precise definition for the term “social media,” because it evolves virtually every day. For the purposes of this research, the term “social media” can be loosely defined as internet-based applications that allow users to create and share content and ideas via online communities and networks. Obar and Wildman (2015) point out that there are four major commonalities between social media platforms today: a) social media platforms are internet-based applications, b) individuals can create their own personalized profiles, c) these platforms allow users to network or connect with other individual profiles or groups, and d) the “user-generated content is the lifeblood of social media” (p. 7). When asked to give an example of social media, one might easily suggest a stand-alone product, like Facebook or Twitter. However, social media is much more than any one product or platform. In fact, social networking functionality has been integrated into other virtual spaces that were not traditionally intended for it, like gaming platforms, human resources applications, or military operations (Andrews, 2012).

Obar and Wildman (2015) also state that “the internet and World Wide Web have *always* been used to facilitate social interaction,” but it was not until “the emergence and rapid diffusion of Web 2.0 functionalities during the first decade of the

new millennium” that social media made its epic infiltration into our daily lives (p. 4). In fact, many younger people cannot recall a time when social media was *not* present. Originally launched for college students in 2004 and soon opened to the general public in 2006, Facebook quickly became the largest social media network and now has more than 1.86 *billion* active users worldwide on a monthly basis as of December 2016 (Facebook, 2017). Similarly, the Pew Research Center (2017) found that 69% of US adults used social media in 2016, up from 5% when the Pew Research Center began tracking social media and internet usage in 2005.

Meanwhile, there are young people out there who have never known a world without social media. The popularity of social media has increased dramatically and not just with the younger, more tech-savvy members of society. Many have experienced being asked to accept a “friend request” from a parent or grandparent on Facebook. Perrin (2015) notes that while young adults (ages 18 to 29) are most likely to use social media today (in fact, 90% of that population does), the number of users who are 65 and older has skyrocketed, going from 2% in 2005 to 35% in 2015.

The Pew Research Center (2017) found as of 2016 that the difference between the number of male and female social media users was small (66% of men and 72% of women), but other demographic differences do exist. Those with lower levels of education are less likely to use social media (78% of those with a college degree, 73% of those with some college, and 59% of those who have high school diplomas or less), and similarly, those in lower income households are less likely to use social media than those in higher income households. The usage gap between race/ethnicity is fairly close (74%

of Hispanics, 69% of Caucasians, and 63% of African Americans), while rural citizens in general are less likely to use social media (71% of those living in suburban areas, 69% of those living in urban areas, and 60% of those living in rural areas; Pew Research Center, 2017). Therefore, it becomes important to understand the general landscape of social media users and their demographics as we start to explore the notion of social media in the workplace.

### **Social Media and the Workplace**

Not only are many members of our society reliant on social media in their personal lives, but their dependence on these platforms may play a unique role on the job as well. Many organizations have fully integrated social media into the workplace by use of instant messaging, internal social media platforms, robust human capital management systems, and of course, platforms like LinkedIn. Many organizations have their own Facebook and Twitter pages used for promoting social events and recruiting new talent (Davison, Maraist, & Bing, 2011).

Because the internet and social media have such an integral role in the workforce today, it is important that we recognize it and understand how they affect not only the current talent landscape, but also potential talent (Davison et al., 2011). First and foremost, we need to understand what types of people use social media. As the Pew Research Center (2017) findings suggest, there are differences between demographics in regards to social media usage, and this adds many challenges to the workplace that have previously not been relevant (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). How does

the use of social media on the job affect company policies, recruitment initiatives, and even selection?

Federal laws are vague and up for interpretation when it comes to social media, as they weren't originally intended to support social media usage. In fact, many laws were established before the internet was commonly available and can be interpreted in many different ways, as we have seen in a variety of court cases in recent years (Andrews, 2012). However, nearly half of the states (e.g. California, Illinois, Michigan, Utah, and Connecticut) have introduced their own legislation on the matter to protect employees and potential employees from organizations that use social media to make hiring decisions. More specifically, they prohibit employers from requiring employees to disclose their social media logins and passwords (Deschenaux, 2015). One can see that this becomes a particularly sensitive issue today as organizations continue to use social media to make decisions about potential job candidates (Brown & Vaughn, 2011). It becomes a matter of what *can* and what *should* organizations do with social media information.

### **Talent Acquisition**

Commonly, the ultimate goal of recruiting is to identify individuals, both internal and external to the organization, and to fill a vacancy or role because "new talent is essential for an organization to meet its goals and to succeed in a rapidly changing marketplace" (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). In order to find and eventually hire top talent, employers have to sift through the applicant pool and

determine who will be the best fit for the role, the team, and the organization as a whole based on a plethora of factors like knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics. In doing so, employers must be careful to not violate federal laws like Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by discriminating and making hiring decisions based on sensitive, and illegal, considerations like age, sex, religion, race, gender, and more (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Society for Human Resource Management, 1969; Strumwasser, 2013; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d.). While employers have traditionally had access to resumes that showcase one's character and expertise in the best possible light using work experience, accomplishments, skills, and more, they now have access to even more information long before the candidate ever walks in the door for an interview by using social media (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).

### **Talent Acquisition and Social Media**

The idea of background checks is not new; social media is just a newer, more cost effective tool that gives employers even more insight into an applicant's personal life (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Some employers have chosen to stick to a more traditional investigative approach, or what is referred to in this study as a "basic" approach, by using background check and drug screening services. Not surprisingly though, other employers have taken an even more "thorough" approach and are examining the public information made available on applicants' social media profiles as an informal source of screening information on their own (Clark & Roberts, 2010; Palank, 2006; Preston, 2011; Slovensky & Ross, 2012; Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth, &

Junco, 2016). Some have even taken it a step further, beyond what we are used to, by demanding that applicants submit their social media passwords or are asked to log into their social media accounts live in order for HR to conduct a full in-depth background check (Strumwasser, 2013). For the purposes of this study, this is considered a more “invasive” investigation.

An outreach manager for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) mentioned that 75% of recruiters are asked to review job candidates online and 70% have actually rejected an applicant as a result of what they have found (Preston, 2011). While there have been many controversial cases of organizations conducting these “thorough” or “invasive” investigations in the past few years, one of the most recent cases occurred at Harvard College. University officials discovered a private Facebook group message where students were sharing offensive, racially-charged content, and they consequently revoked at least 10 offers of admission from the incoming freshman class of 2021. (Schmidt, 2017). When it comes to organizations making decisions based on social media content, where does one draw the line between a joke and, in this case, hate speech? Does an organization have a right to decline an applicant based on unacceptable behavior or is that an invasion of privacy?

Employers do have a both a legal responsibility and organizational duty to conduct thorough background checks to prevent negligent hiring and protect others, but at what cost are they willing to risk further legal implications? The exploration of one’s social media profile could protect the organization from a negligent hire, but it could also be grounds for discrimination. There are many risks to consider. More than

ever before, recruiters have access to and can make preemptive decisions based on protected and sensitive material like age, religion, race, and sexual orientation if made evident on social media (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Strumwasser, 2013). This can violate one's right to privacy, but even more concerning is the misuse of one's private information. What if the information acquired is inaccurate?

One of the debates concerning social media and recruitment is whether one's internet profile draws an accurate and reliable depiction of one's personality characteristics and/or habits as they relate to employment (Kluemper & Rosen, 2009). What do employers gain from exploring applicants' social media profiles regarding both private and public activity? It is possible that the profile contents can predict one's behavior on the job or perhaps it is inaccurate and only highlights desired (or undesired) personality characteristics. It might even potentially allude to an applicant's cognitive ability or other necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities required to be successful on the job. Overall, an employer must understand what is to be gained from conducting a social media background check, while at the same time, also weigh and understand the risks.

### **Advantages of Social Media Background Checks**

In addition to screening potential job candidates using resumes and interviews, employers now have convenient, quick, and more cost-effective access into candidates' personal lives by means of social media, and the candidate does not even need to be present for it (Roth, Bobko, Van Iddekinge, & Thatcher, 2016; Slovinsky & Ross, 2012).

While there are risks to conducting informal social media background checks, there are also several advantages.

### ***Verify Information***

A candidate's social media profile provides yet another source of information for the recruiter. It might display information that supports one's cause and validates the knowledge, skills, and abilities listed on one's resume. Because cover letters and resumes traditionally highlight and sometimes exaggerate one's positive characteristics in order to make a good impression, social media might be helpful in painting a complete picture of the candidate, as it is assumed to be comprised of more honest information since it is not traditionally intended for the purpose of getting a job (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).

Additionally, one's profile could highlight falsified information or negative information, and thus, save the employer time and money. As mentioned above, people tend to exaggerate or be dishonest about qualifications or previous job roles on their resume or in interviews, but forget that employers might have access to see a more honest rendition within their public social media profile data (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Whether the information is good or bad, recruiters have an extra platform with which they can verify one's information.

While identifying falsified or negative information is definitely an advantage, it is also important to be aware of the effects of negative information. Research suggests that bad or negative information is weighed more heavily than good or positive information. Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, and Vohs (2001) found that whether

it is an event, a relationship, a stereotype, or any other type of experience, “the principle that bad is stronger than good appears to be consistently supported across a broad range of psychological phenomena” (p. 354).

When it comes to the positive-negative asymmetry effect, impression formation is no exception (Roth et al., 2016). Early research by Springbett (1958) found that first impressions tend to drive hiring decisions. Interviewers in the study made judgments based on information (e.g. appearance, application) gathered within the first few minutes of the interview with a focus on discovering negative information. If social media profiles are the new first impression, recruiters may be making unjustified hiring decisions long before the candidate walks in the door.

### ***Avoid Negligent Hiring***

Employers have an obligation to do their due diligence when it comes to screening out applicants who might cause harm to others in the organization. Failure to properly screen out such candidates could leave the employer in a legal situation later on (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Employers can do their part to prevent negligent hiring by doing a little extra screening using one’s social media profiles. Slovensky and Ross (2012) note that while traditional background check services might easily uncover a criminal record, social media can shed light on applicants who may not have a criminal record, but still partake in criminal activity, like illegal drug use or underage drinking.

### ***Assess Applicant Characteristics***

While traditional selection tools are more structured to look at one’s person-job fit in terms of knowledge, skills, and abilities, social media profiles, however, can

potentially give employers full insight into one's general and complete character, alluding to one's person-organization fit (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Roth et al., 2016). Recruiters cannot seem to agree on what specifically makes one a "good fit" (Kristof-Brown, 2000), yet person-organization fit is often determined very early on. Studies show that some of the most commonly assessed constructs during interviews are personality and social skills (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001), but it is unclear as to whether or not those constructs can be measured using social media. Nonetheless, with access to things like photos, videos, statuses, and more, employers now have an inexpensive, well-rounded view into the lives of applicants long before the first interview (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).

Some argue that social media can be used to assess writing ability or professionalism, which can be critical to success on the jobs. Others argue that social media is informal and unrelated (Roth et al., 2016). It might also imply one's social skills or ability to communicate with others. An applicant's profile might also show proof that he or she is active in volunteering activities or other positive involvement, which might align to the organization's mission. As a result, this person might be considered a better fit on the team than someone else. In contrast, an applicant's profile could be riddled with inappropriate photos and proof of negative activities that might mar their image or the reputation of the organization. Either way, employers are using this data from social media to make hiring decisions (Clark & Roberts, 2010; Palank, 2006; Preston, 2011; Slovensky & Ross, 2012; Van Iddekinge, Lanivich, Roth, & Junco, 2016).

An applicant's profile might also have the potential to demonstrate one's cognitive abilities, which research has shown to be a valid predictor of performance on the job and across all occupations (Roth et al., 2016). In a study by Kluemper and Rosen (2009), judges were asked to assess the intelligence of social media users and place them into groups based on high or low intelligence. Generally speaking, the judges were able to do so, although more intelligent judges were more accurate in their assessments. Through captions, comments, conversations, and status updates, it could be possible to get a glimpse into the applicant's level of intelligence. A user's posts may also provide demonstrable information related to that person's judgment, decision making, and critical thinking skills.

One's social media profile could shed light on an applicant's personality characteristics, which can be predictors of success on the job (Roth et al., 2016). The question becomes does one's online presence actually predict behavior in the workplace? While this could pose either positive or negative consequences for an individual based on what he or she chooses to post for the public, Back, Stopfer, Vazire, Gaddis, Schmukle, Egloff, and Gosling (2010) suggest two hypotheses: The idealized virtual-identity hypothesis and the extended real-life hypothesis. The first of the two hypothesizes that one's internet profile is more of an idealized version of self, while the extended real-life hypothesis says that an internet profile is an accurate representation of one's personality characteristics. In the Back et al. (2010) study, it was found that social media users tend to support the extended real-life hypothesis and quite accurately portray their own personalities on social media. If this is the case across the

board, employers could learn quite a bit from screening applicant's social media information.

Research by Kluemper and Rosen (2009) and Kluemper, Rosen, and Mossholder (2012) has found that when judges were trained to make assessments of Big Five personality traits based on Facebook profiles, there was strong inter-rater reliability and their assessments correlated with that of the users' self-reported personality assessments. Additionally, Kluemper et al. (2012) found that the judges' "hireability" ratings correlated with that of the candidates' actual job performance, as reported by their current supervisors. Specifically, measures of conscientiousness and agreeableness were predictors of "hireability." Although personality could be assessed using tests, it is important to note that using social media is much quicker and does not require the presence of the candidate.

Overall, research shows that measures of cognitive ability and personality characteristics like conscientiousness have proven to be positively correlated to predicting job performance in the workplace across all occupational groups (Barrick, Mitchell, & Stewart, 2003; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Hertz & Donovan, 2000; Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Salgado, 1997). Studies have shown that conscientiousness specifically is more often associated with responsibility, carefulness, achievement, and dependability (Westerman & Simmons, 2007). It could potentially be advantageous for hiring managers to use social media as a means of screening applicants in order to find the most conscientious and intelligent individuals.

## **Disadvantages of Social Media Background Checks**

### ***Incorrect Information***

One of the risks of using social media as a platform for background checks is that the information found is simply incomplete or inaccurate. Whether it is in favor of the applicant or not, the information is not an accurate representation of the person or yet again, it is exaggerated (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). As Brown and Vaughn (2011) put it, “shared information might be distorted by social desirability or high levels of self-monitoring” (p. 220). Social media users are in full control of how they wish to be perceived by others, and that includes employers.

Information could also be outdated, as many profiles tend to be several years old. Sometimes profiles can be misidentified when a number of people have the same name, similar names, or use nicknames. In some cases, a profile could even be a falsified, imitation, or spam account (Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Because it can be difficult to identify one’s real social media profile, employers risk eliminating top talent based on inaccurate information.

### ***Missing or Hidden Information***

Another facet to consider is missing or hidden information and the inferred information model. Research has found that when information is missing, people tend to fill in the blanks for themselves and even make assumptions as to why the information is not there (Roth et al., 2016). In a marketing research study by Johnson and Levine (1985), participants reported lower satisfaction ratings when product

information was missing. The product evaluation was not only less favorable, but they also viewed the missing information as suspicious.

Similarly, those findings are consistent in employment environments. Jagacinski (1991) found that participants would apply a penalty to hypothetical employees who had missing test scores. In terms of social media profiles, a recruiter might penalize job candidates who have incomplete or hidden profile data. Even more risky, the recruiter might become suspicious of the candidate and fill in the missing information that can influence later decisions (Roth et al., 2016).

#### ***Inaccurate Assessment of Applicant Characteristics***

Although some studies have shown success with raters accurately predicting characteristics based on social media profile assessments (e.g. Back et al., 2010; Kluemper & Rosen, 2009; Kluemper et al., 2012), other studies have demonstrated the contrary. Van Iddekinge et al. (2016) asked 86 recruiters to review and evaluate hundreds of Facebook profiles of students who were about to graduate and seek employment. A year later, students and their respective job supervisors were contacted. The recruiter ratings based on the students' Facebook profiles a year prior were "unrelated to graduates' subsequent job performance, turnover intentions, and turnover" (p. 18). Additionally, there were notable subgroup differences. They found that the recruiters tended to rate females higher than males, as well as White students higher than Black or Hispanic students.

Whether those results are intentional or unintentional, research shows that employers oftentimes make judgments based on the wrong data. Chou, Hammond, and

Johnson (2013) found that among 516 employed participants, those who used Facebook more often did not have better relationships with their coworkers, contrary to the popular belief that those who are more social online might be more people oriented. Additionally, those who had more status updates and more Facebook friends were less likely to like their current job, less likely to care about their job performance, and more often thought about getting a new job. Employers simply cannot make assumptions based on profile data without more information.

With access to candidates' profile photos, this creates the potential for additional biases before employers get to speak to the candidate themselves. Studies show that attractiveness can be a driving factor in employment decisions, which is another reason social media can be risky as an early selection tool. In early research of the attractiveness stereotype, Dion, Berscheid, and Walster (1972) found that more attractive individuals were thought to "be more socially desirable" in that they have happier marriages, are more likely to "attain more prestigious occupations," and overall lead better lives. (p. 288). Similarly, Feingold (1992) noted that more attractive individuals "were perceived as more sociable, dominant, sexually warm, mentally healthy, and socially skilled" (p. 332).

In regards to hiring decisions, attractiveness stereotypes are no exception. Studies show that recruiters make the same assumptions based on appearance, and more attractive individuals tend to "fare better than their less attractive counterparts" (Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003, p. 457). With so much information available online, employers could be doing more harm than good. Even if recruiters are able to

accurately assess candidates' personality, cognitive ability, or "hireability" using their social media profiles, there is a risk of discrimination, which will be discussed more later. Recruiters have access to so much information that can lead them to make hiring decisions based on information unrelated to the job.

### ***Inconsistent Sources of Information***

Because people use social media for a variety of reasons, they might choose to post different types of information. Some people post a lot of content and often, while others post rarely and share minimal information. Some post their own ideas and opinions, others focus on sharing photos and videos, and peoples' motivations and intentions differ (Davison et al., 2011; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). In a Norwegian study by Brandtzaeg and Heim (2011), 5,233 participants were assessed for the purpose of establishing classification types for social media users based on two spectrums: high to low participation and informational to recreational objectives. Among the five classifications defined, the biggest classification (27% of participants) contained the "lurkers" who reported low participation, more recreational objectives, and were more often females looking to "kill some time" (p. 41). On the contrary, "debaters" made up 11% of participants and tended to be older users heavily involved in discussions with high levels of participation and an information-seeking objective.

Depending on one's objective and how frequently one uses social media, profile content can appear totally different from one person to the next. With the exception of career-related platforms like LinkedIn, most social media profiles are not intended for use in selection. Whether we use our accounts for work or play, it also differs from

person to person. As such, social media profiles are not standardized or comparable, and they contain very different information on a variety of different platforms. It is like comparing apples to oranges, as one cannot consistently compare one person to the next (Roth et al., 2016). Research tends to show that more structured selection procedures help to increase the validity and reliability of predicting performance on the job (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). Without standardized processes and more empirical research on the topic of social media in recruitment, the use of these platforms as a selection tool could create perceptions of unfair procedures and present legal issues, which will be discussed shortly.

### ***Invasion of Privacy***

Applicants might also view social media background checks as an invasion of their right to privacy, even if they have nothing to hide (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). Over the course of a decade and ten different studies, 48% of those surveyed reported that they were concerned about employers checking their online activity (Annenberg, 2011). Similarly, a study by Drouin, O'Connor, Schmidt, and Miller (2015) found that out of 448 undergrads, most of the students were not in support of using social media to make employment decisions. In a study by Stoughton, Thompson, & Meade (2015), student participants reported that social media screening was indeed an invasion of privacy, which overall decreased the attractiveness of the organization, as well as the perceived organizational justice. In a second study using a non-student sample, participants reported the same opinions with the addition of "increased intentions to sue the organization" (p. 84).

Some people argue that there should be a clear separation between work and play, while others assert that employers have a right to review who they hire (Clark & Roberts, 2010). In the case of Harvard College rescinding admission offers from the incoming freshman class due to offensive content posted in a private group message, some might consider this an invasion of privacy, because the content was part of a private group message. On the other hand, some might consider that Harvard has a right to uphold its admissions policies and make decisions about students based on their moral character (Schmidt, 2017). Although users have the right to control who has access to their data via custom privacy settings, more invasive social media background checks (e.g. requesting candidate passwords) could circumvent their settings, violate users' privacy, and violate the respective social media privacy policies (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Egan, 2012; Slovensky & Ross, 2012). In doing so, employers risk getting into potential legal issues should they discover and make hiring decisions based on legally protected information.

### ***Potential Legal Issues***

As previously discussed, nearly half of the states have introduced their own legislation that prohibit employers from requiring employees to disclose their social media logins and passwords (Deschenaux, 2015). Aside from more the obvious legal issues, this practice can lead to other potential legal implications that organizations may not be considering. For example, there are demographic differences when it comes to social media usage. When an employer uses social media as a selection tool, does this potentially put some groups at risk, but not others? Overall, 88% of US adults have

internet access and 69% use social media. While usage between genders and racial groups are not that different, there are differences between income groups, education levels, age brackets, and community types (Pew Research Center, 2017). Where there are group differences, there is potential for adverse impact (Roth et al., 2016).

Another major concern is that social media contains a lot of job-irrelevant information (Roth et al., 2016). Additionally, personal information, both public and private, can be subject to discrimination should employers choose to browse candidates' social media profiles (Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Kluemper & Rosen, 2009). Per federal laws like Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, making hiring decisions (whether intentional or unintentional) based on protected information like age, sex, religion, race, gender, disability, etc. is unethical and can raise legal issues with the EEOC (Preston, 2011; Society for Human Resource Management, 1969; U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, n.d). Typically, an employer would not be able to identify this information from one's resume alone. However, it is possible to discriminate against candidates based on their social media pictures and data long before they get a chance to interview (Slovensky & Ross, 2012).

While it might be difficult to prove that an employer used social media to discriminate against or eliminate a job candidate, it is a relatively new possibility and employers should be prepared to defend themselves from legal action. Most of these tools were not originally intended to assess job-related information, and there has not been enough research to determine the validity of their use in selection procedures (Roth et al., 2016). Brown and Vaughn (2011) discuss the idea that not all social media

profiles are identical. Without standardization of process, the threat of misuse of information is even greater.

As previously discussed, research shows that more structured selection procedures can increase the validity and reliability of the measures (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). In a meta-analysis by Huffcutt and Roth (1998), studies showed that structured interviews tend to decrease racial group differences in interview ratings with high validity for predicting job performance compared to unstructured interviews. Whether employers take action to mitigate the risks by creating a formal social media screening policy or by using a third-party reviewer, the potential risks are out there. As such, it is also important to recognize that an employer's social media policies and practices are having an effect on applicants and their perceptions of the organization as a whole.

### **Applicant Perception**

While companies are performing varying types of background checks on social media profiles, it becomes increasingly important for organizations to understand the effects of their actions. If social media background checks are part of the standard process, how will that influence an applicant's perception of the organization as a whole? Research shows that people are concerned about invasions of privacy, which suggests that increased invasiveness might be negatively perceived (Roth et al., 2016). It is possible that these background checks are discouraging qualified applicants from pursuing a job with the organization, and the employers are losing potential top talent as they drop out of the selection process altogether.

Madera (2012) found that among the college students surveyed, companies using social media as a selection tool were “perceived as less fair” than companies that did not (p. 1279). Similarly, participants were less likely to pursue a job with a company that used social media as a selection tool. Perceived organizational and procedural fairness can affect not only the applicant, but also the organization’s reputation and future applicant pool (Stoughton et al., 2015). People tend to evaluate an organization based on their experiences or based on opinions from friends’ experiences. Applicants who perceive fair selection procedures tend to relay this positive outlook to others, while the opposite can be said for unfair procedures (Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004).

As previously mentioned, negative impressions are weighed more heavily than the positive (Baumeister et al., 2001). In other words, an organization can harm its own reputation and may have issues attracting other candidates because of perceived unfair selection policies. Research by Kanar, Collins, and Bell (2010) found that “negative information has a larger impact on job seekers immediately after exposure and the effects of negative information are more likely to persist over time” (p. 207). Specifically, negative recruitment activities caused candidates to view the company as less attractive, thus decreasing interest in working for the organization.

In addition, negative reactions will not only decrease the attractiveness of an organization, but also invite trouble into an organization by increasing the likelihood of legal implications (Stoughton et al., 2015). With all of these potential risks facing organizations today, it becomes increasingly important to weigh the costs and

understand the effects of social media policies. In general, there is limited knowledge on the topic in terms of empirical research and validity of social media as a selection tool, so it is critical that we continue to bridge the gap and understand the implications.

## CHAPTER II

### CURRENT STUDY

#### Primary Research

In an effort to further understand the implications of social media in selection procedures, the purpose of this study was to explore the notion that social media background checks could discourage qualified job applicants. Organizations could be deterring top talent from applying for an open position simply because of procedures used for social media background checks. Similarly, they could be causing top talent to drop out of the process or turn down a job offer due to social media screening.

Based on the literature, it is widely believed that social media background checks are perceived negatively by the general population (Annenberg, 2011; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Drouin et al., 2015; Madera, 2012; Roth et al., 2016; Slovensky & Ross, 2012; Stoughton et al., 2015). Madera (2012) found that participants are less likely to pursue a job with an organization that uses social media to assess candidates. If that is indeed the case and more “invasive” background check procedures (i.e. requesting social media login information) are perceived even more negatively, will invasive social media checks further influence one’s interest in working for an organization? Due to limited empirical research on the subject, it is unclear how these screenings will affect talent acquisition as a whole.

Additionally, there is limited research on how social media usage affects one’s attitudes toward social media background checks. Because people may use social media differently, for different objectives, and for different frequencies (Brandtzaeg & Heim,

2011), it can be difficult to assume how one might react to an organization using social media in employment decisions. One might assume that people who use social media more often might have more content on social media and have more to be self-conscious about. However, in the study by Drouin et al. (2015), social media usage was not a predictor of being for or against social media in employment decisions. As such, this study seeks to further explore that notion with the following research questions.

**Research Question 1:** Will participants' attitudes toward social media background check procedures vary based upon their overall social media usage?

**Hypothesis 1:** Participants who report high social media usage will report negative attitudes toward social media background check procedures.

**Hypothesis 2:** Participants who report low social media usage will report more positive attitudes towards social media background check procedures.

**Research Question 2:** Will participants' interest in working for an organization be influenced by the background check procedures used by the organization?

**Hypothesis 3:** Participants who report high social media usage will be less interested in working for an organization that has social media background check procedures and more interested in working for an organization that has no social media background check procedures.

**Hypothesis 4:** Participants who report low social media usage will be more interested in working for an organization that has social media

background check procedures than participants who report high social media usage.

### **Additional Research**

The above research questions and hypotheses were the primary focus of this study. However, the extent to which background check policies will affect the perceptions of and the general interest in each company was also examined. In other words, if someone reports negative attitudes toward social media background checks, how will that person rate the attractiveness of an organization that conducts “invasive” social media background checks? Based on the previous literature and research by Stoughton et al. (2015), it is believed that perceived invasions of privacy will result in lower organizational attractiveness.

***Research Question 3:*** Will different social media background check policies significantly influence an applicant’s perception of the company?

***Hypothesis 5:*** Participants who report negative attitudes toward social media background checks will rate the “invasive” social media background check company negatively.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS

#### Participants

Using an online survey developed with Qualtrics software, data was collected from student participants at a south central state university through the undergraduate research pool. Students were offered credit in their undergraduate psychology course as a reward for voluntarily participating. The survey was also posted on Amazon's Mechanical Turk, an internet marketplace where people are paid to complete surveys, and workers were paid \$1.50 to participate. Additionally, the survey was shared via multiple social media platforms.

Data was collected from a total of 336 participants. Those who did not finish at least 95% of the survey were removed from the data set. Participants with duplicate IP addresses were also removed. In an effort to preserve quality responses, those who answered at least two out of the three quality assurance items correctly remained in the data set. Lastly, those who answered at least two out of three manipulation check items correctly remained. The final sample included a total of 206 participants.

Of the 206 participants, there were 80 males, 125 females, and 1 no response. The mean age was 30.9 with a range from 18 to 68 years. One third of the participants fell into the 18-20 age range. The majority of the sample was White (67.5%), followed by 15.5% identifying themselves as African-American/Black, 7.3% Asian/Pacific Islander, 4.4% Bi-Racial/Mixed, 3.4% Hispanic/Latino, .5% Native American, and 1.5% identified as other ethnicities. In regards to their last degree obtained, 50.5% reported a high school

diploma (or equivalent), 10.7% associate's degree, 27.7% bachelor's degree, 8.7% master's degree, and 1.5% had a doctorate. Over half of the sample was currently enrolled at a college or university (52.9%). Of those 109 participants, there were 44 freshmen, 26 sophomores, 16 juniors, 15 seniors, and 8 graduate students. When asked to describe their employment status, 91 participants reported full-time employment, 78 part-time, and the rest were either full-time students, unemployed or looking for work, homemakers, or retired (see Appendix A). The average time to complete the entire survey was approximately 74 minutes.

In regards to social media usage, 95.6% of the participants reported using social media websites or mobile applications. Specifically, 90.8% reported having a Facebook account, 64.7% reported having a Snapchat account, 64.1% reported having an Instagram account, 55.9% reported having a Twitter account, and 39.8% reported having a LinkedIn account (see Table 1). When asked their opinions on background checks, 89.9% of participants agreed that companies should complete background checks on their prospective job candidates. When it comes to reviewing public social media information, 51.9% agreed that companies should perform this type of background check. Lastly, 6.3% of participants agreed that companies should ask prospective job candidates to submit their social media logins and passwords for a full review.

**Table 1.**  
*Social Media Membership*

Platform	Frequency	Percentage
Facebook	171	83.0
Instagram	124	60.2
LinkedIn	77	37.4
Twitter	112	54.4
Snapchat	116	56.3
Other	32	15.5
None	6	2.9

*Note:*  $N = 206$

### **Design and Procedure**

The current study was one segment of a larger research project that seeks to examine the effects of personality on social media usage and opinions regarding social media screening. As a result, the survey contained additional measures that were collected for future research purposes, which are briefly described below. The current research questions, however, were focused solely on the relationship between social media usage, attitudes toward social media screening, and willingness to work for an organization based on background check procedures.

After electronically consenting to participate in the study, participants were asked to assume the role of a job seeker deciding between three reputable and similar organizations. One company, Jesterson Incorporated, mentioned conducting a “basic” pre-employment investigation of the applicants involving only a background check and a

drug screen. Another company, Sof's Industries, would conduct a "thorough" pre-employment screening which includes a background check, a drug screen, and an investigation of information that is public on social media. The last company, Poly Enterprises, required candidates to pass an "invasive" pre-employment screening involving a background check, a drug screen, and a social media investigation requesting that applicants submit their logins and passwords for a full data investigation. All three companies were "green" organizations with a focus on solar energy, wind turbines, and electric cars, respectively. Using a within-subjects design, participants were asked to read all three fictitious company biographies and their respective employee policies. The presentation order of the three companies was randomized.

After reading each company description and the associated social media policies, the participants answered manipulation check questions regarding each organization to confirm that they understood the significant details concerning the social media background checks, as well as non-pertinent information (e.g. "Which of the following items are required of the job candidate?"). In addition to those items, participants answered a series of assessment questions that addressed their likelihood to apply for a job with that organization, recommend the job to a friend, or to accept a job offer. After each company was individually assessed and considered, the participants were asked to compare all three companies, decide which organization was viewed most positively and most negatively, and then ultimately decide for which company they would like to work.

The participants were then asked to report their amounts of social media usage on different platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn), followed by their opinions on social media checks as part of the background screening process. Additionally, the second part of the survey consisted of questions that focused solely on the participant, particularly demographics and personality characteristics. Quality assurance items (e.g. "Please choose 'strongly disagree' for this item.") were included throughout the survey to help identify any responses that needed to be removed from the data set.

## **Measures**

### ***Social Media Usage***

To estimate the amount of social media usage by each participant, the survey contained 38 questions specifically developed for this study. This first section asked participants if they are members of Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and/or Snapchat. If they answered "yes" to any of the social media platforms, the survey continued on to ask how long they have been a member, how many hours they spend on that platform per day, and how many friends, connections, or followers they have.

Originally developed by Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007), the Facebook Intensity Scale (FIS) was created to gain an understanding of one's Facebook usage beyond friend count and hours online ( $\alpha = .83$ ). Some questions include: "Facebook has become part of my daily routine" and "I would be sorry if Facebook shut down." They also developed a second set of scales to determine how participants use "Facebook to meet new people vs. Connect with existing offline contacts." Some examples of each

include: “I use Facebook to keep in touch with my old friends” or “I use Facebook to meet new people.” Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree;  $\alpha = .70$ ). Labrague (2014) adapted and combined these to create a 12-question Facebook Intensity Scale (FIS-A) that is used in the second section of assessing social media usage ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

The third section comes from Hartwell (2014) who adapted scales from Bauer et al. (2006) to focus on both the Importance of Facebook and LinkedIn. Also using a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree), these six questions examine usage of both social media platforms with statements like, “LinkedIn has become an essential part of my life.” Unfortunately, scale alphas were not available for this measure.

### ***Attitudes Toward Social Media Screening***

In the first part of this section, unique questions were developed specifically for this study to review participants’ opinions of drug testing job candidates, completing background checks, and reviewing social media both publically and invasively through the requirement of demanding logins and passwords. The remainder of this section was from Hartwell (2014) who adapted a number of scales which focus on privacy invasiveness, job relatedness, and procedural justice of social media screening all of which are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree). The first two adapted scales inquire about the Privacy Invasiveness of Facebook and LinkedIn screening, respectively. Adapted from Stone-Romero, Stone, and Hyatt (2003), these scales each consist of nine questions including: “To what extent do you feel that the use

of a Facebook screening in the hiring process probes into or invades your privacy” and “To what extent do you feel that the use of a LinkedIn screening in the hiring process is likely to produce information that would wrongly discredit you?” Unfortunately, scale alphas were not available for this measure.

The next two scales were adapted by Hartwell (2014) from Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, and Stoffey (1993) and assess both the Job-Relatedness of Facebook and LinkedIn Screens. With a total of 10 questions in each scale, some example statements include: “The employer can tell a lot about an applicant’s ability to do the job from the results of screening Facebook” and “My performance on the LinkedIn screening is a good indicator of my ability to do the job.” Unfortunately, scale alphas were not available for this measure either.

Lastly, there were two scales that Hartwell (2014) adapted from Bauer et al. (2001) that consisted of three statements each and measured the perceived Procedural Justice of Facebook and LinkedIn Screens. Examples include: “I think that Facebook screenings are a fair way to select people for jobs” and “Overall, the method of using LinkedIn screenings is fair.” As with earlier scales from the Hartwell presentation, scale alphas were not available for this measure.

### ***Demographics***

Participants were asked to answer questions regarding gender, age, race, and individual income. Additionally, participants were asked to report their educational background (highest degree obtained and current level in college if applicable) and

current employment status. The results were used to investigate potential subgroup differences in regards to social media usage, behavior, and opinions.

### **Additional Measures**

As previously stated, the current study is one segment of a larger research project that seeks to examine the effects of personality on social media usage and opinions regarding social media screening. The additional measures below were collected for future research purposes and were not used in the current research.

#### ***Personality***

Personality was assessed using the HEXACO Personality Inventory-Revised (Lee & Ashton, in press). HEXACO-PI-R measures six different factors including: one's degree of honesty-humility ( $\alpha = .83$ ), emotionality ( $\alpha = .84$ ), extraversion ( $\alpha = .85$ ), agreeableness ( $\alpha = .84$ ), conscientiousness ( $\alpha = .82$ ), and openness to experience ( $\alpha = .81$ ). Participants were asked to rate 100 statements on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Strongly Agree, 5=Strongly Disagree) each relating back to one of the six personality dimensions. Some examples include: "When working, I often set ambitious goals for myself," "People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others," and "I rarely express my opinions in group meetings" (Lee & Ashton, 2004).

#### ***Social Desirability***

This scale consists of 33 true or false questions related to social desirability, which is a tendency for one to present oneself in a favorable manner by exaggerating one's positive behaviors or attitudes and underrepresenting the less desirable traits or

behaviors that would not be socially acceptable. Examples include: “I sometimes feel resentful when I don’t get my way,” “I always try to practice what I preach,” and “There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things” ( $\alpha = .88$ ; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960).

### ***Responsibility***

This construct was borrowed from the International Personality Item Pool, which is an online library of measures available for public use (Goldberg, 1999). It assesses one’s level of discipline and reliability. Based on part of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI; Gough & Bradley, 1996), responsibility is measured using 10 questions each on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Very Inaccurate, 5=Very Accurate). Participants rated statements, such as, “I try to forgive and forget” and “I am polite to strangers,” which helps assess one’s normality in terms of social interactions and behavior ( $\alpha = .66$ ; Lynch, 2011).

### ***Integrity/Honesty/Authenticity***

This nine-item scale assesses one’s sincerity. Participants read each statement and then rated their agreement with that statement on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Very Inaccurate, 5=Very Accurate). Sample statements include: “I keep my promises” and “I like to exaggerate my troubles” ( $\alpha = .72$ ; Peterson, Seligman, Logan, Kilmer, & Marlatt, 2010).

### ***Impression Management***

Participants rated 20 statements each on a 5-point Likert scale (1=Very Inaccurate, 5=Very Accurate), which determines the tendency to exercise impression

management, or the extent to which one tends to regulate the information about oneself in order to control the audience's perception of him/her. A few items include, "I would never cheat on my taxes" and "I don't always practice what I preach" ( $\alpha = .82$ ; Paulhus, 1991).

### ***Self Monitoring***

Related to the construct above, self monitoring is defined as "the way one attempts to present oneself in a socially appropriate manner for impression management purposes" (Myszkowski, Storme, Zenasni, & Lubart, 2014, p. 387).

Originally a 25-item scale developed by Snyder (1974), this 18-item scale was presented to the participants to rate each statement as true or false (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986).

Statements include: "I guess I put on a show to impress and entertain people" and "I am not particularly good at making other people like me" ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### **Preliminary Analyses**

Prior to examining the primary research questions, it was important to examine the reliability of the scales used for social media usage and attitudes toward social media screening, as many of them were either previously unavailable or developed specifically for this study. Cronbach's alphas were determined for each scale.

#### ***Social Media Usage***

Within the 38 questions regarding social media usage specifically developed for this study, five items referred to the average hours per day spent on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and/or Snapchat, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha was calculated and reliability was found to be unacceptable for those five items alone ( $\alpha = .43$ ). When combined with the other questions regarding the number of posts per day, number of friends, and length of time as a member on each platform, all 20 items together had greater internal consistency ( $\alpha = .84$ ).

Labrague's (2014) combined 12-item Facebook Intensity Scale (FIS-A) originally developed as two scales by Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe (2007) was again found to have excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .92$ ). Additionally, Hartwell's (2014) Importance of Facebook and Importance of LinkedIn scales, adapted from Bauer et al. (2006), were also found to have excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .91$  and  $\alpha = .98$ , respectively). Although the combined reliability was good ( $\alpha = .84$ ), it became of importance to analyze the potential differences between the two social media platforms.

### ***Attitudes Toward Social Media Screening***

Four items were developed specifically for this study to directly assess participants' opinions of background screening in general (i.e. background check, drug testing, reviewing public social media information, and requiring the submission of social media logins and passwords). Together, the items had acceptable reliability for this measure ( $\alpha = .71$ ), however, the items of interest in this study were the two questions directly related to social media screening.

The next six scales were adapted by Hartwell (2014) to focus on privacy invasiveness, job relatedness, and procedural justice of social media screenings. Once again, it became of importance to distinctly measure the differences between Facebook and LinkedIn rather than combine scales. The 9-item Privacy Invasiveness of Facebook Screen had acceptable reliability ( $\alpha = .75$ ), while the Privacy Invasiveness of LinkedIn Screen was good ( $\alpha = .80$ ). The 10-item Job-Relatedness of Facebook Screen had excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = .91$ ), and the Job-Relatedness of Linked Screen was close ( $\alpha = .89$ ). Finally, the 3-item Procedural Justice of Facebook and Linked Screens were both of excellent reliability ( $\alpha = .93$  and  $\alpha = .96$ , respectively).

### **Primary Research**

#### ***Research Question 1***

To determine if participants' overall social media usage was a predictor of their attitudes toward social media background check procedures, six stepwise linear regressions were performed. The four independent usage variables included: mean

hours spent per day on social media, FIS-A, and Hartwell's Importance of Facebook and Importance of LinkedIn scales. The six dependent attitudinal variables included: Hartwell's procedural justice, job relatedness, and privacy invasiveness scales for both Facebook and LinkedIn. Results indicated that Facebook usage was a significant predictor of attitudes toward LinkedIn screenings. More specifically, Hartwell's Importance of Facebook scale was a predictor of attitudes toward the Procedural Justice of LinkedIn Screens,  $F(1, 191) = 15.27, p < .05$ . Similarly, FIS-A was a predictor of attitudes toward the Job-Relatedness of LinkedIn Screens  $F(1, 195) = 7.48, p < .05$ . There were no significant predictors of attitudes toward Facebook screenings (see Table 2).

Hypothesis 1 suggested that participants with high social media usage would report negative attitudes toward social media background checks. Although high Facebook usage was a significant predictor of attitudes toward the procedural justice and job-relatedness of LinkedIn screenings, it was not a predictor of negative attitudes (i.e. privacy invasiveness) toward social media background checks. Thus, hypothesis 1 was not supported. Likewise, hypothesis 2 was not supported, because low social media usage was not a significant predictor of positive attitudes toward social media background checks.

**Table 2.***Social Media Usage as a Predictor of Attitudes - Stepwise Linear Regression Results*

Attitudes (DV)	Usage (IV)	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Procedural Justice of LinkedIn	Mean Hours on Social Media	-.11	-1.63	.11
	FIS-A	.15	1.28	.20
	Importance of Facebook	.27	3.91	.00*
	Importance of LinkedIn	.12	1.68	.09
Job-Relatedness of LinkedIn	Mean Hours on Social Media	-.03	-.36	.72
	FIA-A	.19	2.74	.01*
	Importance of Facebook	.06	.55	.59
	Importance of LinkedIn	.02	.21	.84

Note: \* $p < .05$

### **Research Question 2**

To determine if participants' interest in working for an organization would be influenced by the background check procedures used by the organization, a Pearson's chi-square test was performed. The independent variable was the organization and their respective background check procedures. The dependent variable was the company that participants ultimately chose to work for. Results of the chi-square test indicated that participants were significantly more likely to choose the organization with basic (non-invasive) background check procedures,  $\chi^2 (2, N = 206) = 11.81, p < .05$ . More specifically, participants were more interested in working for Jesterson Incorporated who did not perform any social media background checks (see Table 3).

**Table 3.**

*Background Check Procedures as a Predictor of Interest in Working for a Company - Chi-Square Test Results*

Company	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Poly Enterprises	50	68.7	-18.7
Sofs Industries	66	68.7	-2.7
Jesterson Incorporated	90	68.7	21.3
Total	206		

Hypothesis 3 suggested that participants who report high social media usage will be less interested in working for an organization that has social media background check procedures and more interested in working for an organization that has no social media background check procedures. A stepwise linear regression was performed again using the four independent variables of social media usage. The dependent variable was the company for which participants chose to work. Results indicated that Facebook usage was a significant predictor of choosing where to work. Specifically, FIS-A was a predictor of choosing to work for Jesterson Incorporated,  $F(1, 197) = 4.02, p < .05$ . Thus, hypothesis 3 was supported. Hypothesis 4 was also supported, as those with low social media usage were more likely to choose the organizations with social media background check procedures (see Table 4).

**Table 4.**

*Social Media Usage as a Predictor of Interest in Working for a Company -  
Stepwise Linear Regression Results*

(Interest) DV	Usage (IV)	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Company chosen	Mean Hours on Social Media	.11	1.57	.12
	FIS-A	.14	2.01	.05*
	Importance of Facebook	-.10	-.81	.42
	Importance of LinkedIn	.03	.37	.71

Note: \* $p < .05$

### **Additional Research**

#### ***Research Question 3***

To determine if different social media background check policies significantly influence an applicant's perception of the company, two Pearson's chi-square tests were performed. The independent variable was the organization and their respective background check procedures. The two dependent variables were the participants' responses of most positively and most negatively rated company. Results of the first chi-square test indicated that participants were significantly more likely to rate the organization with basic (non-invasive) background check procedures more positively,  $\chi^2(2, N = 206) = 12.13, p < .05$ . More specifically, Jesterson Incorporated was significantly rated most positively. Results of the second chi-square test indicated that participants were significantly more likely to rate the organization with invasive background check procedures more negatively,  $\chi^2(2, N = 206) = 28.85, p < .05$ . Poly Enterprises was significantly rated most negatively (see Table 5).

**Table 5.**

*Background Check Procedures as a Predictor of Applicant Perceptions - Chi-Square Test Results*

Perception (DV)	Company (IV)	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Positive	Poly Enterprises	51	68.7	-17.7
	Sofs Industries	64	68.7	-4.7
	Jesterson Incorporated	91	68.7	22.3
	Total	206		
Negative	Poly Enterprises	105	68.7	36.3
	Sofs Industries	50	68.7	-18.7
	Jesterson Incorporated	51	68.7	-17.7
	Total	206		

Hypothesis 5 suggested that participants who report negative attitudes toward social media background checks will rate the invasive social media background check company negatively. Two stepwise linear regressions were performed using the six independent variables of attitudes toward social media background checks (i.e. job-relatedness, procedural justice, and privacy invasiveness scales for both Facebook and LinkedIn). The dependent variables were which company participants rated most positively and which was rated most negatively. Results indicated that attitudes toward Job-Relatedness of Facebook was a significant predictor in deciding which company was rated most positively,  $F(1, 193) = 4.22, p < .05$ . In other words, participants who believed Facebook screening was job-related were significantly more likely to rate Poly Enterprises, the invasive organization, more positively. Results of the second linear regression indicated that attitudes toward Job-Relatedness of Facebook was a significant predictor in deciding which company was rated most negatively,  $F(1, 193) =$

4.09,  $p < .05$ . This time, participants who believed Facebook screening was job-related were significantly more likely to rate Jesterson Incorporated, the basic organization, more negatively. As such, those who inversely found Facebook screening to not be job-related were more likely to rate Poly Enterprises negatively, thus hypothesis 5 was supported (see Table 6).

**Table 6.**

*Attitudes as a Predictor of Perception - Stepwise Linear Regression Results*

Perception (DV)	Attitudes (IV)	$\beta$	$t$	$p$
Positive	Procedural Justice of LinkedIn	.04	.49	.63
	Procedural Justice of Facebook	-.06	-.52	.60
	Privacy Invasiveness of LinkedIn	-.04	-.57	.57
	Privacy Invasiveness of Facebook	-.01	-.09	.93
	Job-Relatedness of LinkedIn	.07	.89	.37
	Job-Relatedness of Facebook	-.15	-2.05	.04*
Negative	Procedural Justice of LinkedIn <sup>a</sup>	-.19	-2.52	.01
	Procedural Justice of Facebook	-.08	-.69	.49
	Privacy Invasiveness of LinkedIn	.02	.24	.81
	Privacy Invasiveness of Facebook	-.03	-.32	.75
	Job-Relatedness of LinkedIn <sup>a</sup>	-.16	-2.17	.03
	Job-Relatedness of Facebook	.14	2.02	.04*

*Note: a = Independent Variables with collinearity greater than 0.89; \* $p < .05$*

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to better understand the potential implications of using social media as a pre-employment screening tool. Because many organizations are performing social media background checks on potential job candidates, it is important to understand how these procedures might affect applicants' perceptions of the organization. Not only could these actions negatively affect a company's reputation and attractiveness, but they could consequently affect the potential applicant pool by discouraging qualified job applicants.

The first research question explored the notion that social media usage might predict attitudes toward social media screening. Contrary to the non-significant findings by Drouin et al. (2015), the results of the present study indicated that Facebook usage was a significant predictor of attitudes toward both the procedural justice and job-relatedness of LinkedIn screenings. The reason for this might be that people who use Facebook more heavily might also use it more recreationally and/or have more to hide. They might also believe that LinkedIn is a better screening tool for predicting job performance, as it is more professional and intended to be job oriented as opposed to Facebook. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were not supported, because there was no significant link between *high* usage and *negative* attitudes toward social media.

The second research question examined the effects of background check procedures on interest in working for a company. The findings were similar to that of Madera (2012) where participants were less likely to pursue a job with an organization

that used a social media in selection and Stoughton et al. (2015) where perceived invasions of privacy resulted in lower organizational attractiveness. Overall, participants chose to work for the organization that did not screen social media prior to employment. Considering that half of the participants did not agree with companies performing public social media reviews and only 6.3% agreed that companies *should* request logins and passwords, it is not surprising that the most lenient organization would be the most popular. Hypothesis 3 was supported in that participants with high social media usage would be less interested in working for an invasive company and more interested in the basic organization. Hypothesis 4 was also supported, as participants with low social media usage were more likely to choose the invasive organization. Simply put, if people are not using their social media accounts or they do not have any, they probably do not care if an organization is using them as a screening tool. Conversely, the opposite can be said for high social media usage. If people are using their social media accounts more frequently, they could potentially have more to hide from potential employers.

The last research question focused on background check policies and applicant perceptions of the organization. Not surprisingly, the basic organization with no social media screening policies was rated most positively, and the invasive organization requiring submission of social media logins and passwords was rated most negatively. As mentioned above, the overwhelming majority of participants did not agree with invasive social media screenings. Consequently, their perceptions of that organization was significantly negative over the other organizations. When hypothesis 5 is factored

in, it became interesting to note the significance of attitudes in relation to company perception. Those who believed Facebook screening was indeed job-related were more likely to rate the invasive organization positively and the basic organization negatively. A potential explanation is that if one believes a selection tool is reliable and valid, that person will be more inclined to want to work for an organization that uses reliable and valid selection tools. Those who do not believe Facebook is a job-related screening tool did not agree with the invasive organization's policies and thus, perceived them negatively.

### **Implications**

First and foremost, there is limited research on the topic of social media as a selection tool and how it affects an applicant's perception of an organization. Many organizations are using platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn to make employment decisions, but we do not yet understand the effects of these procedures. In terms of research implications, this study helps to continue bridging the gap between testing reliability and validity of social media as a selection tool and how people feel about invasive screening practices (e.g. requesting social media logins and passwords). There are many studies out there that suggest social media screenings are perceived negatively by the general population (Annenberg, 2011; Brown & Vaughn, 2011; Drouin et al., 2015; Madera, 2012; Roth et al., 2016; Slovinsky & Ross, 2012; Stoughton et al., 2015), but this research extends that notion and explores the effects of social media screenings on potential job applicants by providing insight on how attitudes vary based

on usage, how applicants might perceive organizations with strict policies, and if those people still be interested in working for an “invasive” organization.

Although organizations might experience potential legal implications by using social media platforms as selection tools, as discussed in the literature review, there are a variety of other effects to consider. Perhaps one of the most significant practical implications is the possible effect negative applicant perceptions. In this study, social media background check procedures affected applicants’ decision making, and participants in general chose the company with no social media screenings. Further, high users of Facebook were less interested in working for the company with invasive policies. For organizations currently using or considering using social media platforms as a selection tool, this could potentially lead to qualified applicants dropping out of the selection process or refusing to work for the organization altogether. Those in charge of selection or recruitment procedures will need to weigh the risk of using social media at the price of potential decreased organizational attractiveness and loss of top talent.

Lastly, depending on the social media background check process, the perception of the organization could be at risk. Overall, the invasive company was significantly rated most negatively. Whether or not applicants still continue through the selection process or choose to apply for the job at all, organizations will potentially risk poor organizational perceptions. Negative experiences and perceived invasiveness of selection processes can potentially spread to others creating a negative reputation. As found by Kanar, Collins, and Bell (2010), negative information can greatly affect job

seekers. Not only are organizations discouraging potentially qualified job applicants, but they are putting the greater applicant pool at risk.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

There are several limitations to consider. First, the sample is not a great representation of the greater population. The majority of participants were white females and over half of the sample were college students falling in the traditional college student age range. Most of the students were in their early years of college, so the results of this particular sample may not be generalizable to the entire workforce. On the other hand, this sample could be more helpful in understanding the reactions of applicants who are about to enter the workforce. Additionally, over half of the sample came from the same south central state university, so the results may not generalize to other locations. The sample size could have been larger.

Second, the study was limited by the nested design (company name and line of business were nested within the applicant screening process). Although this was a within-subject design, the display order of the organizations was randomized for each participant, and all three organizations were similar “green” companies, there could have been unintentional effects due to company name, product, or other factors. Perhaps the results indicate that people prefer to work for a solar energy company rather than an electric car company. Future researchers might consider exploring multiple conditions and a better experimental design.

Third, the amount of time it took to complete the survey might have had an effect on participants and the accuracy of their responses. Because this was part of the larger research project, the survey had extra scales and variables not applicable to this particular study. Although participants could save their progress and return to the survey at a later time, they could have experienced fatigue or gotten distracted. Quality assurance and manipulation check items were used to attempt to filter those responses.

Lastly, the study had a focus on social media usage specifically regarding Facebook and LinkedIn, two completely different platforms. Facebook usage was a significant predictor of attitudes toward social media screenings, where to work, and attitudes toward Facebook screenings even affected organizational perceptions. These findings are important, but they may not be generalizable to other platforms or overall attitudes regarding other social media screening tools. Social media is constantly adapting and new platforms get introduced frequently. As research continues to develop in this area, it is important to note that each platform may have different effects.

## **Conclusions**

Social media platforms have quickly become essential tools in the workforce today, which adds numerous challenges and new potential risks that organizations must consider. As a selection tool, social media background check procedures could not only affect current job applicants, but also potential talent. By conducting public social media screenings or requesting that applicants submit logins and passwords,

organizations could potentially face negative applicant perceptions resulting in a negative reputation, decreased organizational attractiveness, and an overall effect on their applicant pool by discouraging qualified job applicants.

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**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS

### *Descriptive Statistics of Demographics*

Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	80	38.8
	Female	125	60.7
	No Response	1	.5
	Total	206	
Ethnicity	White	139	67.5
	African-American/Black	32	15.5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	15	7.3
	Hispanic/Latino	7	3.4
	Native American	1	.5
	Bi-Racial/Mixed	9	4.4
	Other	3	1.5
	Total	206	
Education	High school diploma	104	50.5
	Associate's degree	22	10.7
	Bachelor's degree	57	27.7
	Master's degree	18	8.7
	Doctorate	3	1.5
	No Response	2	1.0
	Total	206	
College Student	Yes	109	52.9
	No	97	47.1
	Total	206	
College Level	Freshman	44	40.4
	Sophomore	26	23.9
	Junior	16	14.7
	Senior	15	13.8
	Graduate	8	7.3
	Total	109	
Employment Status	Full-time	91	
	Part-time	78	
	Other	85	

*Note:* Multiple responses were allowed for employment status.

## APPENDIX B: QUALTRICS SURVEY

**Project Title:** What company do you want to work for?

**Purpose of Project:** To gain a better understanding of the factors that lead to deciding why people decide to work for a company.

**Procedures:** Participants will be asked to answer questions about themselves, their beliefs, their values, their habits, their behaviors, and review information about three different companies and answer questions regarding their personality, social media usage, and demographics. The study will take approximately 45 minutes.

**Risks/Benefits:** There are no known or expected risks/discomforts for participants volunteering in this study. Demographic information will be collected for this study. If participants are not willing to complete the demographic information, they do not have to continue participating in the study.

**Confidentiality:** Every attempt will be made to see that your study results are kept confidential. A copy of the records from this study will be securely stored in the Department of Psychology for at least three (3) years after the end of this research. The results of this study may be published and/or presented at meetings without naming you as a subject. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the MTSU IRB, and personnel particular to this research (Dr. Mark Frame) will have access to the study records. Your responses, informed consent document, and records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

**Principal Investigator / Contact Information:** If you should have any questions or concerns about this research study, please feel free to contact Baylea Jackson at [bnj2r@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:bnj2r@mtmail.mtsu.edu) or Mark Frame, Ph.D. at [Mark.Frame@mtsu.edu](mailto:Mark.Frame@mtsu.edu) or at (615) 898-2565.

**Participation:** Participating in this project is voluntary, and refusal to participate or withdrawing from participation at any time during the project will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which the subject is otherwise entitled. All efforts, within reason, will be made to keep the personal information in your research record private but total privacy cannot be promised, for example, your information may be shared with the Middle Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board. In the event of questions or difficulties of any kind during or following participation, the subject may contact the Principal Investigator as indicated above. For additional information about giving consent or your rights as a participant in this study, please feel free to contact the MTSU Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

**Consent:** I have read the above information and my questions have been answered satisfactorily by project staff. I believe I understand the purpose, benefits, and risks of the study and give my informed and free consent to be a participant. Please do not use the "Back" button on your internet browser while completing this survey. Please click the "Next" button to begin.

**STATEMENT BY PERSON AGREEING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I have read and understand the consent form. By choosing the "I wish to participate in this study" option, I indicate my willingness voluntarily take part in the study. If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by choosing the "I do not wish to participate in this study" option.

- I wish to participate in this study
- I do not wish to participate in this study

**Are you 18?**

- I certify that I am over 18 years old
- I am not yet 18 years old

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study. The survey will ask that you respond to questions about yourself, your behaviors, and your opinions. Use the "Next" button at the bottom of the screen to go from page to page. Please review each item carefully before choosing your answer. When given a prompt, please pay attention, as these may provide specific directions related to the questions that follow. When you are ready to begin, please click "Next."

Welcome! We would like to introduce you to three (3) different companies. With opportunities in every area from marketing to psychology to business, each company currently has a number of job openings in your field of interest, and the hiring managers are eager to fill these roles immediately at a competitive salary. Please read the company descriptions very thoroughly and answer the questions that follow.

**Please carefully read the description of Poly Enterprises.**



### **Poly Enterprises Employee Quick Reference Guide**

**INTRODUCTION** Poly Enterprises proudly specializes in electric car technology. As a global leader in the field, we have worked diligently for over three decades to develop the world's first electric car that is not only safe and reliable, but also cost effective. This fall, Poly Enterprises is pleased to introduce the much anticipated Temporale, which features a record-breaking charge time of only 1 hour. Never before have we seen a car with the capability to reach 80mph while carrying up to 8 passengers! We take pride in our safety and energy ratings, low cost, and customer satisfaction. We strive to bring the consumer the next big thing, and we will not stop until we make the world more energy efficient. Are YOU up for the challenge?

**MISSION STATEMENT** Improving the environment through outstanding customer service, innovation, and quality products

**TEAM MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES** As a proud member of this organization, we encourage you to embrace each of the following team member responsibilities:

- **Honesty** – We expect all team members to be open and honest in all situations. Building trust is how we grow as a company.
- **Diversity** – Not only do we embrace diversity within our company culture, but we celebrate diversity in our ideas and knowledge. Open your mind and expand your creativity.
- **Empowerment** – Encourage and support those around you. The power of teamwork has no limits.
- **Excellence** – Strive to provide excellence in each of your projects, relationships, and endeavors. Good can always be great.

**PROCEDURES** This quick guide provides direction for employees in terms of expectations and team member responsibilities while employed with the company. The following procedures apply to all team members:

**Dress Code** Maintaining a professional appearance is very important to the success of our team. While at work, a business casual wardrobe is expected. You are encouraged to use good judgment by dressing in a manner that projects a respectable environment. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- No blue jeans, t-shirts, or leggings
- Skirts or dresses should meet the knee and no shorter
- Open-toe shoes may be worn with the exception of flip flops

Should you travel off-site to visit a client, supplier, or contractor, it is expected that the same professional impression is projected. Any questions related to the dress code or its policy should be directed to your local human resources representative.

**Drugs and Alcohol** With respect to maintaining a drug and alcohol-free environment, employees are subject to drug screens before and during employment. Job candidates are screened prior to being made a job offer and can be pulled into the clinic for random testing on a monthly basis. Consumption of alcohol during work hours is strictly prohibited. Use or possession of drugs and/or paraphernalia is a violation of company policy. Medications must be medically authorized by a physician. Failure to abide by this policy will result in immediate termination.

**Company Property and Materials** All company-related data is considered company property. This includes data on all systems, information transmitted or received (not limited to emails and intranet material), and all data stored on a company device (laptop, telephone, etc.). Electronic records are governed by the same policies as paper records. Any unauthorized sharing of company property with an external entity will be evaluated, and the team member will be subject to termination. Any questions related to company property can be directed to the VP of your function.

**Social Media Policy** In order to maintain and portray professionalism both inside and outside of the workplace, job candidates are subject to pre-employment social media screenings as part of his/her background check. Candidates are asked to provide logins and passwords to recruiters for each of the following social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Snapchat, and any other platform the recruiters deem fit. Employment is contingent upon providing these passwords, as well as passing the screening requirements. Once employed, employees may change their passwords and are strongly encouraged to adhere to these guidelines of professionalism at work and online. You are responsible for your actions and are expected to use sound judgment. Be mindful that you are constantly representing the team. While we do not monitor social media once you are hired, remember that your reputation reflects the business.

**Harassment and Workplace Violence** Any actions, jokes, or comments regarding a team member's gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion will not be tolerated. This policy is not limited to your workplace or our employees, but is also valid while on business trips, external meetings, and any other business-related event off site. If you witness anyone engaging in these behaviors or experience any of these unwelcomed behaviors yourself, please contact your human resources representative immediately.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT** This quick reference guide contains important information and company expectations. I acknowledge that this handbook is not a contract, but understand that I must abide by these policies and practices while employed with this organization. Policies are subject to revisions and will be communicated in a timely manner. For more details, please visit the human resources website to view the full employee handbook.



Poly Enterprises does not require employees to cover their tattoos or piercings.

- True
- False

Poly Enterprises has a business casual dress code.

- True
- False

Poly Enterprises promotes "casual Friday" in regards to dress code.

- True
- False

Which of the following items are required of the job candidate? Please check all that apply.

- Background check
- Drug test
- Public social media review
- Submission of social media logins and passwords

Poly Enterprises conducts random drug tests throughout one's employment.

- True
- False

Poly Enterprises has an attendance policy that punishes excessive tardiness/absence.

- True
- False

Poly Enterprises has a policy that protects against harassment or discrimination based on which of the following? Please check all that apply.

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnicity

Please select whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding Poly Enterprises.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Poly Enterprises is a good company to work for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want a company like Poly Enterprises in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poly Enterprises cares about its employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Poly Enterprises to be a very attractive company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Poly Enterprises treats its employees fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please choose "Disagree" for this item.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would request more information about Poly Enterprises.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would apply to work for Poly Enterprises.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would interview for Poly Enterprises.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would accept a job offer from Poly Enterprises.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would recommend Poly Enterprises to a friend or family member.	<input type="radio"/>				

What do you like most about Poly Enterprises?

What do you like the least about Poly Enterprises?

Please carefully read the description of Sofs Industries.



### Sofs Industries Employee Policy Summary

**INTRODUCTION** With the ever present institution of alternative energies reaching new and impressive heights in the last decade, the market for off the grid energy solutions has reached a near saturation point. Here at Sofs Industries, we are the worldwide leader in harnessing wind energies. Over this time, our wind turbine technology has become the ultimate and only solution for efficient conversion of wind power. Now, with several different size turbines to choose from, whether you’re supplementing your existing power sources for your business, powering entire cities, or simply powering your own home: Sofs Industries has you covered. How can YOU make a difference?

**PHILOSOPHY** Relentless focus on preserving our beautiful planet

**VALUES** With our main focus being customer satisfaction, we take three important values to heart:

- **Integrity** – We promote open and honest relationships with coworkers and customers alike.
- **Respect** – We foster an environment of respect and cooperation.
- **High Standards** – We believe in providing the highest quality service, not only when it comes to products, but also customer service.

**POLICIES** This employee policy summary provides a set of rules to follow during your journey at this organization. We ask that you familiarize yourself with the following procedures:

**Dress Code** During business hours, team members are required to have a clean, neat appearance. Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- No blue jeans or t-shirts with text
- No skirts, shorts, or dresses above the knee
- Long hair must be tied back when operating machinery
- Short facial hair is permitted

Any questions related to the dress code or its policy should be directed to your local human resources representative.

**Drugs and Alcohol** We maintain a drug and alcohol-free environment by submitting team members to drug screens before and during employment. Job candidates are screened prior to being made a job offer and can be randomly tested at any time. Use or possession of drugs and/or paraphernalia is a violation of company policy. Prescriptions are required for any and all medications. Failure to abide by this policy will result in immediate termination.

**Attendance Control** Team member attendance is critical to the operation of the business. Absences must be turned in to your direct supervisor at least 48 hours in advance so that coverage can be arranged. Use of personal time off (PTO) is required for these instances. In an unplanned absence or emergency comes up, PTO will automatically be coded. Team members are granted five (5) instances of emergency time off per calendar year. Excessive tardiness or extra time off beyond the five instances will result in corrective actions. For more information on leaves of absence, please visit your local human resources office.

**Social Media Policy** In order to help us choose responsible, professional team members, job candidates are subject to pre-employment social media screenings as part of his/her background check. The evaluation will involve reviewing public information and photos from the candidate's Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Snapchat if possible. Employment is contingent upon passing the screening requirements. Once employed, we ask that you please remember that you are constantly representing the company. We advise that you refrain from sharing company information and continue to present yourself in a professional manner.

**Treatment of Others** This policy is fairly straightforward, as we expect you to treat others with courtesy and professionalism. We do not tolerate negative comments reflecting anyone's gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion. Any communication that is embarrassing or humiliating to another team member is unacceptable. We take pride in our diverse culture. If you have any concerns, please contact your human resources representative immediately.

**COMPLIANCE** This policy summary contains important information and company expectations. I understand that I must abide by these policies in full. Policies are subject to occasional revisions. For more details, please visit the company website to view the full employee handbook.



Sofs Industries does not require employees to cover their tattoos or piercings.

- True
- False

Sofs Industries has a business casual dress code.

- True
- False

Sofs Industries promotes "casual Friday" in regards to dress code.

- True
- False

Which of the following items are required of the job candidate? Please check all that apply.

- Background check
- Drug test
- Public social media review
- Submission of social media logins and passwords

Sofs Industries conducts random drug tests throughout one's employment.

- True
- False

Sofs Industries has an attendance policy that punishes excessive tardiness/absence.

- True
- False

Sofs Industries has a policy that protects against harassment or discrimination based on which of the following? Please check all that apply.

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnicity

Please select whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding Sofs Industries.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Sofs Industries is a good company to work for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want a company like Sofs Industries in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sofs Industries cares about its employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Sofs Industries to be a very attractive company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sofs Industries treats its employees fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please choose "Agree" for this item.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would request more information about Sof's Industries.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would apply to work for Sof's Industries.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would interview for Sof's Industries.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would accept a job offer from Sof's Industries.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would recommend Sof's Industries to a friend or family member.	<input type="radio"/>				

What do you like most about Sof's Industries?

What do you like the least about Sof's Industries?

**Please carefully read the description of Jesterson Incorporated.**



### **Jesterson Incorporated Employee Handbook Quick Guide**

**INTRODUCTION** Jesterson Incorporated is one of the world's most successful energy manufacturers offering clean energy for schools, homeowners, and businesses. We give clients efficient, money-saving options for solar energy, while also making a lower impact on our environment than traditional energy sources. Employing the world's top engineers in the field, we are able to design and install the highest quality systems available to meet any budget. With a passion to make a difference, our team members strive to reward you with a quality product. What is YOUR passion?

**VISION** Reducing your carbon footprint with innovative green technologies

**PRINCIPLES** As a forward-thinking organization, we strive to constantly practice our three main principles:

- **Learn** – Constantly pursue growth and knowledge. Education has no limits. Never stop learning!
- **Give** – Care about the community and the environment in which we live. Find meaningful ways to volunteer and get involved. Change starts with you!
- **Embrace Change** – Drive change and don't accept the status quo. We passionately evolve our thinking to create the new and improved. By means of continuous improvement, community engagement, and embracing change, we promise to provide superior products and customer satisfaction.

**EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES** This employee handbook quick guide has been prepared as a guideline and reference while you are employed with this organization. The following procedures apply to all team members:

**Dress Code** Maintaining a professional appearance is always important. You are encouraged dress “business casual.” Some examples include, but are not limited to:

- No blue jeans, t-shirts, tank tops, or shorts
- Skirts or dresses should meet the knee at minimum
- Piercings and tattoos must be covered
- Safety glasses are to be worn when in a manufacturing zone

Should you travel off-site to visit a customer, a suit is recommended, but not required. Any questions related to the dress code or its policy should be directed to your local human resources representative.

**Drugs and Alcohol** With safety being a top priority, we maintain a drug and alcohol-free environment. Job candidates are screened prior to employment and are subject to random drug tests while on the job. In the instance of an on-the-job injury, a drug test will be immediately collected in the form of blood, urine, or oral swab as part of the investigation. Consumption of alcohol during work hours is strictly prohibited. Use or possession of drugs and/or paraphernalia is a violation of company policy. Failure to abide by this policy will result in immediate termination.

**Company Property** All inventions and ideas developed on the job are considered company property. We trust that team members will keep secret and retain in the strictest confidence all confidential matters which relate to the Company, including customer lists, financial information, trade secrets, pricing policies and other business affairs. Any questions related to company property can be directed to the office of compliance.

**Social Media Policy** In order to portray professionalism both inside and outside of the workplace, team members are asked to refrain from posting company materials or information to Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, or any other platform. Posts can sometimes attract public attention, and we do not want to represent the company in a negative light. You are responsible for your actions and are expected to use sound judgment. Keep in mind that your online presence reflects the entire organization.

**Team Member Relations** Any negative actions or comments regarding a team member’s gender, race, ethnicity, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion are grounds for immediate termination. This policy is taken very seriously as we take pride in our diverse workforce. If you witness anyone engaging in these behaviors, please contact your human resources representative immediately.

**AGREEMENT** This quick guide contains important company policies that may affect your employment. By receiving this guide, I understand that I must abide by these policies and practices while employed with this organization. Policies are subject to revisions and will be communicated in a timely manner. For more details, please visit the intranet website to view the full employee handbook.



Jesterson Incorporated does not require employees to cover their tattoos or piercings.

- True
- False

Jesterson Incorporated has a business casual dress code.

- True
- False

Jesterson Incorporated promotes "casual Friday" in regards to dress code.

- True
- False

Which of the following items are required of the job candidate? Please check all that apply.

- Background check
- Drug test
- Public social media review
- Submission of social media logins and passwords

Jesterson Incorporated conducts random drug tests throughout one's employment.

- True
- False

Jesterson Incorporated has an attendance policy that punishes excessive tardiness/absence.

- True
- False

Jesterson Incorporated has a policy that protects against harassment or discrimination based on which of the following? Please check all that apply.

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Sexual orientation
- Ethnicity

Please select whether you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding Jesterson Incorporated.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Jesterson Incorporated is a good company to work for.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want a company like Jesterson Incorporated in my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jesterson Incorporated cares about its employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find Jesterson Incorporated to be a very attractive company.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jesterson Incorporated treats its employees fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please choose "Strongly Disagree" for this item.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would request more information about Jesterson Incorporated.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would apply to work for Jesterson Incorporated.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would interview for Jesterson Incorporated.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would accept a job offer from Jesterson Incorporated.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would recommend Jesterson Incorporated to a friend or family member.	<input type="radio"/>				

What do you like most about Jesterson Incorporated?

What do you like the least about Jesterson Incorporated?

**Now that you have thoroughly reviewed all three companies, please carefully consider your options and choose the company at which you would like to work.**

Which company do you view most positively?

- Poly Enterprises
- Sofs Industries
- Jesterson Incorporated

Why do you view \_\_\_\_\_ most positively?

Which company do you view most negatively?

- Poly Enterprises
- Sofs Industries
- Jesterson Incorporated

Why do you view \_\_\_\_\_ most negatively?

Please click and drag to rank these companies in order of preference:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Poly Enterprises
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sofs Industries
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jesterson Incorporated

Please choose the company at which you would like to apply for a job:

- Poly Enterprises
- Sofs Industries
- Jesterson Incorporated

How enthusiastic are you about the opportunity to work at \_\_\_\_\_?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Choose your desired salary below. Please be as accurate as possible based on your field of study, skills, and experience.

- Choose your desired starting salary
- \$30,000 or less
- \$35,000
- \$40,000
- \$45,000
- \$50,000
- \$55,000
- \$60,000
- \$65,000
- \$70,000
- \$75,000
- \$80,000
- \$85,000
- \$90,000
- \$95,000
- \$100,000 or more

**Please answer the following questions regarding your social media usage.**

Do you use social media websites or mobile applications (apps)?

- Yes
- No

Which of the following social media platforms are you a member? Check all that apply.

- Facebook
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Snapchat
- Other
- None

Do you have a Facebook profile?

- Yes
- No

How long have you been a member of Facebook?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9 or more years

How many Facebook friends do you have?

- Less than 100 friends
- 100-299 friends
- 300-499 friends
- 500-699 friends
- 700-899 friends
- 900-1099 friends
- 1100-1299 friends
- 1300-1499 friends
- 1500-1699 friends
- 1700-1899 friends
- More than 1900 friends

Please choose which of the following options best represents your pool of Facebook friends:

- Most of my Facebook friends are close/best friends.
- Most of my Facebook friends are face-to-face acquaintances.
- Most of my Facebook friends have never met me face-to-face.
- Most of my Facebook friends are strangers.

I am friends with my family members on Facebook:

- True
- False

How many hours per day on average do you spend on Facebook (website and mobile app combined)?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 or more hours

How many Facebook statuses do you post per day on average?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

Do you have an Instagram profile?

- Yes
- No

How long have you been a member of Instagram?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9 or more years

How many Instagram followers do you have?

- Less than 100 followers
- 100-299 followers
- 300-499 followers
- 500-699 followers
- 700-899 followers
- 900-1099 followers
- 1100-1299 followers
- 1300-1499 followers
- 1500-1699 followers
- 1700-1899 followers
- More than 1900 followers

Please choose which of the following options best represents your pool of Instagram followers:

- Most of my Instagram followers are close/best friends.
- Most of my Instagram followers are face-to-face acquaintances.
- Most of my Instagram followers have never met me face-to-face.
- Most of my Instagram followers are strangers.

I am friends with my family members on Instagram.

- True
- False

How many hours per day on average do you spend on Instagram?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 or more hours

How many Instagram posts do you post per day on average?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

Do you have a LinkedIn account?

- Yes
- No

How long have you been a member of LinkedIn?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9 or more years

How many LinkedIn connections do you have?

- Less than 100 connections
- 100-299 connections
- 300-499 connections
- 500-699 connections
- 700-899 connections
- 900-1099 connections
- 1100-1299 connections
- 1300-1499 connections
- 1500-1699 connections
- 1700-1899 connections
- More than 1900 connections

Please choose which of the following options best represents your pool of connections:

- Most of my LinkedIn connections are close/best friends.
- Most of my LinkedIn connections are face-to-face acquaintances.
- Most of my LinkedIn connections have never met me face-to-face.
- Most of my LinkedIn connections are strangers.

I am connected with my family members on LinkedIn:

- True
- False

How many hours per day on average do you spend on LinkedIn (website and mobile app combined)?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 or more hours

How many LinkedIn statuses do you post per day on average?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

Do you have a Twitter account?

- Yes
- No

How long have you been a member of Twitter?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9 or more years

How many Twitter followers do you have?

- Less than 100 followers
- 100-299 followers
- 300-499 followers
- 500-699 followers
- 700-899 followers
- 900-1099 followers
- 1100-1299 followers
- 1300-1499 followers
- 1500-1699 followers
- 1700-1899 followers
- More than 1900 followers

Please choose which of the following options best represents your pool of Twitter followers:

- Most of my Twitter followers are close/best friends.
- Most of my Twitter followers are face-to-face acquaintances.
- Most of my Twitter followers have never met me face-to-face.
- Most of my Twitter followers are strangers.

My family members follow me on Twitter:

- True
- False

How many hours per day on average do you spend on Twitter (website and mobile app combined)?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 or more hours

How many tweets/retweets do you post per day on average?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

Do you have a Snapchat account?

- Yes
- No

How long have you been a member of Snapchat?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-6 years
- 7-8 years
- 9 or more years

How many Snapchat friends do you have?

- Less than 10 friends
- 10-29 friends
- 30-49 friends
- 50-69 friends
- 70-89 friends
- 90-109 friends
- 110+ friends

Please choose which of the following options best represents your pool of Snapchat friends:

- Most of my Snapchat friends are close/best friends.
- Most of my Snapchat friends are face-to-face acquaintances.
- Most of my Snapchat friends have never met me face-to-face.
- Most of my Snapchat friends are strangers.

My family members follow me on Snapchat.

- True
- False

How many hours per day on average do you spend on Snapchat?

- Less than 1 hour
- 1-2 hours
- 3-4 hours
- 5-6 hours
- 7-8 hours
- 9 or more hours

How many snaps do you send per day on average (including your stories)?

- None
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6
- 7-8
- 9 or more

If your significant other broke up with you (or vice versa), would you post about it on social media?

- Yes, I would and/or have.
- No, I would not and/or have never.

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I use Facebook to find new friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use Facebook to better understand the interests and activities of my friends.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook accurately displays my relationships with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I use privacy settings to select what parts of my profile I share with others.	<input type="radio"/>				
I use Facebook "Lists" to create different levels for friends like "Close Friends," "Home Town Friends," "College Friends," etc.	<input type="radio"/>				
Facebook helps me feel closer to my friends.	<input type="radio"/>				
Facebook is part of my everyday activity.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am proud to tell people I'm on Facebook.	<input type="radio"/>				
Facebook has become part of my daily routine.	<input type="radio"/>				

I feel out of touch when I haven't logged onto Facebook for a while.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel I am part of the Facebook community.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would be sorry if Facebook shut down.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree or strong agree with the following statements about Facebook.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Facebook is an important part of my day-to-day life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facebook has become an essential part of my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find myself using Facebook more and more during my free time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree or strong agree with the following statements about LinkedIn.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
LinkedIn is an important part of my day-to-day life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn has become an essential part of my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I find myself using LinkedIn more and more during my free time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please answer the following questions regarding your opinions on background checks.

Please indicate whether you strongly disagree or strong agree with the following statements.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Companies should drug test job candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Companies should complete a background check on job candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Companies should review information made public by a job candidate on social media.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Companies should ask a job candidate for his/her social media passwords.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**To what extent do you feel that the use of Facebook screening in the hiring process:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
is invasive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
probes into or invades your body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
allows you to manage positive impression about yourself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has the potential to reveal negative information about you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is predictive of your job performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
probes into your mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is likely to produce information that would wrongly discredit you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
suggests that the organization does not trust applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
makes you feel uneasy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**To what extent do you feel that the use of LinkedIn screening in the hiring process:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
is invasive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
probes into or invades your body	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
allows you to manage positive impression about yourself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has the potential to reveal negative information about you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is predictive of your job performance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
probes into your mind	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
is likely to produce information that would wrongly discredit you	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
suggests that the organization does not trust applicants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
makes you feel uneasy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding Facebook screening:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I do not understand what screening Facebook has to do with the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I cannot see any relationship between screening Facebook and what is required on the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be obvious to anyone that screening Facebook is related to the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>The actual content of screening Facebook is clearly related to the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>There is no real connection between screening Facebook and the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>Failing to pass the Facebook screening clearly indicates that you can't do the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I am confident that screening Facebook can predict how well an applicant will perform on the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>My performance on the Facebook screening is a good indicator of my ability to do the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				

<p>Applicants who perform well on the Facebook screening are more likely to perform well on the job than applicants who perform poorly.</p> <p>The employer can tell a lot about an applicant's ability to do the job from the results of screening Facebook.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
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Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding LinkedIn screening.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I do not understand what screening LinkedIn has to do with the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I cannot see any relationship between screening LinkedIn and what is required on the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be obvious to anyone that screening LinkedIn is related to the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The actual content of screening LinkedIn is clearly related to the job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>There is no real connection between screening LinkedIn and the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>Failing to pass the LinkedIn screening clearly indicates that you can't do the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I am confident that screening LinkedIn can predict how well an applicant will perform on the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>My performance on the LinkedIn screening is a good indicator of my ability to do the job.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				

<p>Applicants who perform well on the LinkedIn screening are more likely to perform well on the job than applicants who perform poorly.</p> <p>The employer can tell a lot about an applicant's ability to do the job from the results of screening LinkedIn.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
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Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding Facebook screening:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think that Facebook screenings are a fair way to select people for jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that the Facebook screenings themselves are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, the method of using Facebook screening is fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements regarding LinkedIn screening:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I think that LinkedIn screenings are a fair way to select people for jobs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I think that the LinkedIn screenings themselves are fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall, the method of using LinkedIn screening is fair.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Please answer the following questions about yourself.**

Which best describes you?

- Man
- Woman

What is your current age (in years)?

What is your race/ethnic identity?

- White
- African-American/Black
- Asian
- Hispanic / Latino
- Native American
- Asian / Pacific Islander
- Bi-Racial / Mixed
- Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the Hispanic or Latino group that best describes you:

- Mexican/Mexican American
- Puerto Rican
- Cuban
- Salvadoran
- Dominican
- Guatemalan
- Colombian
- Honduran
- Ecuadorian
- Peruvians
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Please select the Asian / Pacific Islander group that best describes you:

- Chinese
- Japanese
- Korean
- Filipino
- Samoan
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladesh
- Sri Lankan
- Nepalese
- Bhutanese
- Vietnamese
- Laotian
- Cambodian
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

What is your total individual income?

- Under \$10,000
- \$10,001 to \$30,000
- \$30,001 to \$50,000
- \$50,001 to \$70,000
- \$70,001 to \$90,000
- Over \$90,001

What is the last degree you obtained?

- High school diploma (or equivalent)
- Associate's degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctorate
- None of the above

Are you currently enrolled at a college or university?

- Yes
- No

What is your current level in college?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Graduate Student

What is your GPA?

Which of the following best describes your employment status? (Check all that apply)

- Employed full time
- Employed part time
- Unemployed or looking for work
- Student
- Homemaker
- Retired

**Thank you for all of the information you have provided thus far. Please take a few more minutes to respond to a few more questions.**

**On the following pages you will find a series of statements about yourself.**

**Please read each statement and decide how much you agree or disagree with that statement. Then, choose your answer to the statement using the following scale:**

**5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral (neither agree nor disagree), 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree.**

**Please answer every statement even if you are not completely sure of your response.**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would be quite bored by a visit to an art gallery.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I clean my office or home quite frequently.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I rarely hold a grudge, even against people who have badly wronged me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel reasonably satisfied with myself overall.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I want something from a person I dislike, I will act very nicely toward that person in order to get it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries.	<input type="radio"/>				
When working, I often set ambitious goals for myself.	<input type="radio"/>				
People sometimes tell me that I am too critical of others.	<input type="radio"/>				
I rarely express my opinions in group meetings.	<input type="radio"/>				
I sometimes can't help worrying about little things.	<input type="radio"/>				
If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would like a job that requires following a routine rather than being creative.	<input type="radio"/>				

I often check my work over repeatedly to find any mistakes.	<input type="radio"/>				
People sometimes tell me that I'm too stubborn.	<input type="radio"/>				
I avoid making "small talk" with people.	<input type="radio"/>				
When I suffer from a painful experience, I need someone to make me feel comfortable.	<input type="radio"/>				
Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.	<input type="radio"/>				
I think that paying attention to radical ideas is a waste of time.	<input type="radio"/>				
I make decisions based on the feeling of the moment rather than on careful thought.	<input type="radio"/>				

People think of me as someone who has a quick temper.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am energetic nearly all the time.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel like crying when I see other people crying.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am an ordinary person who is no better than others.	<input type="radio"/>				
I wouldn't spend my time reading a book of poetry.	<input type="radio"/>				
I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute.	<input type="radio"/>				
My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is "forgive and forget".	<input type="radio"/>				
I think that most people like some aspects of my personality.	<input type="radio"/>				

I don't mind doing jobs that involve dangerous work.	<input type="radio"/>				
I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.	<input type="radio"/>				
I enjoy looking at maps of different places.	<input type="radio"/>				
I often push myself very hard when trying to achieve a goal.	<input type="radio"/>				
I generally accept people's faults without complaining about them.	<input type="radio"/>				
In social situations, I'm usually the one who makes the first move.	<input type="radio"/>				
I worry a lot less than most people do.	<input type="radio"/>				

I would be tempted to buy stolen property if I were financially tight.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would enjoy creating a work of art, such as a novel, a song, or a painting.	<input type="radio"/>				
When working on something, I don't pay much attention to small details.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am usually quite flexible in my opinions when people disagree with me.	<input type="radio"/>				
I enjoy having lots of people around to talk with.	<input type="radio"/>				
I can handle difficult situations without needing emotional support from anyone else.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would like to live in a very expensive, high-class neighborhood.	<input type="radio"/>				

I like people who have unconventional views.	<input type="radio"/>				
I make a lot of mistakes because I don't think before I act.	<input type="radio"/>				
I rarely feel anger, even when people treat me quite badly.	<input type="radio"/>				
On most days, I feel cheerful and optimistic.	<input type="radio"/>				
When someone I know well is unhappy, I can almost feel that person's pain myself.	<input type="radio"/>				
I wouldn't want people to treat me as though I were superior to them.	<input type="radio"/>				
If I had the opportunity, I would like to attend a classical music concert.	<input type="radio"/>				

<p>People often joke with me about the messiness of my room or desk.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>If someone has cheated me once, I will always feel suspicious of that person.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I feel that I am an unpopular person.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>When it comes to physical danger, I am very fearful.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I would be very bored by a book about the history of science and technology.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>Often when I set a goal, I end up quitting without having reached it.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I tend to be lenient in judging other people.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				

When I'm in a group of people, I'm often the one who speaks on behalf of the group.	<input type="radio"/>				
I rarely, if ever, have trouble sleeping due to stress or anxiety.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.	<input type="radio"/>				
People have often told me that I have a good imagination.	<input type="radio"/>				
I always try to be accurate in my work, even at the expense of time.	<input type="radio"/>				
When people tell me that I'm wrong, my first reaction is to argue with them.	<input type="radio"/>				
I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone.	<input type="radio"/>				

Whenever I feel worried about something, I want to share my concern with another person.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would like to be seen driving around in a very expensive car.	<input type="radio"/>				
I think of myself as a somewhat eccentric person.	<input type="radio"/>				
I don't allow my impulses to govern my behavior.	<input type="radio"/>				
Most people tend to get angry more quickly than I do.	<input type="radio"/>				
People often tell me that I should try to cheer up.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel strong emotions when someone close to me is going away for a long time.	<input type="radio"/>				

I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.	<input type="radio"/>				
Sometimes I like to just watch the wind as it blows through the trees.	<input type="radio"/>				
When working, I sometimes have difficulties due to being disorganized.	<input type="radio"/>				
I find it hard to fully forgive someone who has done something mean to me.	<input type="radio"/>				
I sometimes feel that I am a worthless person.	<input type="radio"/>				
Even in an emergency I wouldn't feel like panicking.	<input type="radio"/>				
I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.	<input type="radio"/>				

I've never really enjoyed looking through an encyclopedia.	<input type="radio"/>				
I do only the minimum amount of work needed to get by.	<input type="radio"/>				
Even when people make a lot of mistakes, I rarely say anything negative.	<input type="radio"/>				
I tend to feel quite self-conscious when speaking in front of a group of people.	<input type="radio"/>				
I get very anxious when waiting to hear about an important decision.	<input type="radio"/>				
I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.	<input type="radio"/>				
I don't think of myself as the artistic or creative type.	<input type="radio"/>				

People often call me a perfectionist.	<input type="radio"/>				
I find it hard to compromise with people when I really think I'm right.	<input type="radio"/>				
The first thing that I always do in a new place is to make friends.	<input type="radio"/>				
I rarely discuss my problems with other people.	<input type="radio"/>				
I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.	<input type="radio"/>				
I find it boring to discuss philosophy.	<input type="radio"/>				
I prefer to do whatever comes to mind, rather than stick to a plan.	<input type="radio"/>				
I find it hard to keep my temper when people insult me.	<input type="radio"/>				
Most people are more upbeat and dynamic than I generally am.	<input type="radio"/>				

<p>I remain unemotional even in situations where most people get very sentimental.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I have sympathy for people who are less fortunate than I am.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>I try to give generously to those in need.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>It wouldn't bother me to harm someone I didn't like.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				
<p>People see me as a hard-hearted person.</p>	<input type="radio"/>				

Please indicate whether the following statements about yourself are true or false.

	True	False
Before voting I thoroughly investigate the qualifications of all the candidates.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never hesitate to go out of my way to help someone in trouble.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is sometimes hard for me to go on with my work if I am not encouraged.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never intensely disliked anyone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On occasion I have had doubts about my ability to succeed in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes feel resentful when I don't get my way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am always careful about my manner of dress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My table manners at home are as good as when I eat out in a restaurant.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could get into a movie without paying and be sure I was not seen, I would probably do it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On a few occasions, I have given up doing something because I thought too little of my ability.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to gossip at times.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

There have been times when I felt like rebelling against people in authority even though I knew they were right.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No matter who I'm talking to, I'm always a good listener.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can remember "playing sick" to get out of something.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There have been occasions when I took advantage of someone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm always willing to admit it when I make a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always try to practice what I preach.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't find it particularly difficult to get along with loud-mouthed, obnoxious people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes try to get even, rather than forgive and forget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I don't know something I don't at all mind admitting it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am always courteous even to people who are disagreeable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At times I have really insisted on having things my own way.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There have been occasions when I felt like smashing things.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<p>I would never think of letting someone else be punished for my wrongdoings.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I have never resented being asked to return a favor.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I have never been irked when people expressed ideas very different from my own.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I never make a long trip without checking the safety of my car.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>There have been times when I was quite jealous of the good fortune of others.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I have almost never felt the urge to tell someone off.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I am sometimes irritated by people who ask favors of me.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I have never felt that I was punished without cause.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I sometimes think when people have misfortune they only got what they deserved.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>I have never deliberately said something that hurts someone's feelings.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about yourself.

	Very inaccurate	Moderately inaccurate	Neither inaccurate nor accurate	Moderately accurate	Very accurate
I return extra change when a cashier makes a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to forgive and forget.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like to be of service to others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I act according to my conscience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I anticipate the needs of others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I take others' interests into account.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am polite to strangers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to cooperate with others.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I appreciate people who wait on me	<input type="radio"/>				
I try not to think about the needy.	<input type="radio"/>				

**Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about yourself.**

	Very inaccurate	Moderately inaccurate	Neither inaccurate nor accurate	Moderately accurate	Very accurate
I am trusted to keep secrets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I keep my promises.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe that honesty is the basis for trust.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can be trusted to keep my promises.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am true to my own values.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I lie to get myself out of trouble.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am hard to understand.	<input type="radio"/>				
I feel like an imposter.	<input type="radio"/>				
I like to exaggerate my troubles.	<input type="radio"/>				
I take pride in not exaggerating who or what I am.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am told that I am down to earth.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am told by friends that they do not really know who I am.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements about yourself.

	Very inaccurate	Moderately inaccurate	Neither inaccurate nor accurate	Moderately accurate	Very accurate
I would never take things that aren't mine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would never cheat on my taxes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I believe there is never an excuse for lying.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always admit it when I make a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I rarely talk about sex.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I return extra change when a cashier makes a mistake.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I try to follow the rules.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I easily resist temptations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I tell the truth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I rarely overindulge.	<input type="radio"/>				
I have sometimes had to tell a lie.	<input type="radio"/>				
I use swear words.	<input type="radio"/>				
I use flattery to get ahead.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am not always what I appear to be.	<input type="radio"/>				
I break rules.	<input type="radio"/>				
I cheat to get ahead.	<input type="radio"/>				
I don't always practice what I preach.	<input type="radio"/>				
I misuse power.	<input type="radio"/>				
I get back at others.	<input type="radio"/>				
I am likely to show off if I get the chance.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please indicate whether the following statements about yourself are true or false.

	True	False
I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can only argue for ideas which I already believe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have no information.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I guess I put on a show to impress and entertain people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would probably make a good actor/actress.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In a group of people, I am rarely the center of attention.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In different situations and with different people, I often act like a very different person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not particularly good at making other people like me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not always the person I appear to be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I have considered being an entertainer.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people in different situations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel a bit awkward in public and do not show up quite so well as I should.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.  
Your response has been recorded.**

## APPENDIX C: IRB APPROVAL

**IRB**  
 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD  
 Office of Research Compliance,  
 010A Sam Ingram Building,  
 2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd  
 Murfreesboro, TN 37129



## EXEMPT APPROVAL NOTICE

12/1/2015

Investigator(s): Baylea Jackson  
 Department: Psychology  
 Investigator(s) Email: bnj2r@mtmail.mtsu.edu  
 Protocol Title: "Could Social Media Background Checks Discourage Qualified Job Applicants?"  
 Protocol ID: 16-1116

Dear Investigator(s),

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above and this study has been designated to be EXEMPT.. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b) (2) Educational Tests, Surveys, Interviews, or Observations

The following changes to this protocol must be reported prior to implementation:

- Addition of new subject population or exclusion of currently approved demographics
- Addition/removal of investigators
- Addition of new procedures
- Other changes that may make this study to be no longer be considered exempt

The following changes do not have to be reported:

- Editorial/administrative revisions to the consent of other study documents
- Changes to the number of subjects from the original proposal

All research materials must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board  
 Middle Tennessee State University

NOTE: All necessary forms can be obtained from [www.mtsu.edu/irb](http://www.mtsu.edu/irb).