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**ANALYZING BUSINESS-FOCUSED SOCIAL NETWORKS IN HIRING: THE
INFLUENCE OF A JOB CANDIDATE'S NETWORK ON A RECRUITER'S
HIRING RECOMMENDATION**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of South Alabama
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Computing

by

Hannah V. Kibby

B.S., University of South Alabama, 2016

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	Average variance extracted
CFI	Comparative fit index
CMB	Common method bias
EFA	Exploratory factor analysis
GM	Genetic modification
ICT	Information and communication technology
I/O	Industrial/organizational
ML	Maximum likelihood
NAB	Network association bias
PTT	Propensity to trust
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SEM	Structural equation modeling
SM	Sales or marketing
TAM	Technology acceptance model
TCC	Trust, confidence, and cooperation
TLI	Tucker-Lewis index
UGT	Uses and gratification theory
UTAUT2	Unified theory of acceptance and use of technology

ABSTRACT

Hannah V. Kibby, Ph.D., University of South Alabama, December 2022. Analyzing Business-Focused Social Networks in Hiring: The Influence of a Job Candidate's Network on a Recruiter's Hiring Recommendation. Chair of Committee: Harold Pardue, Ph.D.

Social media has altered the ways in which people interact. Business-focused social media profiles, such as those on LinkedIn, can act as a proxy for a traditional resume. However, these websites differ from a traditional resume in that information presented is sometimes informal, personal, and irrelevant to the member's career. Furthermore, HR employees are able to view a job candidate's social network. This research investigates the influence of a recruiter's knowledge of an applicant's professional network on the recruiter's perception of the applicant's trustworthiness and hence their willingness to take risk in the hiring relationship. A review of the literature covered two areas of research: trust and the use of social networks in hiring. While previous studies connected the trust model to LinkedIn, none of them addressed the influence of a LinkedIn profile's social network on a hiring manager's perception of the candidate's trustworthiness. A survey-based experiment was designed to evaluate how network association bias, a newly created construct, affects a hiring manager's perception of a job candidate's ability and benevolence. The experimental model was based on Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's trust model. A structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was conducted in RStudio using the lavaan latent variable modeling package.

The results of this experiment reveal that that a job candidate's social network impacts how the candidate's levels of ability and benevolence are perceived by others. Furthermore, it is suggested that a recruiter's propensity to trust influences the relationship between network association bias and a job candidate's ability.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

Social media has altered the ways in which people interact. This class of media encompasses mobile apps and websites whose focus is creating and maintaining social networks. A fundamental difference between social media platforms and previous analog social networks is the ability of a member to see most if not all of another member's connections within the network. Through viewing the connections of other members, individuals are able to expand their own networks. Most commonly, this feature applies to adding friends, such as on Facebook. In a similar fashion, business-focused social media platforms such as LinkedIn enable the expansion of professional networks.

A critical part of a professional recruiter's repertoire is a large professional network, which can act as a list references and potential job candidates. With job candidates' professional information so readily available, many human resources recruiters use business-focused social media to identify and recruit new candidates. Business-focused social media profiles, such as those on LinkedIn, can act as a proxy for a traditional resume. However, these websites differ from a traditional resume in that information presented is sometimes informal, personal, and irrelevant to the member's career. Furthermore, HR employees can view a job candidate's social network. A

possibly unintended consequence is that a job candidate's connections can be viewed as professional references.

Hiring an employee establishes a new relationship between the applicant and the hiring organization which is an inherently risky decision. According to Robert Half, eighty-one percent of small and midsize businesses have made at least one bad hiring decision, wasting up to seventeen weeks on filling and refilling one job position [1]. A bad hire can also hurt employee morale, lower the bar for other employees, and result in a -298% return on investment [2], [3]. In addition to finding a suitable job candidate, recruiters also look for applicants who will reflect positively on them. A person's willingness to take risk in a relationship is at least partially conditioned by the perception of the other person's trustworthiness [4].

Assessing the trustworthiness of an applicant from a traditional resume requires years of experience, follow up with listed references, and intelligence gathering within the recruiter's professional network. A job applicant's social media profile provides data that is not available on a traditional resume: the applicant's professional network. It is not known whether and how knowledge of an applicant's professional network influences recruiters' perceptions of the applicant's trustworthiness and hence their willingness to take risk in the hiring relationship.

1.2 Phenomenon

This research investigates the influence of a recruiter's knowledge of an applicant's professional network on the recruiter's perception of the applicant's trustworthiness and hence their willingness to take risk in the hiring relationship. In this

study, a business-focused social network is defined as a social media website whose focus is building business relationships and the placement of job candidates. A hiring manager is responsible for locating and filtering appropriate job candidates. This individual can work for the hiring company or for a separate job placement agency. A job candidate is an individual being considered for a job opening. The candidate may have applied for the job, or the hiring manager may have located the candidate through a search. This interaction requires that the hiring manager viewed the job candidate's business-focused social network profile. The hiring manager may or may not have seen the job candidate's traditional resume. For example, job candidates may have linked to their resumes from the social media profile, or they may have submitted a resume for a job application, and the hiring manager subsequently viewed the social media profile. An assumption of this study is that the two individuals have no prior relationship with each other, as to prevent any prior relationship bias. An exception would be if the two individuals have simply connected on social media, as hiring managers often connect with many people to increase their candidate pool.

Choosing whether to recommend a job candidate for hire involves risk on the part of the hiring manager. Not having previously interacted with the job candidate, the hiring manager must choose whether to recommend the candidate based on the social media profile, a decision that requires assessing the candidate's trustworthiness. The candidate may potentially reflect negatively on the hiring manager in the hiring process, or after being hired. For example, if the candidate is inept or malicious, the hiring manager's due diligence and judgement could be questioned.

1.3 Research Question

When recommending a job candidate, risk is present because candidates may misrepresent themselves. In the end, the hiring manager has to decide whether the candidate is trustworthy. The focus of this study is on how candidates are indirectly represented by their professional connections, that is, their business-focused social network. Therefore, the research question is: *When filtering job candidates through a business-focused social network, what is the influence of knowledge of a candidate's social network on the hiring manager's perception of the trustworthiness of the candidate – measured as ability, integrity, and benevolence – and the manager's subsequent willingness to risk a positive recommendation?*

1.4 Organization of Dissertation

This dissertation consists of six chapters. The first chapter introduces the motivation for the study as well as the phenomenon and research question to be studied. The second chapter reviews the current literature on trust and risk, as well as business-focused social networks in the hiring process. The third chapter states the research model and the hypotheses of the study. The fourth chapter details the experiment conducted to test the hypotheses. The fifth chapter reviews the results of the experiment, and the final chapter discusses the conclusions of the findings.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This dissertation pulls from two areas of literature. The theoretical model of trust and its antecedents have been utilized in a variety of disciplines. Trust has also been shown to have a relationship with risk. The use of social networks in the hiring process provides a foundation for the current study to build upon.

2.1 Trust and Risk

While numerous authors have modeled trust, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's integrative model of organizational trust remains one of the most well established methods in the literature [4]. Integrating research from multiple disciplines, the authors defined trust as "the willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party" [4]. The model focuses on trust between a trustor (the trusting party) and a trustee (the party to be trusted) in an organizational setting. Key to the model are the three antecedents of trust: ability, benevolence, and integrity. Ability is a trustee's skills and competencies within a specific domain; benevolence is the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do

good to the trustor; and integrity is how much a trustee aligns to an accepted set of principles.

In addition to Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's trust model, there are many other models and theories centered on trust [5]–[7]. In one study, Earle formulates and tests two trust-centric theories [5]. The first theory derives from normative considerations and states that trust is based on universal factors such as objectivity and fairness. The second theory claims that trust is context specific and is based on agreement or similarity. Through the use of a think-aloud methodology, it was found that participants followed the second theory and based their trust judgements on specific forms of agreement. Therefore, trust is not universal but context specific. In a study comparing morality- and performance-based information, Earle and Siegrist examined the Trust, Confidence, and Cooperation (TCC) model [6]. This model distinguishes between morality-relevant information and performance-relevant information, with the former controlling how the latter is interpreted. In the TCC model, trust is based on value similarity, and confidence is based on past performance. Value similarity pulls from morality-relevant information, while past performance pulls from performance-relevant information. Through a series of three studies, the authors found that judgments of trust were more influential than judgments of confidence.

Twyman, Harvey, and Harries examined the model of risk communication, where an advisor provides advice regarding the risk of an agent's behavior [7]. The effectiveness of this advice depends on the agent's trust in the advisor's competence as well as the advisor's motives. The authors found that the past quality of the advisor's advice and the degree of similarity between the advisor's and the judge's values both

influence two types of agent behavior. The types are stated trust (the degree of trust expressed in a source) and revealed trust (the weight given to the source's advice).

Poortinga and Pidgeon noted that, while it is widely accepted that trust plays an important role in responses to risks, there are disagreements about the aspects of trust [8]. After conducting a literature review, they identified three social psychological perspectives on trust. First, the dimensional approach to trust aims to identify the basic components of trust. Second, the salient value similarity approach states that people base their judgments on perceived value similarity. Finally, the associationist view of trust emphasizes prior attitudes.

Some authors have shown a relationship between trust and confidence, such as Siegrist, Gutscher, and Earle, who examined trust and confidence's influence on hazard perception [9]. They defined general trust as the conviction that other people can be relied upon, while general confidence is the belief that uncertainty is low, and everything is under control. Through a study of people living in Switzerland, they found that high levels of trust and confidence led to reduced levels of perceived risks. Older individuals and females had higher risk perceptions, while gender was also a significant predictor for technological hazards. In another study, Siegrist, Connor, and Keller analyzed trust and confidence items using principal component analysis [10]. Two value similarity-based trust factors were found, as well as one confidence factor: economy/health and environment, trust and honesty of industry and scientists, and competence. In field experiments discussing genetic modification (GM), all three factors significantly influenced acceptance. In their study, Siegrist, Connor, and Keller found that fairness is moderated by moral conviction, meaning it is stronger for some people than for others;

this was contrary to previous findings which suggested that fairness influences environmental hazard acceptance.

In addition to confidence, another topic that is often associated with trust is risk. One paper by Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, and Johnson reanalyzed the relationship between perceived risk and perceived benefit, which is often seen as inverse [11]. They hypothesized that this relationship occurs because people utilize affect when determining risk and benefits. Two studies were conducted to test this hypothesis. The first study found that the inverse relationship was stronger when a time pressure was introduced, while the second study saw that altering favorability information changes an individual's affective evaluation of an item. Both studies supported the idea of an "affect heuristic" influencing both risk and benefit evaluations. Another factor in determining risk is credibility, as noted by Trumbo and McComas [12]. They studied the effect of credibility on how people process information and subsequently perceive risk. In a study focusing on cancer, credibility was assessed for three sources: state health departments, citizen groups, and industries involved in cancer cases. It was observed that high credibility for industry and state, as well as low credibility for citizen groups, promoted heuristic processing, which is itself a predictor for low risk perception. Conversely, low industry and state credibility resulted in systematic processing, which leads to greater risk perception. In a cross-national study, Viklund examined the relationship between trust and risk perception [13]. Individuals were surveyed across four European countries: Sweden, Spain, the United Kingdom, and France. While trust was a significant predictor of risk, it was weak in Spain and France and moderate in the United Kingdom and Sweden. This relationship also varied depending on the type of risk and trust measure.

For example, nuclear risks were more influenced by trust, and general trust did a better job explaining perceived risk than specific trust did. The author concluded that trust does explain risk, but it might not be as powerful as is often argued.

In studying risk perception and affect, Slovic and Peters determined that humans perceive and act on risk in two fundamental ways [14]. The first way, risk as feelings, refers to an individual's intuitive and instinctive reactions to danger. Meanwhile, risk as analysis utilizes logic, reason, and scientific deliberation to manage risk. Relying on risk as feelings is known as the "affect heuristic", which was previously observed by Finucane, Alhakami, Slovic, and Johnson several years prior [11]. The remainder of the paper traced the heuristic's development and discusses some of the ways in which it impacts risk perception and evaluation. A more recent paper focusing on risk by Pachur, Hertwig, and Steinmann tested the affect heuristic and the availability heuristic against each other [15]. In two studies utilizing student samples, risk perception was gauged by using a homogenous (cancer) cause of death and a set of classic heterogeneous causes of death. Three measures were also taken: frequency, value of a statistical life, and perceived risk. Availability-by-recall, a heuristic that exploits an individual's experience of occurrences of risks in their social network, best conformed to people's responses. Direct experience was also very influential and clearly surpassed affective information. Affective information was more pronounced when measuring the value of a statistical life and perceived risk than in risk-frequency judgments. Finally, ignoring the assumption that one must rely on either the availability heuristic or the affect heuristic, the authors found evidence for methods that combine both.

Trust can occur in a variety of relationships, such as a relationship between two individuals. In one paper, De Bruin and Van Lange investigated the role of morality and intelligence behavioral information on three factors: impressions, cooperative behavior expectations, and own cooperation [16]. They found support for two hypotheses. The morality-importance hypothesis stated that morality information had a stronger influence on the three factors than intelligence information, as well as greater confidence in expectations. The negativity-effect hypothesis stated that negative morality and intelligence information had a greater impact on impressions than positive information. Another finding was that people expect more cooperation from others than they were willing to display; this difference was more pronounced for moral and unintelligent targets. In another paper, De Bruin and Van Lange examined how personal information and perceiver differences influence active and passive impression formation [17]. They utilized the two hypotheses from the previous study, as well as a third new hypothesis. Following the morality-importance hypothesis, participants looked for morality information first, and they assigned greater weight to morality information than to competence. Supporting the negativity-effect hypothesis, participants cared less about competence information once negative morality information was introduced, and negative morality information carried a greater weight in impressions than positive morality information. The social-value-orientation hypothesis showed that proselves searched for additional competence information after morality information was introduced more often than prosocials. In addition, proselves' impressions were more affected by competence information and less affected by morality information than prosocials' impressions.

Taking a more formal look at interpersonal trust, Frowe studied “professional trust” [18]. They argued that trust is an essential component of being a “professional”. The first part of the paper discussed the nature of trust and argued that everyone is involved in trusting relationships and all trust involves risk. The second part examined the concept of professional trust and discussed the two components of knowledge: information and judgment. The paper’s main argument is that exercising judgment through “discretionary power” is a central part of being a professional. However, that judgment, being tacit and individual, does not lend itself to propositional formulation.

Trust can also relate to organizations and industries. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer looked at the trust theory and trust between organizations [19]. In analyzing trust, the authors sought to answer four questions: whether scholars can agree on the meaning of trust, if researchers are viewing trust statistically, if the status of trust changes across disciplines, and whether the levels of analysis also change. They found that trust’s “bandwidth” – where the line between trust and distrust is drawn – can vary over time. It was also noted that trust has three phases: building, stability, and dissolution. Focusing on a single industry, Earl and Siegrist examined the relationships between trust, fairness, and cooperation within two environmental risk management contexts [20]. The first context focused on high personal moral importance, while the second focused on low moral importance. Three factors were manipulated: issue importance, procedural fairness, and policy outcome. The surveys’ results supported a model of the relation between trust and fairness, which suggests that the efficacy of fair procedures is highly limited. Similarly, trust can also be applied to software component adoption.

Pardue and Landry utilized Trust-TAM (Trust-Technology Acceptance Model) to test a behavioral model of software component adoption [21]. Three sets of predictive factors were found to be significant in their relationship with intention to adopt: the consumer's perception of the component producer's trustworthiness, the component's adoption-related characteristics, and the organizational reuse norms. The results further validated the addition of interpersonal and normative elements to TAM.

Relationships involving trust are not limited to face-to-face interactions: trust is also a factor in online interactions. McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar noted that consumers hesitate to conduct online transactions because they are unsure about vendor behavior or the risk of having personal information be stolen [22]. To overcome perceptions of risk and insecurity, consumers must have a certain level of trust. Addressing the issue, this study proposed and validated measures for a multidimensional model of trust in e-commerce. This model included four constructs: disposition to trust, institution-based trust, trusting beliefs, and trusting intentions. These constructs were then broken into sixteen sub-constructs. Through the use of a hypothetical, legal advice site, the authors demonstrated that trust is a multidimensional concept that uses the four constructs. Similarly, a study by Davis examined the role that the three antecedents of trust – ability, benevolence, and integrity – play in online person-to-person transactions [23]. An experiment measured the effect that each antecedent had on trust in a fully computer-mediated dyadic transaction. Factors such as user ratings were manipulated. Trust was found to be a key ingredient in this type of transaction. Being conducted in the early days of e-commerce, this study hoped to provide insight regarding trust to the developers of e-commerce websites.

Another study focusing on peer-to-peer computer-mediated transactions was conducted by Pardue, Landry, and Shaw [24]. A content analysis was conducted to identify what trustors in these transactions communicate to others regarding the trustworthiness of a trustee with whom they interacted. In analyzing an online reputation system, it was found that 61% of all feedback comments referred to the trustworthiness of the trustee. Nearly half of the comments referenced the trustee's ability, while nearly a quarter referenced the trustee's integrity. More recently, Ma analyzed interpersonal trust on online exchange platforms [25]. Images in product listings on peer-to-peer marketplaces (eBay and LetGo.com), language in profiles on sharing economy platforms (Airbnb), and networks in social groups on social networks (Facebook) were examined. It was revealed how algorithms can predict interpersonal trust in various contexts. For example, on peer-to-peer marketplaces, high-quality images were seen as more trustworthy than stock imagery. The author suggested that future research should utilize the "networked trust" framework to study online interpersonal trust; this framework has three focuses: cues in Computer-Mediated Communication, embeddedness in social networks, and increasing mediation by algorithms.

Some studies focusing on online trust take a specific look at social networks [26], [27]. One such study by Claybaugh and Haseman investigated individual level and network level trust on LinkedIn [26]. Data was collected using an online survey, and the findings revealed that the intention to trust a new connection (i.e., add someone to the network) was directly influenced by the user's disposition to trust, as well as the trust belief between them and their most recent connection. However, trust in LinkedIn had no

influence. The proposed model used the same four constructs as McKnight, Choudhury, and Kacmar, as well as positive prior experience and privacy concern [22].

Meanwhile, Chang, Liu, and Shen compared trust factors between Facebook and LinkedIn [27]. Through interviewing subject domain experts, the relationships between constructs were investigated. The examined constructs were effort expectancy, social influence, privacy concern, perceived risk, trust, and continuance intention. They found that trust in a social network was mainly influenced by effort expectancy, social influence, and perceived risk. However, the strength of these impacts differed between LinkedIn and Facebook users, as these users might have different priorities, such as social reputation or security compliance.

Finally, while the current literature review has provided a general view of trust and risk, other literature reviews offer a more in-depth look into trust. One review by Earle focused on trust in risk management [28]. The review described the consensus view of trust and compared various trust models to the consensus approach. This consensus defined two conceptualizations of trust. Relational trust, or trust, is the relationship between a trustor and a trustee. Calculative trust, or confidence, is based on the trustee's past behavior, as well as constraints on future behavior. The author found that the majority of risk management studies were at least partly consistent with the consensus view of trust. A more recent review by Siegrist examined trust and risk perception [29]. Siegrist noted that many risk perception and hazard acceptance studies included trust as an explanatory variable. However, trust's importance has often been questioned. Siegrist's review seeks to answer whether trust is crucial, as well as what form of trust people rely on in a certain situation. Various trust models were discussed, as well as the

relationship between trust and affect heuristics. The author found that trust's importance varies by respondent group and hazard type.

2.2 Social Networks in the Hiring Process

2.2.1 Individual Users

Since its inception, social networking has become increasingly popular, making its way into various parts of users' lives, including the hiring process. The Uses and Gratification Theory (UGT), published by Blumler and Katz, attempts to explain why people choose a particular media to meet their goals [30]–[32]. Basak and Calisir utilized this theory to explore the usage of LinkedIn by job applicants in Turkey [30]. They utilized a two-stage survey approach and found several factors that contributed to use: self-promotion, group activities, jobs and job activities, finding old and new friends, follow up, profile viewer data, and professional networking. UGT was also used by Florenthal, who explored college students' motivations for joining LinkedIn, as well as what inhibits them from fully utilizing the site [31]. The goal was to determine what barriers lead to this stopped usage. Through surveying undergraduate business students, four uses and gratifications categories were determined. The first three categories – interpersonal communication, online identity, and information – can be applied to more generic social networks. The fourth category, career development, is specific to LinkedIn. The main barriers to LinkedIn adoption were the perception that LinkedIn should not be used until after graduation, along with ignorance of the network. Knowledge that recruiters utilize the site further motivated students to have an active account.

Brewer utilized UGT to analyze the influence LinkedIn gratifications have on how U.S. adults utilize the website [33]. Adults 25 and older were surveyed to exclude college students and instead focus on professional usage. Three gratification factors were found: jobs and job affairs, social aspects of employment, and finding old and new friends. The social aspect of employment was closely related to attitudes toward LinkedIn and site usage. The researchers found this social focus to be surprising, as LinkedIn is typically associated with career-oriented usage.

As was shown with the uses and gratification papers, searching for jobs is a driving factor for LinkedIn usage. Buettner investigated users' job search behavior by surveying German working professionals, focusing on the effect that the number of LinkedIn connections has on job search success [34]. By adding the number of contacts to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2), predictive quality greatly increased. However, it was found that there is a negative relationship between job search success and the number of contacts, leading the researchers to question the value of professional social networks. While Buettner looked at the job search, Sender and Korzynski analyzed what factors motivate a user to conduct a job search [34], [35]. Namely, they investigated whether a peer's career advancement updates on a professional social network increases an individual's likelihood to begin a job search. By combining individuals' survey data with a recruiting agency's data, a relationship between career advancement updates and job searches was found. This relationship was stronger for employees with higher perceived employability and those who were more embedded within their organization.

Johnson and Leo utilized social-cognitive theory and self-regulation theory to determine the advantages and disadvantages of using LinkedIn to conduct a job search [36]. By studying two data sets, it was found that the use of LinkedIn in the job search leads to ego depletion, which in turn hurts job search success. Furthermore, an increase in job search behavior on LinkedIn worsened job search self-efficacy. In order to have a successful job search on LinkedIn, it is beneficial to follow social media marketing strategies, such as those defined by McCabe [37]. This paper touts the benefits of using social media as a job search and career advancement tool. The author developed the Social Media Job Search Cycle and the Social Media Job Search Model to provide college students with a model they can use for personal branding and career advancement.

The benefits of professional social media was further examined by Davis, Wolff, Forret, and Sullivan, who focused on the usage and career benefits of LinkedIn [38]. They surveyed graduate business students, a subset of which allowed the researchers access to their LinkedIn profiles. A model was developed that revealed the influence of networking ability and site usage (i.e., frequency of usage and number of contacts) on career benefits, such as career sponsorship. The frequency of usage had a greater impact on career benefits than the number of contacts. LinkedIn contacts can also provide recommendations, which Rui reveals work differently on the site than in traditional settings [39]. The expectedness and valence, or intrinsic attractiveness/goodness, of recommendations that violate traditional warranting principles was measured. Experimental results showed that recommendations from former supervisors were viewed more positively than those from former subordinates. In addition, nonreciprocal

recommendations had a higher valence than reciprocal recommendations, although both were equally expected.

Highlighting LinkedIn's influence, papers have studied the use of the social networking site in classroom settings. One exercise by Peterson and Dover had students create profiles, make connections, join groups, post comments, and obtain recommendations [40]. The students were successful, exceeding the required mandates, as well as securing job offers. This success was credited to the students being "findable" on professional social media. An analysis of student profiles by Slone and Gaffney found that students failed to complete their profiles, leaving out information that would improve credibility [41]. In the subsequent semester, students were provided real profiles and were required to narrow a list of fifty applicants to five interviewees. The group discussion gave students an opportunity to reflect on a profile's positive and negative traits. It was recommended that class time be set aside to guide students on profile creation, with an emphasis on the attributes of successful professional profiles.

2.2.2 Individuals and Organizations

While many of the studies analyzing LinkedIn usage focus exclusively on individual users or an entire organization, there is a small subset of papers that bridge the gap between the two groups. This research is often conducted via surveys. Subhani, Joseph, Osman, and Hasan examined employers' and prospective candidates' perspectives on using LinkedIn for recruitment and selection [42]. Respondents were from the Karachi region of Pakistan and were provided with one of two surveys, depending on their role. It was found that, while large multinational companies used

LinkedIn for recruitment and job postings, the average business was not yet using the site for these purposes.

A large multinational study by Zanella and Pais surveyed more than 17,000 job seekers and over 1,500 recruiters [43]. The survey covered using social media for professional purposes, how effective social media is in matching job seekers with open positions, and the impact of one's online reputation on recruiting. The majority of recruiters used at least one social network for recruiting, and they believed that the most attractive elements of a profile are previous work experience, prizes and awards, and any personality insights. An additional finding was that, with increased usage, LinkedIn's perceived effectiveness increases. Another set of job seekers and recruiter surveys were conducted around the same time by Nikolau [44]. This research was split into two studies conducted in Greece: the first focused on the use of social networks during the job search, while the second explored their use in the recruitment and screening processes. It was found that job seekers still chose job boards over social networks when looking for a job. Similar to Zanella and Pais's results, LinkedIn's effectiveness went up with increased usage; however, this effect is more pronounced when recruiting passive job candidates, or candidates who are not actively looking for a job [43].

2.2.3 Organizations and Human Resources

Moving away from individual users and their use of LinkedIn, there are many papers covering LinkedIn's usage by organizations and human resources departments. Archambault and Grudin conducted annual surveys between 2008 and 2011 on the use of social networking at Microsoft [45]. Their goal was to discover how the websites were used, as well as whether they could be useful for information-gathering and

organizational communication. One recruiter stated that they could not recall how they did their job without LinkedIn, revealing that human resources employees have been utilizing the site for at least a decade.

Around the same time period, Bonsón and Bednárová studied the use of LinkedIn by Eurozone companies, with a focus on how the companies manage their online practices and who their audience is [46]. The majority of surveyed companies used LinkedIn, with their target audience being current and potential employees. It was stated that reduced budgets in human resources departments have contributed to social media's increased importance in recruiting. In addition, social media can lead to the discovery of "hidden" candidates, such as those who are not currently in the job search.

In the last decade, many studies have been conducted on the use of social media in human resources management as well as the recruitment and selection of employees. Caers and Castelyns conducted a study focused on recruitment and selection using LinkedIn and Facebook in Belgium, [47]. It was found that recruiters utilized both sites to collect additional information on applicants and decide who to invite to an interview. The surveyed R&S professionals denied that profile pictures reveal personality dimensions such as agreeableness and emotional stability; however, they were able to recognize signals of maturity and extraversion. This recognition is a problem, as it can lead to selection bias. Kluemper agrees that many hiring managers utilize social networks like LinkedIn and Facebook in the acceptance or rejection of job applicants [48]. They reviewed the state of social network screening practices, noting various HR issues, such as privacy and discrimination. Furthermore, the advantages and disadvantages of

screening candidates through social networks were reviewed and a framework of best practices to incorporate into this screening process was provided.

McDonald, Damarin, Lawhorne, and Wilcox conducted an in-depth exploration of human resource professionals' online recruitment strategies [49]. Interviews were conducted with HR recruiters in the southern United States, revealing two distinct patterns. Low-level jobs with general skills were posted onto online job boards, such as Monster and CareerBuilder, making these jobs available to large audiences. On the other hand, high-level jobs with specific skills were sent to targeted passive candidates on LinkedIn. Recruiters hope that these high-level "purple squirrels" will be willing to leave their current job; meanwhile, low-level job seekers fall into the impersonal "black hole" of job boards.

Kluemper, Mitra, and Wang recognized the growing importance of social media in human resource management [50]. However, as they noted, this research was spread across a variety of literature; to remedy this, they conducted a literature review on the topic. They found that social media can be powerful if companies use it correctly, benefitting processes such as personnel selection, teambuilding, and organizational image, among others. Organizations should remember that social media can also be a liability if it is not managed effectively. A study on organizational use of LinkedIn was conducted by Chen, Lee, and Ting [51]. Their research follows the global top ten recruiting companies' LinkedIn activities from September 2016 to January 2017. These activities included articles, posts, and member response, such as likes and comments. It was concluded that the most successful companies posted two articles per day.

An analysis on the use of social media in the recruitment of young professionals in Pakistan was conducted by Chandani and Bashir [52]. The goal of the study was to answer four questions relating to four independent variables. The first variable was the perceived costs of utilizing social media, which was found to be low for many organizations. For perceived benefits, the researchers observed that the human resource professionals gathered consistent information for all candidates, making hiring fair. Regarding perceived risks, some applicant characteristics, such as political associations, are unrelated to hiring and may be observed by recruiters. Finally, for perceived opportunities, companies did well in posted new job opportunities; however, most were lacking a job portal geared toward young professionals.

A further look into the use of social networks for recruiting and selection was conducted by Villeda and McCamey [53]. They sought to answer the question “How can employers take full advantage of technology in the hiring process?” Through an analysis of peer-reviewed journals and other reliable sources, social media in the recruiting process was found to be beneficial, while its use in the selection process can introduce new challenges. Benefits to the hiring process include the ability to reach a large number of candidates, including passive candidates, as well as lower cost and time spent hiring each employee. On the other hand, legal issues, the lack of a diverse pool of candidates, and the inaccuracy of information obtained are potential pitfalls. The authors’ last recommendation was that social media should be used for recruiting job candidates, but not the final selection of who to hire.

A 2020 literature review on the influence of online professional social media in human resource management was conducted by Ruparel, Tandon, Kaur, and Islam [54].

Their review focused specifically on the use of social media in hiring processes. Social platforms and information systems' short lifecycles motivated the study; these systems are continuously innovating to further aid their users. New avenues of study were presented to researchers, while the study also aided human resource managers by providing practical insights.

Hosain and Liu analyzed papers from 2010 to 2019 that focused on the role of social media in talent search and acquisition [55]. Their main objective was to investigate the rationales behind and ways of using social media for these purposes. They found that, while social media is popular among employers, it is still being used as a secondary source, with LinkedIn being the most popular. Based on the survey, the authors provided some action recommendations and guidelines for HR professionals to use when conducting search and recruitment.

There have also been studies on the use of social networks in the hiring process of specific countries [56]–[59]. One such study by Koch, Gerber, and de Klerk focused on the recruitment process in South Africa [56]. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with recruiters across a range of industries. As is the case in other countries, South African recruiters used both traditional methods and LinkedIn. The use of Twitter and Facebook was lower than in other countries. One drawback that was found is that the volume of content produced by social media may be overwhelming to a recruiter. Meanwhile, Pavlicek and Novak utilized a qualitative case study to determine how recruiters used LinkedIn in Norway, France, and Germany [57]. It was found that companies who use LinkedIn do not post very frequently. In addition, companies did not attempt to encourage employees to regularly update their profiles. Of the three countries,

Germany had the highest adoption of LinkedIn, while it also had the lowest number of job ads. Based on their findings, the researchers believe that LinkedIn is not an essential part of sustainable recruiting, contrary to their theory. A slightly different approach was taken by Boachie-Ansah, who, while focusing on Ghana, studied multi-national companies [58].

Similar to Pavlicek and Novak, data was gathered from human resource personnel via semi-structured interviews. The interviewees' companies used social media to post job advertisements, screen candidates, and identify candidates for person-job fit. The social networking sites were used hand-in-hand with traditional recruitment and selection methods; this was especially true during the recruitment process, making social media more of a recruitment tool than a selection tool. Finally, Solomon set out to identify hiring practices used by human resource personnel in the southeastern United States [59]. Once again, semi-structured interviews with human resource professionals were conducted, with the requirement that they had used social media for at least three years to screen and select job candidates. The conceptual framework used was signaling theory. The participating organizations' documentation was also reviewed to establish what guidance the human resource employees received for using social networking sites in hiring decisions. By reviewing these hiring practices, the researcher hoped to increase knowledge on the use of social media for hiring and to prevent any discrimination or legal concerns.

2.2.4 Profile Analysis

When referencing a job candidate's LinkedIn profile, there are certain elements that recruiters find more useful than others. Zide, Elman, and Shahani-Denning conducted a two-phase study to identify the sections of a LinkedIn profile that human resource professionals focus on the most [60]. In the first phase, the researchers interviewed recruiters to determine how they used LinkedIn and to establish a list of twenty-one variables. These variables represent the parts of a profile referenced in recruiting. In the second phase, LinkedIn profiles from three industries – HR, sales/marketing, and industrial/organizational (I/O) psychology – were compared to phase one's list of variables. For ten of the variables, there were significant differences in self-presentation across the three groups. There were also several gender differences. Of the three groups, sales/marketing professionals tended to have the most complete profiles, while men were more likely to provide personal information than women. Shahani-Denning, Patel, and Zide replicated this study [61]. While the prior study examined the use of LinkedIn within the United States, this study focuses on India. Utilizing the same methodology, they surveyed India-based hiring professionals to establish a smaller list of twelve profile variables. These variables were compared to 200 profiles across two industries: HR and sales or marketing (SM). Similar to the original study, there were significant differences between the two groups' self-presentation. Furthermore, it increased support for the twelve variables that were used in both studies.

Another study to examine self-presentation and hiring recommendations was conducted by Chiang and Suen [62]. It investigated how a job candidate's self-presentation on LinkedIn affects recruiters' hiring recommendations, as well as what

categories of self-presentation contribute most to fit perceptions for obtaining a recommendation. The researchers identified fourteen profile sections that human resource employees might analyze. Recruiters were asked to review potential candidates' LinkedIn profiles and respond to questions concerning the credibility and quality of self-presentations, as well as fit perceptions and hiring recommendations. It was found that recruiters reference specific self-presentation categories to make inferences about person-job fit and person-organization fit. This in turn predicts a recruiter's intentions to recommend a job candidate. The key features of self-presentation that a recruiter might analyze are the profile summary, work experience, and educational background.

A similar experiment was organized by del Cerro, Rodríguez, Vidal, Escabrós, and Oberst [63]. Within the experiment, they conducted two studies focusing on LinkedIn self-presentation and employability. The first study determined which profile categories users and observers find most useful when assessing a LinkedIn profile. Professional and non-professional observers relied on similar categories, but recruiters were more suspicious of profiles. The authors concluded that candidates were highly aware of how they should present themselves. The second study looked at whether certain gender roles were predictors of perceived employability, in addition to personality, gender, and competencies. The two roles were instrumentality (traditional masculinity) and expressiveness (traditional femininity). It resulted that competencies, followed by expressiveness, were the strongest predictors.

As is expected, career coaches have also provided insight into which parts of a LinkedIn profile recruiters find most important. One example by Brooks states that successful profiles have three key characteristics [64]. First, a professional profile picture,

rather than a casual photo is essential. Photos in general are important to a successful profile, as profiles with photos receive 21 times more views and appear in more search results. Second, longer profiles perform better than shorter profiles. A thorough, complete profile shows a user who is more conscientious. Third, the number and types of connections are important. Users must have relevant connections that align with their interests.

Another branch of research centered around LinkedIn focuses on impression management and the perception of personality. Paliszkievicz and Madra-Sawicka explained that relationships are increasingly being initiated and maintained via websites, making online impression management progressively more important [65]. The authors defined impression management as a “conscious process in which people attempt to influence the perceptions of their image”. This is done by managing the information presented on social media, and this presentation can be the key to success or failure. Bremner and Phung examined the rhetorical structure of professional resume writers’ LinkedIn summaries [66]. They analyzed the profiles of 50 professionals in the United States. They found that the LinkedIn summary shares much in common with a traditional job application letter. All or nearly all of the profiles identified a target market and established credentials. A new item that the profiles had was personal branding. However, the summaries did not follow a set organizational structure.

Van de Ven, Bogaert, Serlies, Brandt, and Denissen conducted an experiment on personality perception based on LinkedIn profiles [67]. Across two studies, raters inferred personality traits from LinkedIn profiles; these traits were the Big Five and self-presentation. The authors then compared the results to self-rated personality assessments

conducted by the profile owner. The results revealed that using LinkedIn profile information allowed for better inferences of self-presentation and extraversion. While these job-related profiles contain a relatively standard set of information, they may “leak” information about the owner’s personality. Another study directed by Garcia et al. analyzed self-description on LinkedIn [68]. Quantitative semantics were used to identify clusters of words on a profile. Some of the clusters discriminated between work and friend conditions (e.g., flexible vs. caring), while others identified users with high and low education (e.g., analytical vs. messy). While the original study was conducted in Swedish, the authors identified the English equivalent of the ten most common words from each cluster.

Moving away from text analysis, Tifferet and Vilnai-Yavertz studied visual self-presentation in LinkedIn portraits [69]. The authors noted a lack of research on the topic, leading to only non-academic recommendations for how a portrait should appear. Common features on LinkedIn portraits and whether they adhere to non-academic recommendations were identified. In addition, the authors hypothesized that LinkedIn portraits, as well as other profile features, would reveal gender and occupational differences. The portraits did have common features and typically followed online recommendations. While no occupational differences were detected, women were more likely to signal emotion, and men were more likely to signal status. A more specific study regarding self-presentation was conducted by Kuzior [70]. It focused on the self-presentation of Polish football managers on LinkedIn. Four dimensions of self-presentation were explored: profile completeness, profile attractiveness, network-embeddedness, and activity. After analyzing over 300 profiles, it was found that

managers only use LinkedIn to build a professional brand in an extremely limited, mostly static way. Furthermore, the managers with the best self-presentation worked in the Polish Football Association and had more professional experience. There were only slight differences between men and women.

While LinkedIn has become a common selection tool for hiring managers to use, not much is known regarding whether LinkedIn meets established selection criteria, such as validity, reliability, and legality. Through two studies discussed in a single paper, Roulin and Levashina addressed these shortcomings [71]. The first study revealed that raters were consistent when assessing applicant skill, personality, and cognitive ability. Initial ratings matched ratings done a year later, and hiring recommendations were positively associated with career success indicators. Longer profiles, with a picture and more connections, received higher ratings. The second study showed that breaking a profile up and conducting an itemized assessment is more effective than a single global assessment. A final study that analyzed personality in LinkedIn profiles was orchestrated by Aguado, Andrés, García-Izquierdo, and Rodríguez [72]. The authors noted that, in addition to selection, recruiters use LinkedIn to make inferences about a candidate's personality. They studied the profiles of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) employees to answer questions regarding an underlying information structure, a relationship between profile appearance and professional performance, and profile design variation. Profile variance came down to four factors: breadth of professional experience, breadth of interaction on LinkedIn (social capital), interest in updating knowledge, and breadth of nonprofessional information. The factors had a strong influence on absenteeism, productivity, and potential for professional development.

Research has also been conducted on deception in LinkedIn profiles, such as one study by Guillory and Hancock [73]. It was hypothesized that, because claims on LinkedIn are public, deception patterns should be different than in traditional resumes. In a between-subjects experiment, subjects created a resume in one of three environments: traditional (offline), private LinkedIn, or public LinkedIn. The results showed that, while the frequency of deception on LinkedIn was the same, the kinds of deception were different. LinkedIn resumes were less deceptive about the information that employers care the most about, such as work experience, but were more deceptive about hobbies and interests.

Finally, a study by Clemente-Mediavilla and Antolín-Prieto analyzed LinkedIn job listings and some confusion around them [74]. The research focused on job ads geared toward Advertising graduates in Spain. The offer information was placed into categories such as type of contract and required skills. There was a degree of confusion on the companies' part, as there was not a clear line between an Advertising graduate's skills and a Fine Arts, Marketing, or Business Administration graduate's skills. The analysis also highlighted the changes that the digital age has had on the profiles and professional skills of graduates compared to the skills in demand in the labor market.

2.2.5 Automation

The final section of this literature review looks at attempts to automate the evaluation of LinkedIn profiles. First, Faliagka et al. proposed a new approach for evaluating job applicants in an online recruitment system, utilizing machine learning to rank candidates, as well as semantic matching techniques [75]. Their method pulls objective criteria from the candidate's LinkedIn profile. The profile data is then

compared semantically to the job's prerequisites. Personality characteristics can also be inferred from blog posts. The system performed consistently with human recruiters, making it a viable alternative. Lai et al. proposed a similar system known as CareerMapper, the automated resume evaluation tool [76]. However, rather than recommending a job candidate, this system scans LinkedIn profiles to detect errors. These profiles are often the first source of information about a candidate that a recruiter sees, and they must be error free and well-organized.

Chala, Ansari, Fathi, and Tijdens developed a different type of system that did not specifically focus on LinkedIn [77]. The authors suggested a framework of automatic bidirectional matching between job seekers and employers. The system determines the semantic similarity between a job seeker's skills and qualifications and an employer's job listing. As it exists in Chala et al.'s paper, the system is designed to be integrated into various recruitment systems.

The final system, created by Yan et al., automates social skill validation on LinkedIn [78]. To provide the best opportunities for members, LinkedIn must understand the member's skill set; however, estimating skill expertise can be challenging. The Social Skill Validation framework collects validations for members' skill expertise, with millions of user-skill pairs. To ensure objectiveness, these signals are collected in an anonymous way.

2.3 Conclusion

This literature review covered two areas of research. In examining trust, several trust models, the relationship between trust and risk, and trust in various forms of relationships were discussed. In studying the use of social networks in hiring, the ways in which applicants, organizations, and human resources employees utilize LinkedIn were described. In addition, the parts of a LinkedIn profile that are most important to recruiters were determined.

While there have been published studies that connect the trust model to LinkedIn, none of these papers address the current study's research focus – that is, the influence of a LinkedIn profile's social network on a hiring manager's perception of the candidate's trustworthiness. Utilizing the knowledge gained in this literature review, this study aims to combine the two topic areas and address the research question at hand. Most notably, this study will benefit from previous listings of what profile sections recruiters find most useful, as well as examples of the trust model's various applications.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Research Model

Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman described trust as a dyadic relationship: one that is between a trusting party (the trustor) and a party to be trusted (the trustee) [4]. This trust model is appropriate for hiring recommendations, as there are two parties involved: the hiring manager who makes the recommendation and the job candidate who receives the recommendation. The current study alters some of the existing trust model variables' definitions to reflect a hiring scenario. In addition, one variable, network association bias, is added to the model. In this study, network association bias is defined as the hiring manager's bias based on positive and negative associations with the job candidate's network. A hiring manager might view a job candidate's LinkedIn network and find that they have many positive connections, such as respected high-ranking members of the hiring company. Contrarily, the job candidate might be connected with individuals or companies that are viewed negatively by the hiring manager, such as previous employees who left to work for a competitor. Network association bias is believed to influence how a hiring manager views a candidate's trustworthiness.

Based on the results of the literature review, it was determined that Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's model of trust would be modified for use in the current study [4].

Figure 1 presents the modified trust model that will be used in this study. Table 1 lists and defines the variables contained within the model. With the exception of network association bias, each definition was adapted from Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman's original definitions [4]. Network association bias is original to this study.

Table 1. Variables in Modified Trust Model for a Relationship Between a Hiring Manager and a Job Applicant.

Variable	Definition
Network Association Bias	Hiring manager's bias based on positive/negative associations with the job candidate's network.
Ability	Job candidate's competence in the required skillset for the job opening.
Benevolence	Perception that the job candidate has a positive orientation toward the hiring manager.
Integrity	Hiring manager's belief that the job candidate adheres to a set of principles that the hiring manager finds acceptable.
Trustor's Propensity	Generalized expectation about the trustworthiness of others.
Trust	Willingness of the hiring manager to be vulnerable to the actions of the job candidate.
Perceived Risk	Factors outside the relationship that make the decision to trust significant and uncertain.
Risk Taking in Relationship	Measured in terms of the hiring manager's actual behavior, rather than willingness to engage in behavior.
Outcomes	The results of the hiring recommendation, as they reflect the hiring manager's due diligence, judgement, and decision.

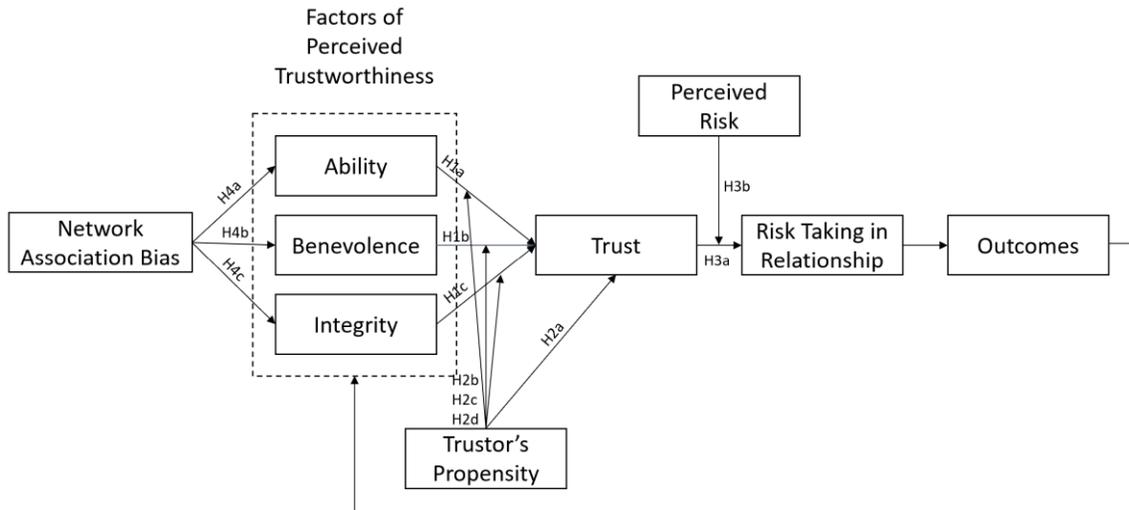


Figure 1. Modified Trust Model for a Relationship Between a Hiring Manager and a Job Applicant.

3.2 Hypotheses

Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman’s model of trust states that trustworthiness is based on the three antecedents of trust: ability, benevolence, and integrity [4]. In this study’s context, if a hiring manager finds a job candidate to be trustworthy, they will be more likely to recommend the candidate for a job opening. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman refer to ability as the skills, competencies, and characteristics that provide an individual with a level of influence in a specific domain [4]. For this study, the “specific domain” is the job opening; therefore, ability is a job candidate’s competence in the required skillset for the job opening. Meanwhile, benevolence is the level of good that a trustee is believed to want to do for the trustor [4]. With regards to a hiring scenario, benevolence is the perception that the job candidate has a positive orientation toward the hiring manager. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman noted that high benevolence in a relationship is inverse to

the motivation to lie [4]. Therefore, in this scenario, benevolence is measured as how willing the job applicant is to lie to the hiring manager, that is, to misrepresent themselves. The more likely a candidate is to lie, the less benevolence they are displaying toward the hiring manager. Finally, integrity represents the trustor's assessment of how closely the trustee adheres to a set of principles that the trustor deems acceptable [23]. For this study, this definition remains consistent, with hiring manager being used in the place of trustor and job candidate being used in the place of trustee. With these definitions in mind, this study aims to measure the influence each antecedent has on a hiring manager's level of trust in a job candidate. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1a: Perceived ability will have a positive effect on a hiring manager's level of trust when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

H1b: Perceived benevolence will have a positive effect on a hiring manager's level of trust when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

H1c: Perceived integrity will have a positive effect on a hiring manager's level of trust when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

The trustors' propensity to trust refers to their generalized expectation about the trustworthiness of others [4]. According to the trust model, it is believed that the trustor's propensity has a direct influence on the likelihood to trust, as well the relationship between the three antecedents of trust and the likelihood to trust. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H2a: The hiring manager's propensity to trust will have a positive effect on their level of trust when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

H2b: The hiring manager's propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables ability and trust.

H2c: The hiring manager's propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables benevolence and trust.

H2d: The hiring manager's propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables integrity and trust.

Once a level of trust is established, the hiring manager must choose whether to recommend the job candidate for the position. This relationship has one moderating variable: perceived risk. In this study, perceived risk is defined as factors outside the relationship that make the decision to trust significant and uncertain [4]. This risk will be measured as the level of the job opening. A high-level job, such as a CEO, would come with a higher perceived risk. Compared to standard entry-level jobs, there are less people with the skills for executive positions, thus making the jobs harder to fill. In addition, high-level positions are more expensive to fill. While replacing a midrange position costs about twenty percent of the annual salary, replacing an executive position can cost up to 213 percent of the annual salary [79]. Once trust is established, the level of perceived risk may affect whether the trustor takes a risk in the relationship. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3a: The hiring manager's level of trust will have a positive effect on their likelihood to recommend a job candidate.

H3b: The hiring manager's level of perceived risk will inversely affect the relationship between the variables trust and risk taking in relationship.

Finally, one new variable was added to the trust model for this study. The new variable, network association bias, refers to any positive or negative biases that the hiring manager may have based on the job candidate's network. This variable serves as an antecedent to the three factors of perceived trustworthiness. This usage is similar to a trust model presented by Claybaugh and Haseman [26]. In their model, the trust that users felt toward their previous LinkedIn connections affected how likely they were to trust new connections. In both the current study and Claybaugh and Haseman's study, users rely on previous interactions or knowledge of others to make trusting decisions. Further supporting this idea is Pachur, Hertwig, and Steinmann's use of availability-by-recall [15]. In their study, people utilized knowledge of their social networks to determine a specific risk. Similarly, in the current study, hiring managers rely on their knowledge of a job applicant's network to make judgments about the applicant. Finally, similar to outcomes in the original trust model, network association bias may affect the perception of ability, benevolence, and/or integrity, depending on the situation [4]. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H4a: The hiring manager's level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate's level of ability when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

H4b: The hiring manager's level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate's level of benevolence when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

H4c: The hiring manager's level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate's level of integrity when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

In this research model, it is proposed that trust is a key factor in whether a hiring manager decides to recommend a job candidate when the candidate has been viewed through a business-focused social network. This study will empirically test the model of trust in this context. The details of this experiment are covered in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY

This dissertation examined the influence of the knowledge of a candidate's social network on a hiring manager's perception of a job candidate's trustworthiness when the job candidate was viewed through a business-focused social network. Data was collected via a web-based survey with an experimental manipulation. The remainder of this chapter discusses the web-based survey, the participants and their task, manipulation, measurements and control variables, and data analysis.

4.1 Measurements

To measure the proposed hypotheses, the following measures were developed.

Propensity to Trust: Used a measure developed by Frazier, Johnson, and Fainshmidt [80].

Perceived Risk: Was based on items developed by Featherman and Pavlou [81]. The

statements were updated to reflect LinkedIn, and the statements related to

Financial, Psychological, and Social Risk were excluded.

Social Attraction: Used a scale created by Escalas and Bettman [82]. The statements were

updated to reflect an individual, rather than a group.

Perceptions of Antecedents of Trust / Trust: Was based on a scale created by Mayer and

Davis and modified by Davis [23], [83].

Hiring Recommendation: Used a measure developed by Tsai, Chen, and Chiu and updated by Chiang and Suen [62], [84].

4.2 Web-based Survey

Participants were emailed the web-based survey's URL. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix H. The first page displayed a consent form, along with an introduction to the survey and general instructions. At the bottom of the page, the participant was asked whether they consented to participate in the survey. If "No" was selected, they were taken to the survey's exit page. The participant was unable to back up into the survey. If "Yes" was selected, the participant was taken to the next step.

The first set of questions concerned demographics, such as gender and age. In addition, work-related questions focused on company size, job title, and experience. These questions were included to provide context to the survey data and to better describe survey participants [85]. It has been found that placing demographic questions at the beginning of a survey increases the response rate for demographic items, while not affecting the response rate for non-demographic items [86].

For the second set of questions, the participant was presented statements relating to propensity to trust. Propensity to trust is context independent and could be asked about at any point in the study. For this survey, the participant's propensity to trust was determined before any contextual information was presented. Following this, the participant was asked to answer questions regarding the color silver. This set of questions did not relate to the content of the survey and was used as a marker variable.

On the next page, the participant responded to statements concerning the perceived risk of using LinkedIn. It was assumed that, having careers in human resources, participants would be familiar enough with LinkedIn to answer these questions. The perceived risk of using LinkedIn would be the same regardless of the job candidate because all job candidates were applying for the same opening. Therefore, this perception was measured before any information regarding the job candidates and their first-degree connection was given. The following screen gave instructions relevant to the two scenarios that would follow.

To start the first scenario, the participant was presented with a mock profile for a job candidate. This profile resembled a LinkedIn profile, as the participant was told that they found the job candidate while browsing LinkedIn. In addition, a description of one of the job candidate's first-degree connections was shown. The participant was instructed to assume they knew this connection, and the description presented the information they knew about the connection. For this first scenario, each participant was randomly assigned a first-degree connection, with varying levels for the benevolence and integrity antecedents of trust. One connection would always have a high level of ability, while the other would have a low level of ability; it was random as to which connection was shown first. This helped to distinguish between the two scenarios and make them more believable, avoiding repetition. The experimental manipulation is described in a later section. On the same page, the participant responded to statements regarding the first-degree connection's level of social attraction. This was believed to influence how trustworthy the job candidate appeared in a variable known as network association bias. Finally, the participant was asked to respond to statements concerning the job candidate.

These statements covered the antecedents of trust (ability, benevolence, and integrity), trust, and overall hiring recommendation. Participants worked through a task's processes; therefore, questions were asked in that order.

The following screen was set up the same as the prior screen. The mock LinkedIn profile was for a different job candidate, with a similar set of skills and experience. A different first-degree connection was randomly shown as well. The main difference between the two scenarios was that the second pool of first-degree connections had a low level of ability, while the first scenario's pool had a high level of ability. When the participant had answered the questions regarding the scenario, they clicked the "Next" button and continued to the survey's final page. A submission confirmation was given, and the participants were thanked for their time.

4.3 Task

For their task, participants analyzed a job candidate's LinkedIn profile as well as read a description of one of the candidate's first-degree connections. The participant then decided whether to recommend the job candidate for hire. Making hiring recommendations is a fundamental part of the participants' jobs; therefore, this is an appropriate task for this study. Furthermore, viewing job candidates through an online social network is becoming increasingly common [54], [55]. Beyond having a background as a human resources recruiter, participants did not require any special skills or knowledge to complete this task.

4.4 Participants

The data for this study was collected from a purposive sample of human resources and recruiting professionals in the United States. Qualtrics' research services were utilized to gather participants, as well as perform an initial data cleansing [87]. Interested participants were emailed an anonymous URL to the online survey. The survey was administered at the participants' convenience via the Qualtrics survey website. Of the 493 participants given the URL, 324 successfully completed the survey. A further 15 participants were removed due to having irrelevant job titles, resulting in 309 usable responses. The response rate was 65.72 %. Demographic details are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Participant Demographics for a Web-Based Survey.

	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	118	38.2%
Female	191	61.8%
Age		
24 or younger	25	8.1%
25 – 34	93	30.1%
35 – 44	111	35.9%
45 – 54	62	20.1%
55 or above	18	5.8%
Company Size		
Small (< 100 employees)	39	12.6%
Midsize (100 – 999 employees)	147	47.6%
Large (> 1000 employees)	123	39.8%
Years of Experience		
< 5 years	46	14.9%
5 – 10 years	129	41.7%
11 – 15 years	83	26.9%
16 – 20 years	38	12.3%
More than 20 years	13	4.2%

n=309

4.5 Manipulation

The manipulation for this study was the levels of the three antecedents of trust – ability, benevolence, and integrity – for the first-degree connections. Eight scenarios were created by manipulating the antecedents, and participants were randomly assigned two of the scenarios (see Table 3). Once the list of participants was finalized, the participants

were randomly assigned two of the eight scenarios. The survey software was programmed so that the scenarios would have a roughly equal number of participants. The first scenario pulled from the four “high ability” combinations, while the second scenario pulled from the four “low ability” combinations. As shown in Table 3, a plus sign (+) indicates a high level for the antecedent; a minus sign (-) indicates a low level for the antecedent. For example, an A+ connection would be described as someone having thirteen years of experience as a project manager, a Project Management Institute certification, and currently works at a Fortune 500 company.

Table 3. Combinations of the Antecedents of Trust.

	Ability (A)	Benevolence (B)	Integrity (I)	Label
Scenario 1	+	+	+	HHH
	+	+	-	HHL
	+	-	-	HLL
	+	-	+	HLH
Scenario 2	-	-	-	LLL
	-	-	+	LLH
	-	+	+	LHH
	-	+	-	LHL

The combination of antecedents was related to a first-degree connection of the job candidate. Participants were told that they knew the first-degree connection, but they did not have a close, personal relationship. Their knowledge of the connection was presented in a paragraph form. The connection’s name differed between Scenario 1 and Scenario 2.

To limit any connotational influence the name might have, both names were male names generated via a common English name generator.

In addition to the first-degree connection and its description, participants viewed two LinkedIn profiles. The manipulation between these profiles was limited, as the focus was on the first-degree connection. Both profiles featured a female project manager with two years of experience at a large transportation manufacturing company. The experience section of the profiles was similarly written, and both job candidates graduated from the same university. As was the case with the first-degree connections, the job candidates' names were generated using a common English name generator.

4.6 Manipulation Check

Common method bias (CMB) refers to false correlations occurring in a dataset due to a systematic error [88]. This can manifest when a common method is used to measure all items in a survey instrument. Because the present study includes the collection of measurement items using a common data collection mechanism, common method bias is a potential area of concern. The presence of CMB indicates that the common method used is contributing to some of the correlations present in latent variables. Common method bias can severely impair data interpretation, as researchers who detect CMB are unable to state that observed correlations are fully attributable to the underlying relationships in the studied phenomenon. To determine the presence or absence of CMB, this survey utilized two types of items: marker variables and attention factors.

The use of a marker variable to combat CMB was suggested by Richardson, Simmering, and Sturman and was based on the research of Lindell and Whitney [89], [90]. The goal was to use a marker variable that captured the influence of the survey methods and measurement items that created common method variance. To be effective, the marker variable had to be in the same or similar format to the rest of the items (e.g., on a 7-point Likert scale) and theoretically unrelated to the study constructs. If the marker variable did not correlate with any of the other constructs or items in the study, it is indicative of the absence of CMB. The four items included in the survey were adapted from the attitude towards a particular color scale by Miller and Chiodo [91]. The original items asked the respondents to give their opinion toward the color blue. The color was changed to silver, rather than blue, so it would not skew the results if a high percentage of males completed the study [92].

The purpose of an attention factor item is to determine if the respondent read the survey items to which he or she was responding [93]. Embedded instructed-response items were used for the attention factor. This type of attention factor item asked respondents to select a pre-determined answer (e.g., Please select "Agree"). Kung et al. describe this method as being a low cost and low effort way to detect respondent inattention without sacrificing validity. The attention factor questions followed the format of the surrounding items (e.g., on a 7-point Likert scale) and were dispersed throughout the survey. Four of these items were included, with two in the general section and one in each of the two scenario sections. These items functioned as a method to eliminate from the dataset any respondents who were not paying sufficient attention when answering the questions.

4.7 Control Variables

The goal of this study was to determine the influence of a job candidate's social network on a hiring manager's perception of the trustworthiness of a job candidate – measured as ability, integrity, and benevolence – and the manager's subsequent willingness to risk a positive recommendation, when filtering job candidates through a business-focused social network. The possible influence of a first-degree connection on the job candidate's trustworthiness was controlled for by manipulating the first-degree connection's ability, benevolence, and integrity.

4.8 Data Analysis

Three iterations of an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were conducted in SPSS version 28 to assess the survey instrument items' factor structures [94]. A Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis was then conducted in RStudio using the lavaan latent variable modeling package [95]. The analysis of the collected data is discussed in Chapter V.

4.9 Pilot Study

A face validity check was performed on the two LinkedIn profiles. Three human resources experts were consulted to ensure that the profiles were detailed enough for the participants to perform their task and would provide adequate variance in the data. After a slight modification, the profiles were approved.

CHAPTER V

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1 EFA Results

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted in SPSS version 28 to assess the survey instrument items' factor structures [94]. Because the model contained factors that are known to correlate, a Promax rotation with Kaiser normalization was used for the principal component analysis. Extracted components were required to have an eigenvalue over one. Any factor loadings below 0.40 were eliminated [96].

The initial EFA iteration was conducted on the four Propensity to Trust items, five Performance Risk items, three Privacy Risk items, three Time Risk items, five Overall Risk items, three Social Attraction items, six Ability items, five Benevolence items, six Integrity items, four Trust items, three Hireability items, and the four marker variables (n=309). Social Attraction, Ability, Benevolence, Integrity, Trust, and Hireability were doubled for the two scenarios. Eleven components were identified. It was observed that Trust and Hireability were loading across several components. In addition, Performance Risk, Privacy Risk, Time Risk, and Overall Risk loaded as a single component. Because of this, Risk and Risk Taking in Relationship (represented by Hireability in this study) were eliminated from the model. At this point, Trust was not removed from the model, but it was noted to be potentially problematic.

An additional issue with the Trust scale is that half of its questions are reverse-scored. Traditionally, reverse-scored questions were used to prevent complacency in question answering [97]. However, these questions can be "cognitively burdensome" and lead to increased respondent fatigue and errors [97]. In addition, van Sonderen, Sanderman, and Coyne found that incorporating reverse-worded items did not prevent response bias [98]. Rather, the scores became contaminated by confusion and inattentiveness. The conclusion was that it is better to have shorter scales with no reversed questions. For these reasons, the reverse-scored questions in the Trust scale were removed from the data analysis.

A second iteration of EFA was conducted on the four Propensity to Trust items, three Social Attraction items, six Ability items, five Benevolence items, six Integrity items, the two non-reverse-scored Trust items, and the four marker variables (n=309). In this iteration, the two scenarios were analyzed separately. For both Scenarios 1 and 2, there were issues with Integrity and Trust cross loading with other factors. As a result of this analysis, Integrity and Trust were dropped from the model, as they were not able to load on their own unique factors.

A third and final EFA iteration was conducted on the four Propensity to Trust items, three Social Attraction items, six Ability items, five Benevolence items, and the four marker variables (n=309). Once again, the two scenarios were analyzed separately. Scenario 1 resulted in five clearly defined factors, explaining 71.953% of the variance. Meanwhile, Scenario 2 only contained four factors, with Ability and Benevolence loading together. Because of this, it was decided that only Scenario 1 would be analyzed

in the Structural Equation Modeling phase. The pattern matrix for the final solution is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Final EFA Results (Scenario 1).

	1	2	3	4	5
SocialAttraction1					0.893
SocialAttraction2					0.953
SocialAttraction3					0.905
PropToTrust1				0.842	
PropToTrust2				0.774	
PropToTrust3				0.802	
PropToTrust4				0.840	
Ability1	0.842				
Ability2	0.799				
Ability3	0.820				
Ability4	0.877				
Ability5	0.802				
Ability6	0.892				
Benevolence1		0.835			
Benevolence2		0.773			
Benevolence3		0.799			
Benevolence4		0.776			
Benevolence5		0.620			
Marker1			0.847		
Marker2			0.865		
Marker3			0.816		
Marker4			0.786		

Notes. EFA = Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Weighted scores were computed for Social Attraction, Propensity to Trust, Ability, Benevolence, and the marker variables using the final EFA factor results for Scenario 1. Table 5 presents the means, standard deviations, Cronbach's alphas, square root of the average variance extracted (AVE), and intercorrelations among the variables included in the final model.

Table 5. Correlation Matrix for Weighted Variables.

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Cronbach's α	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Social Attraction	4.70	1.70	0.92	0.89				
2. Propensity to Trust	5.50	1.10	0.83	0.18	0.75			
3. Ability	5.40	1.00	0.92	0.48	0.25	0.81		
4. Benevolence	5.00	1.10	0.87	0.56	0.29	0.78	0.76	
5. Marker Variable	4.50	1.40	0.86	0.18	0.29	0.09	0.20	0.78

Notes. Values on the diagonal are the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE).

5.2 Updated Model and Hypotheses

Due to the EFA results, Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b concerning Trust, Perceived Risk, and Risk Taking in Relationship are untestable. While these hypotheses were removed, a new hypothesis concerning Propensity to Trust was added to the model. Figure 2 presents the updated model used in the SEM analysis.

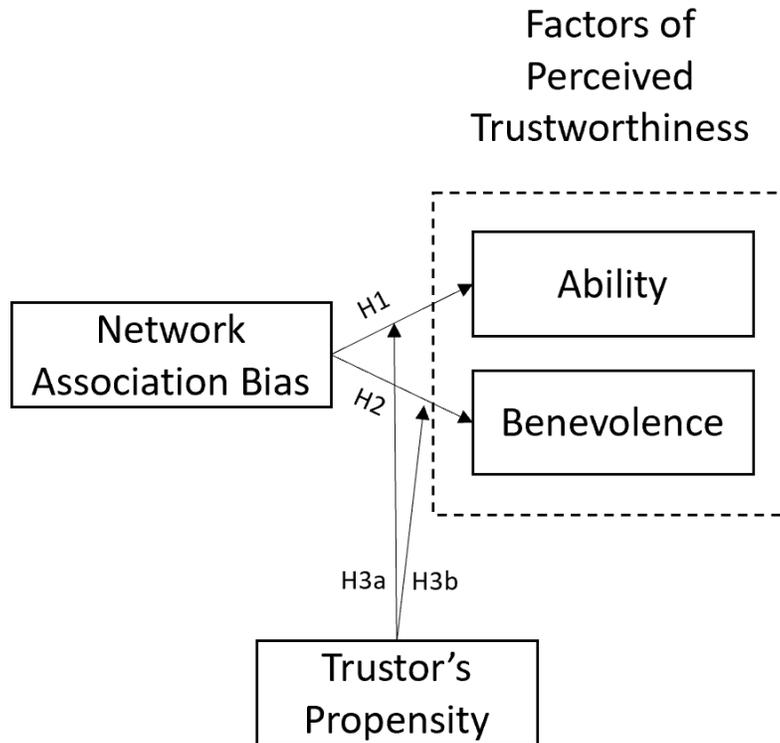


Figure 2. Updated Trust Model for a Relationship Between a Hiring Manager and a Job Applicant.

Because several hypotheses were dropped, the remaining hypotheses were renumbered. Therefore, the hypotheses regarding Network Association Bias are as follows.

H1: The hiring manager's level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate's level of ability when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

H2: The hiring manager's level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate's level of benevolence when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.

In the traditional Trust Model, Propensity to Trust moderates the relationships between the Factors of Perceived Trustworthiness and Trust [4]. Propensity to Trust takes on a similar role in the updated model, being a moderator between Network Association Bias and the Factors of Perceived Trustworthiness. The trustors' Propensity to Trust refers to their generalized expectation about the trustworthiness of others [4]. It is believed that this generalized trustworthiness, being applicable to any trusting relationship, will influence the strength of Network Association Bias's influence on the Factors of Perceived Trustworthiness. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H3a: The hiring manager's propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables network association bias and ability.

H3b: The hiring manager's propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables network association bias and benevolence.

5.3 SEM Results

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis for this study was conducted in RStudio using the lavaan latent variable modeling package [95]. When using the normal-theory maximum likelihood (ML), it is recommended that the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be smaller than 0.05; in addition, the comparative fit index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) should be larger than 0.95 [99], [100]. Table 6 displays the model fit indices, while Table 7 presents the results of the SEM analysis.

Table 6. Trust Model for a Relationship Between a Hiring Manager and a Job Applicant Fit Indices.

	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	Chi-square
Model 1	0.015	0.998	0.997	0.320
Model 2	0.032	0.987	0.984	0.010
Model 3	0.131	0.754	0.713	0.000

Table 7. Results of Structural Equation Modeling.

Variable	Model 1					Model 2					Model 3				
	β	Err.	z	P(> z)	R ²	β	Err.	z	P(> z)	R ²	β	Err.	z	P(> z)	R ²
<u>Variances</u>															
Ability	0.884	0.118	7.521	0.000	0.031	0.680	0.085	7.969	0.000	0.259	0.634	0.083	7.603	0.000	0.586
Benevolence	0.991	0.143	6.952	0.000	0.085	0.727	0.106	6.887	0.000	0.316	0.709	0.109	6.489	0.000	0.385
NAB	-	-	-	-	-	1.806	0.223	8.112	0.000	-	1.795	0.222	8.070	0.000	-
PTT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.798	0.182	4.380	0.000	-
<u>Regressions</u>															
Ability ~															
Gender	-0.137	0.118	-1.162	0.245	-	0.039	0.108	0.357	0.721	-	0.040	0.102	0.394	0.694	-
Age	0.061	0.071	0.866	0.387	-	0.107	0.070	1.519	0.129	-	0.121	0.067	1.816	0.069	-
Comp. Size	0.201	0.088	2.275	0.023	-	0.112	0.080	1.397	0.162	-	0.078	0.081	0.957	0.339	-
Years Exp.	-0.102	0.069	-1.476	0.140	-	-0.148	0.062	-2.385	0.017	-	-0.158	0.064	-2.479	0.013	-
NAB	-	-	-	-	-	0.349	0.055	6.300	0.000	-	-	-	-	-	-
NAB x PTT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.006	0.003	2.042	0.041	-
Benevolence ~															
Gender	-0.431	0.132	-3.259	0.001	-	-0.230	0.120	-1.912	0.056	-	-0.216	0.115	-1.887	0.059	-
Age	0.054	0.077	0.699	0.485	-	0.106	0.077	1.388	0.165	-	0.124	0.075	1.645	0.100	-
Comp. Size	0.258	0.084	3.085	0.002	-	0.156	0.073	2.136	0.033	-	0.120	0.075	1.600	0.110	-
Years Exp.	-0.034	0.078	-0.433	0.665	-	-0.089	0.071	-1.248	0.212	-	-0.096	0.072	-1.332	0.183	-
NAB	-	-	-	-	-	0.409	0.065	6.290	0.000	-	-	-	-	-	-
NAB x PTT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.004	0.003	1.489	0.137	-
<u>Covariances</u>															
Ability ~~															
Benevolence	0.733	0.105	6.995	0.000	-	0.500	0.067	7.488	0.000	-	0.474	0.068	6.917	0.000	-
NAB ~~															
PTT	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.219	0.091	2.409	0.016	-

Notes. N = 309. NAB = Network Association Bias. PTT = Propensity to Trust.

In analyzing the results of the SEM analysis, the following observations were made. Model 1 included the demographic control variables of Gender, Age, Company Size, and Years of Experience as predictors of Ability and Benevolence. The demographic variables were dummy-coded with “Male” serving as the reference category for Gender, “24 or younger” serving as the reference category for Age, “Small business (fewer than 100 employees)” serving as the reference category for Company Size, and “Less than 5 years” serving as the reference category for Years of Experience. The fit indices for Model 1 were good, with RMSEA = 0.015, CFI = 0.998, and TLI = 0.997. Company Size was a significant predictor of Ability ($\beta = 0.201$, Err. = 0.088, $z = 2.275$, $p = 0.023$) and Benevolence ($\beta = 0.258$, Err. = 0.084, $z = 3.085$, $p = 0.002$). This indicates that hiring managers from a larger company are more likely to view a job candidate as having increased ability and benevolence. Gender was also a significant predictor of Benevolence ($\beta = -0.431$, Err. = 0.132, $z = -3.259$, $p = 0.001$). This indicates that women are less likely than men to view an individual as benevolent.

In Model 2, the theorized effect of Network Association Bias on a job candidate’s Ability and Benevolence was added. The fit indices for Model 2 were also good, with RMSEA = 0.032, CFI = 0.987, and TLI = 0.984. Years of Experience was a significant predictor of Ability ($\beta = -0.148$, Err. = 0.062, $z = -2.385$, $p = 0.017$). This indicates that hiring managers with more experience are more likely to view a job candidate as having decreased ability. Company size continued to be a significant predictor of Benevolence ($\beta = 0.156$, Err. = 0.073, $z = 2.136$, $p = 0.033$), indicating that hiring managers from a larger company are more likely to view a job candidate as benevolent. Finally, the newly introduced variable, Network Association Bias, was a significant predictor of Ability ($\beta =$

0.349, Err. = 0.055, $z = 6.300$, $p = 0.000$) and Benevolence ($\beta = 0.409$, Err. = 0.065, $z = 6.290$, $p = 0.000$). This indicates that when recruiters view a job candidate's social network favorably, they are more likely to view a job candidate as having high ability and benevolence.

In Model 3, the theorized moderation effect of Propensity to Trust on the relationship between Network Association Bias and the Factors of Perceived Trustworthiness (Ability and Benevolence) was added. The direct effect of Network Association Bias on Ability and Benevolence was excluded from this model. The fit indices for Model 3 were outside the acceptable ranges, with RMSEA = 0.131, CFI = 0.754, and TLI = 0.713. Years of Experience continued to be a significant predictor of Ability ($\beta = -0.158$, Err. = 0.064, $z = -2.479$, $p = 0.013$), indicating that hiring managers with more experience are more likely to view a job candidate as having decreased ability. Finally, the effect of Propensity to Trust on the relationship between Network Association Bias and Ability was significant ($\beta = 0.006$, Err. = 0.003, $z = 2.042$, $p = 0.041$); this interaction is shown in Figure 3, which presents the standard deviations and mean of this relationship. However, the effect of Propensity to Trust on the relationship between Network Association Bias and Benevolence was nonsignificant ($\beta = 0.004$, Err. = 0.003, $z = 1.489$, $p = 0.137$). The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in Table 8.

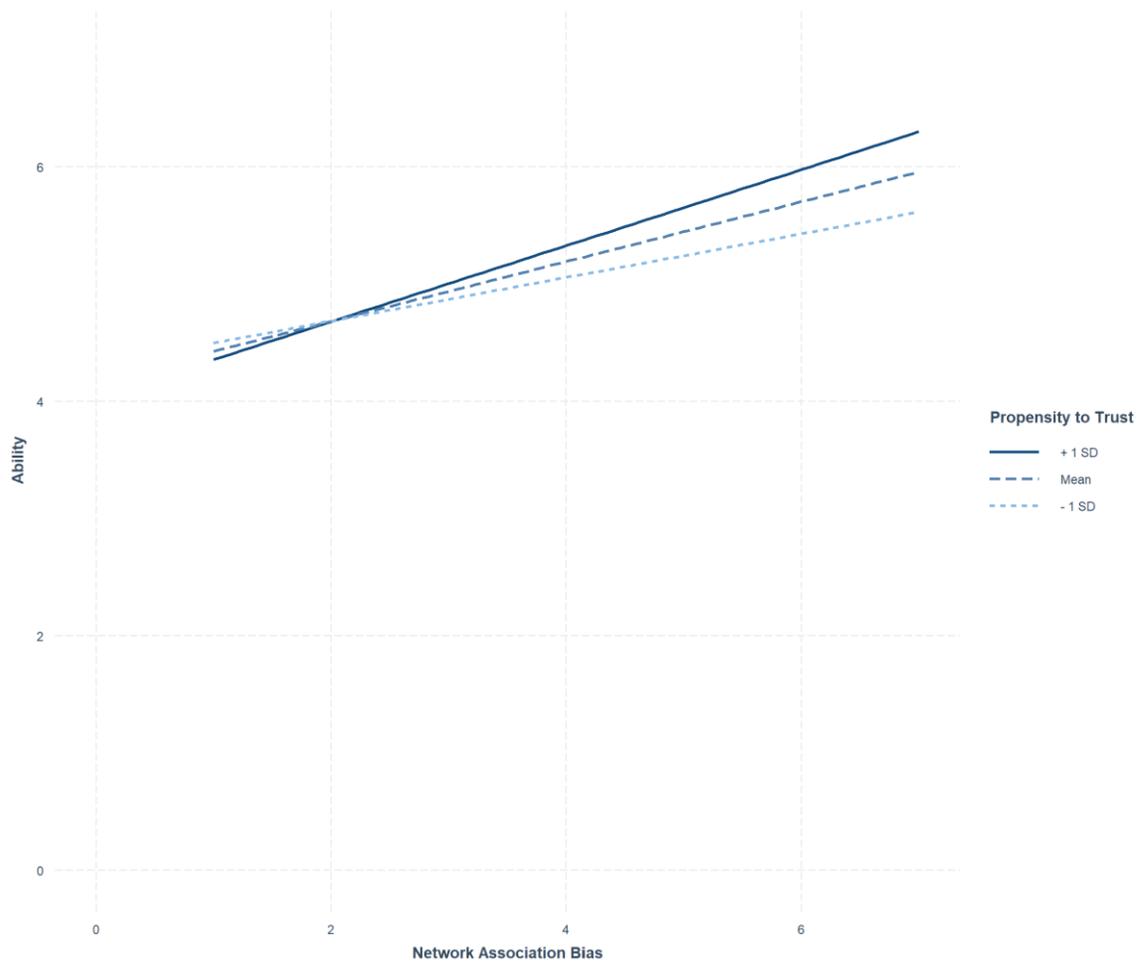


Figure 3. Interaction Plot for Ability (Model 3).

Table 8. Results of Tested Hypotheses for a Trust Model for a Relationship Between a Hiring Manager and a Job Applicant.

Hypothesis	Results
<p>H1a: The hiring manager’s level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate’s level of ability when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.</p>	Supported
<p>H1b: The hiring manager’s level of network association bias will have a positive effect on how they view a job candidate’s level of benevolence when viewing a job candidate through a business-focused social network.</p>	Supported
<p>H2a: The hiring manager’s propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables network association bias and ability.</p>	Supported
<p>H2b: The hiring manager’s propensity to trust will positively affect the relationship between the variables network association bias and benevolence.</p>	Not Supported

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This chapter summarizes the results of a doctoral dissertation focusing on the influence of a job candidate's social network when viewed by a hiring manager. This chapter also discusses the contributions to theory and implications for practice of this research. In addition, the study's limitations, directions for future research, and the conclusion are given.

The purpose of this study was to answer the question: *When filtering job candidates through a business-focused social network, what is the influence of knowledge of a candidate's social network on the hiring manager's perception of the trustworthiness of the candidate – measured as ability, integrity, and benevolence – and the manager's subsequent willingness to risk a positive recommendation?* This study was designed to evaluate how knowledge of a job candidate's social network, represented by a single LinkedIn connection that the recruiter was familiar with, impacted how the recruiter perceived the candidate's three factors of perceived trustworthiness. These three factors, commonly seen in the Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman trust model that is the foundation for this study, are ability, benevolence, and integrity [4]. Additionally, the potential impact of propensity to trust on the relationships between network association bias and the factors of perceived trustworthiness was examined. Furthermore, this study reveals to

individuals on both sides of the hiring process what the impact of one's business-focused social network can be. With the increasing use of social networks in the hiring process, many studies have been conducted on how companies utilize social networks for recruitment and selection [47]–[55]. However, no prior studies have analyzed this relationship between a social network and a job candidate's trustworthiness. The research findings suggest that knowledge of a job candidate's business-focused social network influences how a hiring manager views the candidate's levels of ability and benevolence. In addition, the hiring manager's propensity to trust moderates the relationship between network association bias and perceived ability.

6.1 Contributions to Theory

This study makes several contributions to the literature. First, through the introduction of a new variable, network association bias, this work produces new knowledge regarding the influence of a job candidate's business-focused social network on how their levels of ability and benevolence are perceived by hiring managers. Second, this study developed a new use for the propensity to trust measure, revealing that this propensity also has a moderating effect on the relationship between network association bias and ability. This work will provide a new avenue of exploration for researchers focusing on the hiring process, especially where business-focused social networks such as LinkedIn are concerned.

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to introduce a measure similar to network association bias to the traditional trust model [4]. It is also believed that this is the first use of propensity to trust in this context. Through this integration, this work

builds upon a well-established model, advancing the current state of research regarding the hiring process and social media.

6.2 Implications for Practice

Other than the theoretical contributions, this study also offers practical implications pertaining to the use of business-focused social media in the hiring process. In addition to or in lieu of traditional resumes, many recruiters utilize business-focused social media profiles, such as those on LinkedIn, to aid them in the hiring process [54], [55]. As opposed to traditional resumes, these websites allow HR employees to view a job candidate's social network. Since its inception, LinkedIn has promoted growing one's network by accepting most connection requests, regardless of how well one knows the connection. The results of this study, however, suggest that this can have a negative influence on how one appears to others.

Based on the findings, users of business-focused social networks should be more selective when accepting connection requests. The results reveal that when a human resources employee is familiar with a member of the job candidate's social network, how the employee views the candidate's levels of ability and benevolence is influenced. Therefore, if the job candidate's network consists of people that recruiters may find unfavorable, the candidate will likewise be seen less favorably. Contrarily, if the job candidate connects with individuals that recruiters respond favorably toward, the candidate will benefit by being seen as more competent and benevolent. With this in mind, individuals who are using platforms such as LinkedIn to supplement their resumes may want to think carefully about whether to accept a connection request. In short, they

might shift their focus toward quality over quantity, aligning with the advice of some career coaches [64].

These findings also inform the human resources employees. These employees may want to consider whether it is worth looking at a job candidate's connections. Do these connections truly represent the candidate, or do they encourage a false bias toward or against the candidate? As a result, companies may need to adjust their hiring practices where business-focused social networks are concerned.

6.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the theoretical and practical contributions of this study, there are limitations that limit the generalizability of the findings. Only 5.8% of the participants were in the "55 or above" age group; likewise, only 4.2% of the participants were in the "More than 20 years" years of experience group. Additional research focusing on the older population should be conducted, so that it can be determined if they are affected in the same way.

Future studies could examine the effects of company size, gender, and years of experience on a recruiter's perception of a job candidate's factors of perceived trustworthiness. While gender was only shown to influence perceived benevolence, and years of experience only influenced perceived ability, company size was revealed to have an influence on both. The current study did not focus on these measures, as they were treated as control variables, but a future study could explore this topic in depth.

This study had some limitations in the model. First, during the exploratory factor analysis, the integrity measure had to be dropped, meaning that only two of the three

factors of perceived trustworthiness made it into the final model. Future studies should work to include integrity so that the influence of a job candidate's social network on how a recruiter views the candidate's integrity can be examined. Second, the fit indices for Model 3 were outside the acceptable ranges, meaning that its results are unreliable. However, Model 3's results suggest that a hiring manager's propensity to trust influences the relationship between network association bias and ability. A future study could examine this relationship further and determine if it is supported.

Finally, this study utilized two mock LinkedIn profiles that both featured a female project manager with two years of experience at a large transportation manufacturing company. Furthermore, the two mock connections were men with varying levels of ability, benevolence, and integrity. Future studies could replicate what was done in this study, but with variations on the mock profiles and connections. In addition, multiple connections could be included, rather than a single connection.

6.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of a recruiter's knowledge of an applicant's professional network on the recruiter's perception of the applicant's trustworthiness and hence their willingness to take risk in the hiring relationship. This research contributes to advancing the fields of recruiting and hiring, business-focused social networks, and trust. This work explored a new avenue of research by examining the influence of a job candidate's business-focused social network on how their levels of ability and benevolence are perceived by hiring managers, as well as developing a new use for the propensity to trust measure. Evidence was presented to

support the concept that a job candidate's social network impacts how the candidate's levels of ability and benevolence are perceived by others. Furthermore, it is suggested that a recruiter's propensity to trust influences the relationship between network association bias and a job candidate's ability. Users of business-focused social networks should be more selective when accepting connection requests, as an unfavorable connection may reflect badly on them. In addition, hiring managers and companies should consider whether a job candidate's social network truly represents the candidate, or if it may encourage a false bias toward or against the candidate.

To our knowledge, this is the first study to introduce a measure such as network association bias to the traditional trust model, as well as the first to use propensity to trust in this context. While this research determined that network association bias influences perceived ability and benevolence, further research is needed to determine whether the same can be said for perceived integrity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Form

irb@southalabama.edu



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AD 240 · MOBILE, AL. 36688-0002

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD May 20, 2021

Principal Investigator: Hannah Kibby, M.S.
IRB # and Title: IRB PROTOCOL: 21-178
[1757999-1] Understanding How Recruiters Utilize LinkedIn When Making Hiring Decisions From a Computing Perspective

Status: APPROVED Review Type: Exempt Review
Approval Date: May 20, 2021 Submission Type: New Project
Initial Approval: May 20, 2021 Expiration Date:
Review Category: 45 CFR 46.104 (d)(2): Research that only includes interaction involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording);

ii. Any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside of the research would not reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation

This panel, operating under the authority of the DHHS Office for Human Research and Protection, assurance number FWA 00001602, and IRB Database #00000286 or #00011574, has reviewed the submitted materials for the following:

1. *Protection of the rights and the welfare of human subjects involved.*
2. *The methods used to secure and the appropriateness of informed consent.*
3. *The risk and potential benefits to the subject.*

The regulations require that the investigator not initiate any changes in the research without prior IRB approval, except where necessary to eliminate immediate hazards to the human subjects, and that **all problems involving risks and adverse events be reported to the IRB immediately!**

Subsequent supporting documents that have been approved will be stamped with an IRB approval and expiration date (if applicable) on every page. Copies of the supporting documents must be utilized with the current IRB approval stamp unless consent has been waived.

Notes:

Appendix B: Propensity to Trust Scale

Developed by Frazier, Johnson, and Fainshmidt [80]. 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

- I usually trust people until they give me a reason not to trust them.
- Trusting another person is not difficult for me.
- My typical approach is to trust new acquaintances until they prove I should not trust them.
- My tendency to trust others is high.

Appendix C: Marker Variable Scale

Derived from Miller and Chiodo [91]. 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

- I prefer silver to other colors.
- I like the color silver.
- I like silver clothes.
- I hope my next car is silver.

Appendix D: Perceived Risk Scales

Derived from Featherman and Pavlou [81]. 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

- Performance Risk
 - LinkedIn might not perform well and create problems with my job.
 - The security systems built into LinkedIn are not strong enough to protect my personal information.
 - It is likely that there will be something wrong with the performance of LinkedIn or that it will not work properly.
 - Considering the expected level of service performance of LinkedIn, it would be risky to use it.
 - LinkedIn's servers may not perform well and process information incorrectly.
- Privacy Risk
 - It is likely that using LinkedIn will cause you to lose control over the privacy of your personal information.
 - Signing up for and using LinkedIn would lead to a loss of privacy for you because your personal information would be used without your knowledge.
 - Internet hackers (criminals) might take control of your personal information if you use LinkedIn.
- Time Risk
 - If you had begun to use LinkedIn and had to switch to a different service, you would lose time.

- Considering the investment of your time to set up a LinkedIn profile, it is risky to use.
- The possible time loss from having to set up and learn how to use LinkedIn makes it risky to use.
- Overall Risk
 - On the whole, considering all sorts of factors combined, it is risky to use LinkedIn.
 - Using LinkedIn as part of your job would be risky.
 - LinkedIn is dangerous to use.
 - Using LinkedIn would add great uncertainty to your job functions.
 - Using LinkedIn exposes you to an overall risk.

Appendix E: Social Attraction Scale

Derived from Escalas and Bettman [82]. 7-point Likert scale, with 1 being the worst and 7 being the best.

- How would being associated with this individual reflect on someone?
- How much would you like to be identified with this individual and what they represent?
- To what extent would you like being associated with this individual and what they stand for?

Appendix F: Antecedents of Trust / Trust Scales

Developed by Mayer and Davis and modified by Davis [23], [83]. 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

- Ability
 - The job candidate is very capable of performing the tasks necessary for this position.
 - The job candidate is known to be successful at the things they try to do.
 - The job candidate has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done.
 - I feel very confident about the job candidate's skills.
 - The job candidate has specialized capabilities that can increase the company's performance.
 - The job candidate is well qualified.
- Benevolence
 - The job candidate is very concerned about my welfare.
 - My questions and desires are very important to the job candidate.
 - The job candidate would not knowingly misrepresent themselves through their resume/profile.
 - The job candidate really looks out for what is important to human resources professionals.
 - The job candidate will go out of his/her way to be helpful.
- Integrity
 - The job candidate has a strong sense of fair dealing.

- I never have to wonder whether the job candidate is reliable.
- The job candidate tries hard to be fair dealing with others.
- The job candidate's actions and behaviors are not very consistent. (Reverse-scored)
- I like the job candidate's values.
- Sound principles seem to guide the job candidate's actions.
- Trust
 - If I had my way, I wouldn't let the job candidate influence my decision to recommend them for this position. (Reverse-scored)
 - I would be willing to let the job candidate decide the terms of a hiring recommendation.
 - I really wish I had a way to monitor the actions of the job candidate. (Reverse-scored)
 - I would be comfortable giving the job candidate a task or problem which was critical to me, even if I could not monitor their actions.

Appendix G: Hiring Recommendation Scale

Developed by Tsai, Chen, and Chiu and updated by Chiang and Suen [62], [84]. 7-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

- I consider the job candidate to be suitable for hiring into the organization.
- The job candidate would have a good future in the hiring organization.
- The job candidate would perform well for the hiring organization.

Appendix H: Survey

Survey Export

Start of Block: Introduction

Q1 Consent Form

Title of Research Study: *Understanding How Recruiters Utilize LinkedIn When Making Hiring Decisions From a Computing Perspective*

Researcher Contact Information:

For questions about the research study, research results, or other concerns, contact the researcher at:

Doctoral Student Name: Hannah Kibby

Email Address: Hvk1221@Jagmail.SouthAlabama.edu

Key Information About This Research Study

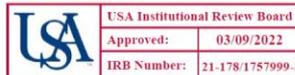
The goal of this research study is to identify how human resources recruiters utilize LinkedIn. More specifically, this study focuses on the use of LinkedIn when making hiring recommendations. You are being asked to take part in this research study because you have been identified as a human resources employee or recruiter. As an individual working in this field, the insight gained from this study may be of benefit to you. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

This survey should take 15-25 minutes to complete. You will be asked to read two scenarios and respond to statements and questions about them.

This survey is part of a doctoral dissertation, and the results of this research may be published. These results will be kept confidential and cannot be traced back to you. There are no foreseeable risks from participating in this research, and there is no cost to participate. Your participation is voluntary and declining to participate will result in no loss to you. You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Q2 Do you consent to participate in this survey?

- Yes, I consent to participate in this survey (1)
- No, I do not consent to participate in this survey (2)



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Skip To: End of Block If Do you consent to participate in this survey? = No, I do not consent to participate in this survey

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Demographics

Q3 What is your gender?

- Male (1)
 - Female (2)
 - Prefer not to say (3)
-

Q4

What is your age?

- 24 or younger (1)
 - 25 - 34 (2)
 - 35 - 44 (3)
 - 45 - 54 (4)
 - 55 or above (5)
 - Prefer not to say (6)
-

Q5 How large is the company for which you work?

- Small business (fewer than 100 employees) (1)
 - Midsize business (100 - 999 employees) (2)
 - Large business (1000 or more employees) (3)
-

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Q6 What is your current job title?

Q7

For your current job, are you involved in the hiring process?

Examples include recruiters who search for job candidates and managers who make the final hiring decision.

Yes (4)

No (5)

Skip To: End of Block If For your current job, are you involved in the hiring process? Examples include recruiters who sea... = No

Q8 How many years of experience do you have working in human resources/recruiting?

Less than 5 years (1)

5-10 years (2)

11-15 years (3)

16-20 years (4)

More than 20 years (5)

End of Block: Demographics

Start of Block: General

X+

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Q9 Respond to the following statements:

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
I usually trust people until they give me a reason not to trust them. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trusting another person is not difficult for me. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My typical approach is to trust new acquaintances until they prove I should not trust them. (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please select "Agree". (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My tendency to trust others is high. (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Skip To: End of Block If Respond to the following statements: != Please select "Agree". [Agree]



Q10 Respond to the following statements:

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
I prefer silver to other colors. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the color silver. (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like silver clothes. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I hope my next car is silver. (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: General

Start of Block: General



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Q11 Respond to the following statements:

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (8)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
LinkedIn might not perform well and create problems with my job. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The security systems built into LinkedIn are not strong enough to protect my personal information. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is likely that there will be something wrong with the performance of LinkedIn or that it will not work properly. (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Considering the expected level of service performance of LinkedIn, it would be risky to use it. (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



LinkedIn's servers may not perform well and process information incorrectly.
(9)



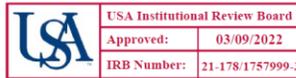
X+

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Q12 Respond to the following statements:

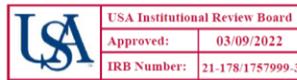
	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
It is likely that using LinkedIn will cause you to lose control over the privacy of your personal information. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Signing up for and using LinkedIn would lead to a loss of privacy for you because your personal information would be used without your knowledge. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet hackers (criminals) might take control of your personal information if you use LinkedIn. (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



X+

Q13 Respond to the following statements:

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
If you had begun to use LinkedIn and had to switch to a different service, you would lose time. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please select "Strongly disagree". (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Considering the investment of your time to set up a LinkedIn profile, it is risky to use. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The possible time loss from having to set up and learn how to use LinkedIn makes it risky to use. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

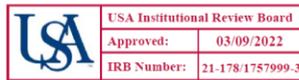


Skip To: End of Block If Respond to the following statements: != Please select "Strongly disagree". [Strongly disagree]



Q14 Respond to the following statements:

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
On the whole, considering all sorts of factors combined, it is risky to use LinkedIn. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using LinkedIn as part of your job would be risky. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LinkedIn is dangerous to use. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using LinkedIn would add great uncertainty to your job functions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using LinkedIn exposes you to an overall risk. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



End of Block: General

Start of Block: Instructions

Q15

Next, you will be presented with two scenarios, along with questions relating to each scenario.

In these scenarios, you are a recruiter looking to fill the position of a project manager. You have conducted a search on LinkedIn in order to find potential job candidates.

In each scenario, you are presented with a job candidate's LinkedIn profile. You have **no prior knowledge** of this job candidate, and this is the first time you have seen any information about them. In addition, one of the job candidate's first-degree connections is described; this connection is a person with whom you are familiar.

End of Block: Instructions

Start of Block: Scenario

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Q16



Christine Washington
Project Manager at Austal USA
Mobile, Alabama Area · 100 connections

 **Austal USA**
 **University of South Alabama**

Experience

 **Project Manager**
Austal USA
Jan 2019 - Present · 2 years
Mobile, Alabama Area

- Build and develop a 10-person project team to ensure maximum performance, providing direction and motivation
- Lead projects from requirements definition through deployment
- Develop and maintain partnerships with outside resources
- Monitor and assign resources appropriately to streamline project efficiency and maximize deliverable outputs
- Establish and maintain relationships with appropriate client stakeholders

Connections

 **James Allen** · 3rd
Project Manager
Mobile, AL
10 shared connections

[Message](#)

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One of the following four questions will be randomly displayed.

Q17 In viewing Christine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, James Allen, has 13 years of experience as a project manager. He has a certification from the Project Management Institute and currently works at a Fortune 500 company. You worked with James at your last job, and he has recommended high-quality job candidates to you in the past. In addition, he volunteers at the same organization as you.

Q18 In viewing Christine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, James Allen, has worked as a project manager for 13 years. He currently works at a Fortune 500 company and has a certification from the Project Management Institute. James was a coworker at your last job. He has suggested high-quality job candidates to you in the past. However, James supports an organization that you are morally opposed to and has been known to make derogatory remarks about others.

Q19 In viewing Christine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, James Allen, is employed by a Fortune 500 company and has 13 years of experience as a project manager. In addition, he has a certification from the Project Management Institute. James claims to have previously worked at your company, but you know this is false. Records show that he was caught lying on his application. In addition, James has been known to make derogatory remarks about others and supports an organization that you are morally opposed to.

Q20 In viewing Christine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, James Allen, has a certification from the Project Management Institute and has worked as a project manager for 13 years. In addition, he is currently employed by a Fortune 500 company. James also volunteers at the same organization that you do. While James's profile states that he previously worked at your company, you know this false. Records show that he was caught lying on his application.

Q21 *Based on what is provided in the LinkedIn profile, as well as the description of your prior knowledge of the first-degree connection, please respond to the following statements.*

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Q22 Respond to the following statements, considering the **first-degree LinkedIn connection** (i.e., James Allen), with 1 being the worst and 7 being the best:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
How would being associated with this individual reflect on someone? (1)	<input type="radio"/>						
How much would you like to be identified with this individual and what they represent? (2)	<input type="radio"/>						
To what extent would you like being associated with this individual and what they stand for? (3)	<input type="radio"/>						



Q23 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Christine Washington):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
The job candidate is very capable of performing the tasks necessary for this job position. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate is known to be successful at the things they try to do. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel very confident about the job candidate's skills. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate has specialized capabilities that can increase the company's performance. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



The job candidate is well qualified. (6)

X→

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Q24 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Christine Washington):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
The job candidate is very concerned about my welfare. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My questions and desires are very important to the job candidate. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate would not knowingly misrepresent themselves through their resume/profile. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate really looks out for what is important to human resources professionals. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate will go out of his/her way to be helpful. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>





Q25 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Christine Washington):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
The job candidate has a strong sense of fair dealing. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please select "Somewhat disagree". (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never have to wonder whether the job candidate is reliable. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate tries hard to be fair dealing with others. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate's actions and behaviors are not very consistent. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the job candidate's values. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Sound principles seem to guide the job candidate's actions. (6)

Skip To: End of Block If Respond to the following statements, considering the job candidate (i.e., Christine Washington): != Please select "Somewhat disagree". [Somewhat disagree]



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Q26 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Christine Washington):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
If I had my way, I wouldn't let the job candidate influence my decision to recommend them for this job position. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be willing to let the job candidate decide the terms of a hiring recommendation. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really wish I had a way to monitor the actions of the job candidate. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be comfortable giving the job candidate a task or problem which was critical to me, even if I could not monitor their actions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q27 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Christine Washington):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
I consider the job candidate to be suitable for hiring into the hiring organization. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate would have a good future in the hiring organization. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate would perform well for the hiring organization. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Scenario

Start of Block: Scenario



Q28



Katherine Peterson

Project Manager at Airbus Group

Mobile, Alabama Area · 100 connections



Experience



Project Manager

Airbus Group

Jan 2019 - Present · 2 years

Mobile, Alabama Area

- Coordinate internal and external resources, ensuring projects remain within scope, schedule, and defined budgets
- Analyze project progress and, when necessary, adapt scope, timelines, and costs
- Establish and maintain processes to manage scope over the project lifecycle, setting project quality and performance standards
- Structure and manage integrated, multi-track project performance databases
- Report project outcomes and/or risks to the appropriate management channels as needed

Connections



Thomas Hughes · 3rd

Planning Assistant

Mobile, AL

10 shared connections

Message

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One of the following four questions will be randomly displayed.

Q29 In viewing Katherine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, Thomas Hughes, has two years of experience as an entry-level employee. He currently works at a small, local firm. Thomas claims to have previously worked at your company, but you know this is false. He did apply to your company, but he lied on his application. In addition, Thomas supports an organization that you are morally opposed to and has been known to make derogatory remarks about others.

Q30 In viewing Katherine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, Thomas Hughes, is an entry-level employee with two years of experience. He currently works at a small, local firm. While Thomas's profile states that he previously worked at your company, you know this false. He did apply to your company, but he lied on his application. In addition, Thomas volunteers at the same organization that you do.

Q31 In viewing Katherine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, Thomas Hughes, works at a small, local firm as an entry-level employee. He has two years of experience. You worked with Thomas at your last job, and he has recommended high-quality job candidates to you in the past. In addition, he volunteers at the same organization as you.

Q32 In viewing Katherine's profile, you notice that one of her first-degree connections is a person with whom you are familiar. This person, Thomas Hughes, is an entry-level employee at a small, local firm. He has two years of experience. Thomas was a coworker at your last job and has suggested high-quality job candidates to you in the past. However, Thomas has been known to make derogatory remarks about others and supports an organization that you are morally opposed to.

Q33 Based on what is provided in the LinkedIn profile, as well as the description of your prior knowledge of the first-degree connection, please respond to the following statements.

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X+

Q34 Respond to the following statements, considering the **first-degree LinkedIn connection** (i.e., Thomas Hughes), with 1 being the worst and 7 being the best:

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)
How would being associated with this individual reflect on someone? (1)	<input type="radio"/>						
How much would you like to be identified with this individual and what they represent? (2)	<input type="radio"/>						
To what extent would you like being associated with this individual and what they stand for? (3)	<input type="radio"/>						

X+

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Q35 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Katherine Peterson):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
The job candidate is very capable of performing the tasks necessary for this job position. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate is known to be successful at the things they try to do. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate has much knowledge about the work that needs to be done. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel very confident about the job candidate's skills. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate has specialized capabilities that can increase the company's performance. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



The job candidate is well qualified. (6)



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Q36 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Katherine Peterson):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
The job candidate is very concerned about my welfare. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My questions and desires are very important to the job candidate. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate would not knowingly misrepresent themselves through their resume/profile. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate really looks out for what is important to human resources professionals. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate will go out of his/her way to be helpful. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



X→

Q37 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Katherine Peterson):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
The job candidate has a strong sense of fair dealing. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I never have to wonder whether the job candidate is reliable. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate tries hard to be fair dealing with others. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate's actions and behaviors are not very consistent. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the job candidate's values. (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Sound principles seem to guide the job candidate's actions. (6)



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Q38 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Katherine Peterson):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
If I had my way, I wouldn't let the job candidate influence my decision to recommend them for this job position. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be willing to let the job candidate decide the terms of a hiring recommendation. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really wish I had a way to monitor the actions of the job candidate. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would be comfortable giving the job candidate a task or problem which was critical to me, even if I could not monitor their actions. (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Please select "Somewhat agree". (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Skip To: End of Block If Respond to the following statements, considering the job candidate (i.e., Katherine Peterson): != Please select "Somewhat agree". [Somewhat agree]



X+

Q39 Respond to the following statements, considering the **job candidate** (i.e., Katherine Peterson):

	Strongly agree (7)	Agree (6)	Somewhat agree (5)	Neither agree nor disagree (4)	Somewhat disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
I consider the job candidate to be suitable for hiring into the hiring organization. (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate would have a good future in the hiring organization. (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The job candidate would perform well for the hiring organization. (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Scenario

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Information Systems, May 2018, Mobile, Alabama

Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, dual concentrations in
Networking and Web Publishing, December 2016, Mobile, Alabama

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School of Computing Academic Achievement Award, May 2018

Upsilon Pi Epsilon Honor Society, April 2018

School of Computing Outstanding Student Award for the 2016-2017 Academic
Year, May 2017

Mortar Board Senior Honor Society, April 2016

Alpha Iota Mu Honor Society, April 2015