

MISQ Archivist

Social Media and Selection: Political Issue Similarity, Liking, and the Moderating Effect of Social Media Platform

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Abstract

In this work, we investigate how social media has changed hiring processes, an important internal activity of organizations. Specifically, we probe how viewing job-relevant and job-irrelevant social media content influences hiring managers' ratings of job applicants. To do so, we conducted an experiment that manipulated the presence of social media content on political issues and job-relevant information as well as the social media platforms on which they appear. We balanced job-relevant and job-irrelevant content because we were interested in assessing whether information about political issues continued to have effects even in the presence of information relating to a job applicant's knowledge, skills, and abilities. We found that social media posts that convey information about political issues do have effects, even in the presence of job-relevant information. We also found that, for some issues, the source of social media content matters, with platform effects impacting the assessment of job applicants. This work has timely implications, suggesting that managers be made aware that both social media content and the platform on which it is viewed can contaminate hiring processes. We suggest a need for future research at the intersection between social media and hiring policies.

Keywords: Social media, social media platform, political affiliation, cybervetting, hireability