Professionalism Online: The Effect of Resumes and Social Media on Perceived Work Ethic

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ABSTRACT : *Our society is more connected today than ever before. This connectivity can be attributed to the rise and prevalence of social media. With the increase in popularity of social media, and Facebook in particular, this raises the question of whether social media can alter our impression of others and whether we are really showing our true selves. Social media affords users the chance to share content and this, in turn, allows each user to project a certain image. The ability to choose which content is displayed, whether through photos or status updates, will affect how others view any individual online. In a digital world, oftentimes, the first impression of someone is formed through social media. With this being the case, it is important to understand how shared content can affect the viewer and their perceptions of others. This paper details an experiment undertaken to understand how the content shared through social media provides others with information which is used to form judgments about individuals, particularly in relation to recruitment.*

KEYWORDS *–Profiles, Resumes, Recruitment, Social Media, Work Ethic*

I. Introduction

Social media are interactive computer-mediated technologies that facilitate the creation and sharing of information, ideas, career interests and other forms of expression via virtual communities and networks[1]. The variety of stand-alone and built-in social media services currently available introduces challenges of definition; however, there are some common features[2] :

- Social media are interactive Web 2.0 Internet-based applications[2][3].
- User-generated content, such as text posts or comments, digital photos or videos, and data generated through all online interactions, is the lifeblood of social media[2][3].
- Users create service-specific profiles for the website or app that are designed and maintained by the social media organization[2][4].
- Social media facilitate the development of online social networks by connecting a user's profile with those of other individuals or groups[2][4].
- Users usually access social media services via web-based technologies on desktops and laptops, or download services that offer social media functionality to their mobile devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets). As users engage with these electronic services, they create highly interactive platforms through which individuals, communities, and organizations can share, co-create, discuss, participate and modify user-generated content or pre-made content posted online.

Networks formed through social media change the way groups of people interact and communicate. These changes are the focus of the many emerging fields of media studies. Social media outlets operate in a dialogic transmission system (many sources to many receivers)[5]. This contrasts with traditional media which operates under a mono-logic transmission model (one source to many receivers), such as a newspaper which is delivered to many subscribers, or a radio station which broadcasts the same programs to an entire city. Some of the most popular social media websites, with over 100 million registered users, include Facebook (and its associated Facebook Messenger), YouTube, WeChat, Instagram, QQ, QZone, Weibo, Twitter, Tumblr, Telegram, Reddit, Baidu Tieba, LinkedIn, LINE, Snapchat, Pinterest, Viber, MeWe, and VK.

Observers have noted a range of positive and negative impacts of social media use. Social media can help to improve an individual's sense of connectedness with real or online communities and can be an effective communication (or marketing) tool for corporations, entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, advocacy groups, political parties, and governments.

1.1 Social Media and Perception:

Social media can help to develop lasting impressions of a person, whether that is a positive or negative impression. In a digital society it is important to understand the message that is being portrayed on social media. Researchers have explored the effect that computer mediated communication has on the perception of others [6]. They discovered that even with a limited amount of information available, people were able to quickly form an opinion of another person, based solely on information from a social media profile. Even with the absence of a picture, participants were able to quickly form judgements about the person in the profile [6]. The research highlights how social media is often one of the first things people see before meeting in person. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the portrait that is painted by a social media profile.

First impressions can be made quickly and without many cues, in an online space. Unlike meeting in person, where one can view facial expressions and body language, online profiles tend to convey less information for a snap judgement to be made [6]. Social media users are also affected by the halo effect, which involves making judgements based on previously identified characteristics in the absence of information [6]. This means that when certain information is not provided social media users tend to fill in the blanks with judgements based on other information that is provided. This is also important to the notion of forming a first impression through social media, as it puts more of a focus on the information that is at hand. If the little information that is provided on the profile is seen in a negative light, judgements about other aspects of that person may also be inferred in a negative tone.

Other researchers examined the relationship between the personas that are portrayed on Facebook and the perception of that person [7]. These studies attempted to determine whether or not displaying a fake persona was possible on social networking websites and if so, how it alters the judgement of the viewer. It was determined in these studies that it is indeed possible to create a fake persona on social media networks and that people are able to tailor that image how they see fit. This infersthat social media users have the ability to present an image of themselves that they want others to see, whether that is positive or negative.

Research in this field has also shown that negative content was weighted more heavily than positive content [7]. This effect has a potential impact on employment and recruitment. Ifa candidate has negative content displayed on social media, this could potentially severely affect their employment chances. Since negative content has a greater effect on perception, it is important to understand the magnitude of this effect. This project intends to assesthe impact that negative social media has on the perception of a potential employer.

1.2 Social Media and Impressions

Social media can have a big impact on the impression that is formed of a person, this can lead to people attempting to show a positive image of themselves. The concept of impression management describes the social media user's attempts to control how others perceive them [8]. The main goal of impression management is to attempt to steer other users' impressions with the use of controlling information, photos, and videos by displaying them in an ideal way on social media [8]. This means that users are controlling both the amount of and type of information that is presented on social media. The availability of social media has allowed individuals to create a virtual identity through information, photos, and videos that is shared by the individual in order to change how they are viewed by others both in the real world as well as online.

Information management is often seen as a key element of successful communication with coworkers, team members, and colleagues. Being able to adapt to new social groups and portray a specific image is what makes information management important. This ability can open many doors if the person is perceived in the

right way, on the other side however, negative perceptions can be very costly. Even simple mistakes on a social media profile can eliminate a candidate from a job prospect [7, 8].

While investigating the notion of impression management on social media platforms, research has attempted to uncover a way to measure the extent to which users attempt to control their online persona [9]. To determine how much perception control is present on social media platforms, it is first important to understand what factors lead to impression management. There are two aspects that must be present for a social media user to attempt to change others' perception of themselves.

- The first of these factors is an awareness of how others perceive you based on the observable aspects of the self [9]. What this means is that in order to begin impression management one must first understand what impression will be formed based from visible information. The visible information that is chosen to be displayed becomes the key contributor to displaying the desired self-representation and these observable clues form the basis for developing an impression based on online information.
- The second of the impression management factors is a desire to directly influence these perceptions [9]. This factor is the most important component in impression management as it is the will of a user to project a certain self-representation with the goal being the alteration of another's impression of them.

Research has also shown that younger users are more apt to practice impression management than older users [9]. The possible explanation for this is that younger users are more interested in portraying an image that will garner attention from their peers, as opposed to older users who already have well established relationships. Another finding showed that there was no difference in impression management between genders [9].

This desire for acceptance could be considered a determining factor in the content that is posted on social media. Research has shown that it is important to understand how information is being portrayed on social media as even a slight mistake can be costly in the workplace [7, 8, 9].

1.3 Social Media and Professionalism:

Self-representation on social media can have an impact not only on the user's social life, but also in their professional life. Researchers have explored the differences between students and faculty in what they deem as acceptable to post on social mediato determine if students were more lenient on what content was posted on social media, compared to faculty. The study reported differences between faculty and students in how they viewed the posting of pictures, cases, and comments about coursework [10]. In many cases faculty found certain posts unacceptable, students often found them acceptable. There is a suggestion that younger people feel these posts are relevant to their personal lives and are acceptable to share in what they believe to be a private space. However, regardless of the level of privacy that is set on a social media account, some glimpses of an individual's private information will often be accessible to the public, whether in the form of photos or comments, the content that is broadcasted on social media is never entirely private.

This relates back to the idea that our personal and professional lives are blending together. Computer mediated communication and social media is seen as a cause for this identity crisis, as the personal and private lives of many young people begin to blend together online. This blend can be harmful to those who do not pay attention to the information they share online [7, 10].

The false notion of privacy on social media can lead users into believing that only friends and family can see the content they have posted. This can be especially detrimental to those who work in a public sector. Research into the sharing habits and the potential risks associated with those in the healthcare profession has assessed the impact that sharing work related information can have on the reputation of healthcare professionals and the organizations they work for [11]. While many healthcare workers saw posting work related information as inappropriate, some participants did post content that they would not be willing to share with the general public [11]. The larger the network of connections on asocial media platforms, the more likely shared content is

to be seen by strangers. This can again cause the personal and professional lives of users to blend together and result in negative consequences [11].

Work has even been done on assessing how employers use social media, and the process of cybervetting, during the hiring process. Cybervetting is when employers make use of online resources, such as social media, to gain informal, often personal information about perspective or current employees [12]. The goal of this process is for the employer to be able to gain insights into the personal lives of employees, this process can have a profound impact on the hiring process. Since social media allows for some anonymity when viewing user profiles, this involves difficult ethical issues, but it also calls into question the legality of cybervetting.

One argument as to why the practice of cybervettingcould be an issue is that it can lead to hiring bias or forms of discrimination. However, employers argue that cybervetting can help to paint a better picture of perspective employees and help them to determine if their personality will be a fit in their workplace [12]. Many hiring managers view the practice of cybervetting as a form of risk management, with the idea being that they could potentially find some "red flag" through the applicant's social media accounts, which can help to support applicants they deem as low risk, while at the same time eliminating those that they consider potential risks [12].

1.4 Measuring Work Ethic:

One way in which it is possible to measure the perception of a user on social media is through the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI), a tool that was initially used to measure work ethic. A shorter form Occupational Work Ethic Inventory (OWEI-SF) was created in 2016 using the three main measuring categories as the original, which were interpersonal skills, initiative, and dependability [13]. Each of the three measuring categories are based off one-word adjectives to determine one's work ethic score. The OWEI-SF consists of a total of 12 questions answered on a 7-point Likert scale. This means that the higher the score of the survey, the more likely that person is to have a high work ethic.

- The first of the three measurement categories is interpersonal skills. The interpersonal skills score is derived from four questions, based upon these answers it can be determined if a person is deemed courteous, likeable, cheerful, and friendly. A high score in this category means that the individual is seen to have great interpersonal skills.
- The second of the three measurements categories is initiative. The initiative score is obtained from five answers on the survey, based upon these answers it can be determined if aperson is seen as ambitious, effective, initiating, perceptive, and resourceful. A high score in this category means that the individual is seen to have greater initiative.
- The final measurement categories used in the OWEI-SF is dependability. The dependability score is obtained from three answers in the survey, based upon these answers it can be determined if aperson is rated as dependable, how they are at following directions, and how they are at following regulations. A high score in this category means that the individual is seen to be a dependable person.

Research has shown that the OWEI-SF is accurate for society's changing view of work ethic, which was a concern with the original OWEI. While this survey was originally meant to be self-reflective, the way in which it is organized can be used as a measurement for perceived work ethic. Using this form as a measurement for perceived work ethic can help to determine if social media has had an impact on the impression of others.

II. Method

With many of our interactions being online now, it is important to portray both a professional and truthful online image. Since private and professional lives are being blended together through the use of social media, users should use discretion with the content they share. First impressions tend to be lasting and since social media only provides a small amount of information for others to form assessments it is important to have that content be meaningful. Theresearch in the previous section described social media and perception, and the impact it has on impression formation. Through the use ofa perceived work ethic measurement, this project will

demonstrate the impact that social media has on the impression of an individual online. This work is particularly focused on cybervetting and the way that employers form perceptions of potential job candidates based on their social media profiles.

2.1 Research Questions:

- RQ1: How does a social media profile affect an individual's impression of another person?
- RQ2: Does a good or bad social media profile affect how a resume is viewed?
- RQ3: Does resume quality affect the perception of an individual's work ethic?
- RQ4: Can a social media profile affect the perception of an individual's work ethic?

2.2 Hypotheses:

- H1a: A good social media profile will have a higher overall work ethic rating when compared to a bad social media profile.
- H1b: A good social media profile with have a higher dependability score, initiative score, and interpersonal skills score when compared to a bad social media profile.
- H2a: A good resume will have a higher overall work ethic rating when compared to a bad resume.
- H2b: A good resume will have a higher dependability score, initiative score, and interpersonal skills score when compared to a bad resume.
- H3a: A good social media profile will result in an increase in work ethic ratings regardless of resume type.
- H3b: A bad social media profile will result in a decrease in work ethic ratings regardless of resume type.

2.3 Design:

This study used a two-factor (resume x social media profile) design. The independent variables are the type of resume, good and bad (Fig. 1), and the type of social media profile, good and bad (Fig. 2). The dependent variable is the rated work ethic, which is measured by the Occupational Work Ethic Inventory Short Form (OWEI-SF).

2.4 Participants:

The participants in this study were recruited using an email announcement and social media announcements. There were a total of 68 participants, consisting of 31 males, 36 females, and 1 preferred to not answer. The average age of the participants was 42.7 (SD = 16.0) years.

2.5 Materials:

A variety of materials were used in this study including :

2.5.1 Occupational Work Ethic Inventory short form (OWEI-SF):

The Occupational Work Ethic Inventory short form (OWEI-SF) is a multidimensional measure of an individual's work ethic. The OWEI-SF measures three different aspects of an individuals perceived work ethic, which includes: interpersonal skills, initiative, and dependability. There is a total of 12 questions in the OWEI-SF and they are rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The first dimension of the OWEI-SF, interpersonal skills, includes four questions to produce a score between 4 and 28 points. A high score in this category means that the individual is seen to have great interpersonal skills. The initiative dimension includes five questions and will produce a score between 5 and 35 points. A high score in this category means that the individual is seen to have greater initiative. As for the dependability dimension, it includes 3 questions and will produce a score between 3 and 21 points. All of these dimensions are aggregated together to gather an overall work ethic score. With the OWEI-SF measure, a higher score indicates a better perceived work ethic.
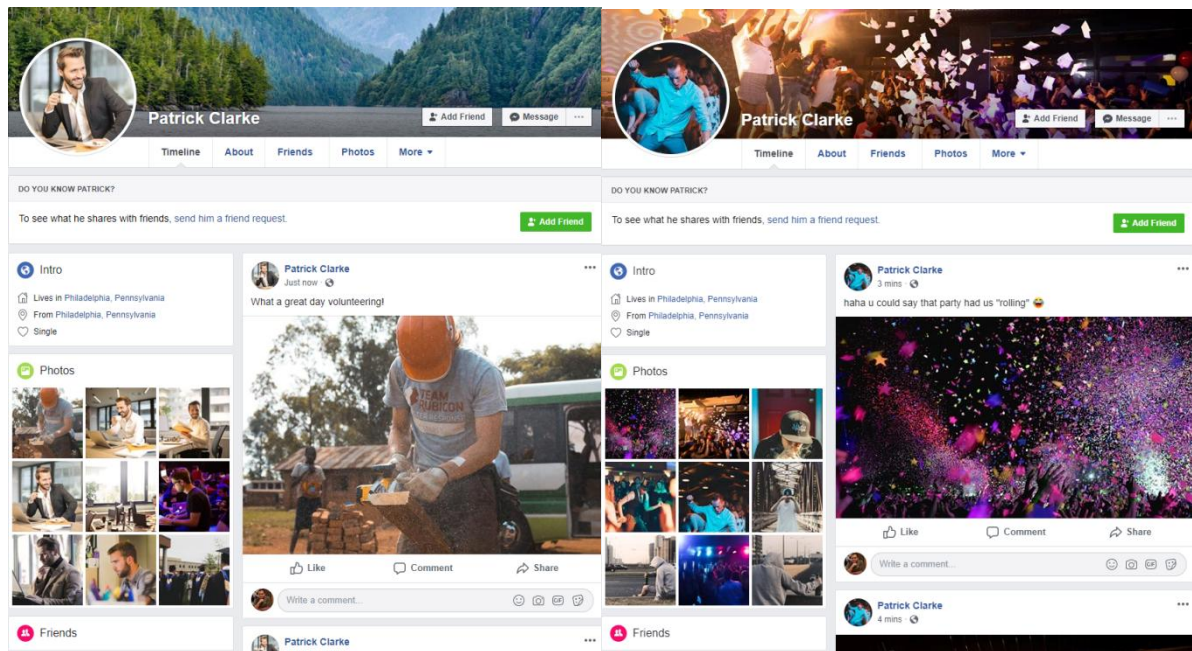
Figure 1. An example of aGood Resume and a Bad Resume

Figure 7. An example of aGood Social Media Profile and a Bad Social Media Profile

2.5.2 Qualtrics:

The survey software Qualtrics was used to create the surveys used in this study and a direct link was distributed to participants. Some of the initial analysis of the results from the survey was also undertaken using the Qualtrics software.

2.6 Procedure:

The participants began the experiment by opening the survey through the Qualtrics link provided. Once the survey is opened, participants were prompted to read the informed consent form. After reviewing and accepting the informed consent form participants will randomly be shown a resume (either good or bad) and then complete the work ethic questions on the survey. Once the first resume ratings are completed the participant is randomly assigned a social media profile (either good or bad)and again they will complete the work ethic questions on the survey. After the first social media profile is assessed participants will then be shown a different resume, the opposite of the first(either good or bad), and then asked to complete the work ethic survey. Once the participant has completed the second resume, they will then be shown another social media profile, which is the opposite of the first(either good or bad), and be asked to complete the work ethic questions again. After the second social media profile has been completed participants are then directed to a demographic survey. Once the survey has been completed the experiment is concluded.

III.   Results

A 2 (Resume) x 2 (Social Media) within-subjects ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of resumes and social media profiles on perceived work ethic. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were performed to test the hypotheses of this study.

3.1 Overall Work Ethic

Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics for overall work ethic scores, while Table 2 displays the results of inferential statistics test for overall work ethic scores.

Variable	*n*	*M* (*SD*)
Resume		
Good	68	58.5 (10.9)
Bad	68	52.7 (12.7)
Social Media		
Good	68	63.4 (13.2)
Bad	68	45.6 (12.3)

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Overall Work Ethic

Variable	*F* (1, 67)	*p*	η^2
Resume	1.56	.216	.002
Social Media	59.05	<.001	.179
Resume x Social Media	22.56	<.001	.047

Table 2. Overall Work Ethic ANOVA Results

There was a significant interaction effect between resumes and social media profiles on perceived overall work ethic, $F(1, 67) = 22.56$, $p < .001$, η2 = .047. This indicates that the effect of resume quality on perceived overall work ethic was dependent on the social media profile quality. The interaction term was further examined through simple effects analysis.

Simple effects analysis revealed that a good social media profile (M = 65.0, SD = 10.8) was rated higher than a bad social media profile (M = 46.5, SD = 13.6) in terms of overall work ethic when following a good resume, t(129) = 2.90, p = .023. As for following a bad resume, t(129) = 8.95, p < .001, the good social media profile (M = 61.9, SD = 15.0) again received higher ratings than that of the bad social media profile (M = 44.6, SD = 10.8).

There was a statistically significant difference between the quality of social media profiles, F(1, 67) = 59.05, p < .001, η2 = .179. This indicates that regardless of which resume was displayed (good vs. bad) participants rated the good social media as having a higher overall work ethic than that of the bad social media profile. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect.

As for the difference between resumes on overall work ethic, there was no significant difference, F(1, 67) = 1.56, p = .216, η2 = .002.

These results indicate that for both the good and bad resumes the good social media resulted in higher work ethic ratings. A good social media profile also was perceived to have a higher work ethic than that of the bad social media profile, regardless of resume quality. Fig. 3 represents the perceived overall work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality.
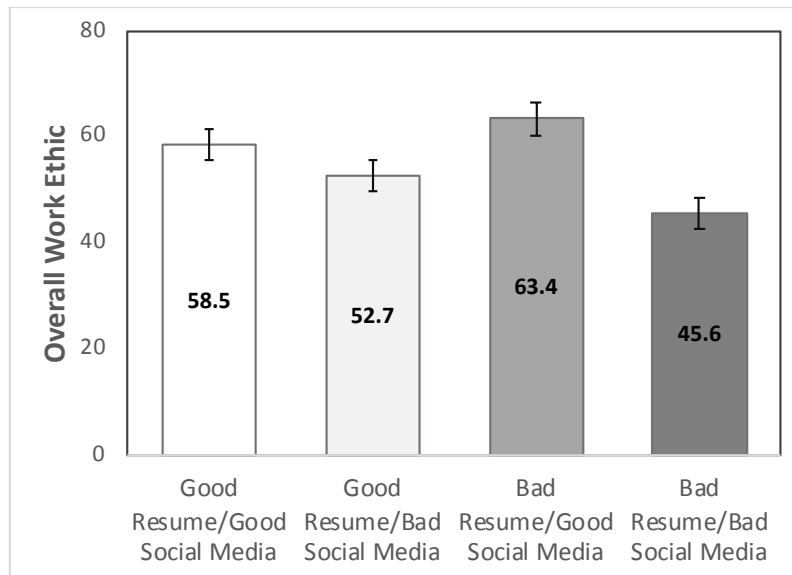

Figure 3. Overall Work Ethic Scores as a Function of Resume and Social Media Quality

3.2 Interpersonal Work Ethic

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for interpersonal work ethic scores, while Table 4 displays the results of inferential statistics test for interpersonal work ethic scores.

There was a significant interaction effect between resumes and social media profiles on perceived interpersonal work ethic, F(1, 67) = 17.1, p < .001, η2 = .029. This indicates that the effect of resume quality on perceived interpersonal work ethic was dependent on the social media profile quality. Therefore, the interaction term was further examined through simple effects analysis.

Simple effects analysis revealed that a good social media profile (M = 21.8, SD = 4.14) was not rated significantly higher than a bad social media profile (M = 17.7, SD = 4.62) in terms of interpersonal work ethic when following a good resume, t(124) = 2.104, p = .157. As for following a bad resume, t(124) = 7.079, p

<.001, the good social media profile (M = 21.1, SD = 4.96) received significantly higher ratings than that of the bad social media profile (M = 16.5, SD = 4.01).

Variable	*n*	*M (SD)*
Resume		
Good	68	18.7 (3.72)
Bad	68	17.4 (4.07)
Social Media		
Good	68	21.5 (4.58)
Bad	68	17.1 (4.35)

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Interpersonal Work Ethic

Variable	*F* (1, 67)	*p*	η^2
Resume	11.3	.001	.020
Social Media	33.0	<.001	.098
Resume x Social Media	17.1	<.001	.029

Table 4. Interpersonal Work Ethic ANOVA Results

There was a statistically significant difference between the quality of social media profiles, F(1, 67) = 33.0, p < .001, η2 = .098. This indicates that regardless of which resume was displayed (good vs. bad) participants rated the good social media as having a higher interpersonal work ethic than that of the bad social media profile. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect.
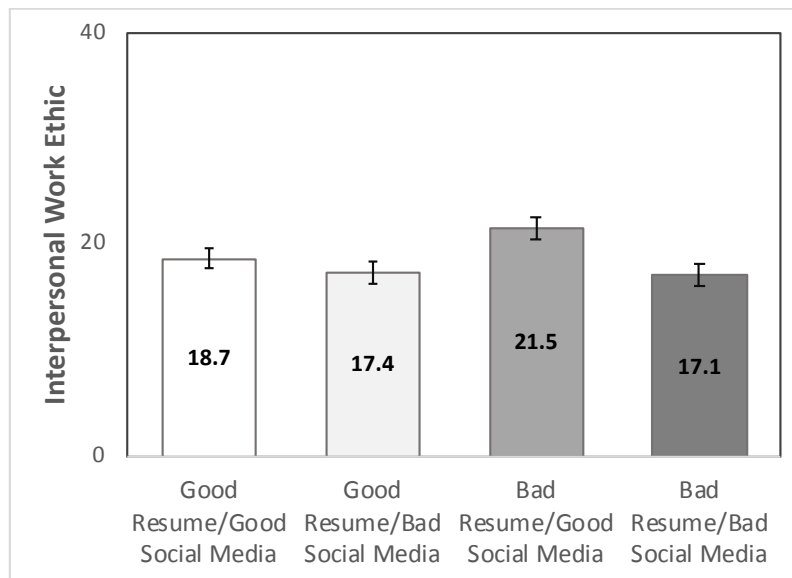

Figure 4. Interpersonal work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality

Similarly, there was a significant effect of resume quality (good vs. bad) on interpersonal work ethic ratings, $F(1, 67) = 11.3$, $p = .001$, $\eta2 = .020$. This indicates that regardless of which social media profile was displayed, participants rated the good resume as having a higher interpersonal work ethic than that of the bad resume. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect. Fig.4 represents the perceived interpersonal work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality.

3.3 Initiative Work Ethic

Table 5 displays the descriptive statistics for initiative work ethic scores, while Table 6 displays the results of inferential statistics test for initiative work ethic scores.

Variable	n	M (SD)
Resume		
Good	68	25.0 (4.94)
Bad	68	22.0 (6.13)
Social Media		
Good	68	26.5 (5.69)
Bad	68	18.3 (5.95)

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics for Initiative Work Ethic

Variable	F (1, 67)	p	η^2
Resume	6.83	.011	.007
Social Media	64.29	<.001	.191
Resume x Social Media	16.87	<.001	.041

Table 6. Initiative Work Ethic ANOVA Results

There was a significant interaction effect between resumes and social media profiles on perceived initiative work ethic, $F(1, 67) = 16.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .041$. This indicates that the effect of resume quality on perceived initiative work ethic was dependent on the social media profile quality. Therefore, the interaction term was further examined through simple effects analysis.

Simple effects analysis revealed that a good social media profile (M = 27.4, SD = 4.29) was rated significantly higher when compared to a bad social media profile (M = 18.5, SD = 6.39) in terms of initiative work ethic when following a good resume, $t(133) = 3.21$, $p = .009$. As for following a bad resume, $t(133) = 8.71$, $p < .001$, the good social media profile (M = 25.8, SD = 6.66) once again received significantly higher ratings than that of the bad social media profile (M = 18.1, SD = 5.52).

There was a statistically significant difference between the quality of social media profiles, $F(1, 67) = 64.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .191$. This indicates that regardless of which resume was displayed (good vs. bad) participants rated the good social media as having a higher initiative work ethic than that of the bad social media profile. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect.

Similarly, there was a significant effect of resume quality (good vs. bad) on initiative work ethic ratings, $F(1, 67) = 6.83$, $p = .011$, $\eta2 = .007$. This indicates that regardless of which social media profile was displayed, participants rated the good resume as having a higher initiative work ethic than that of the bad resume. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect. Fig. 5 represents the perceived initiative work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality.
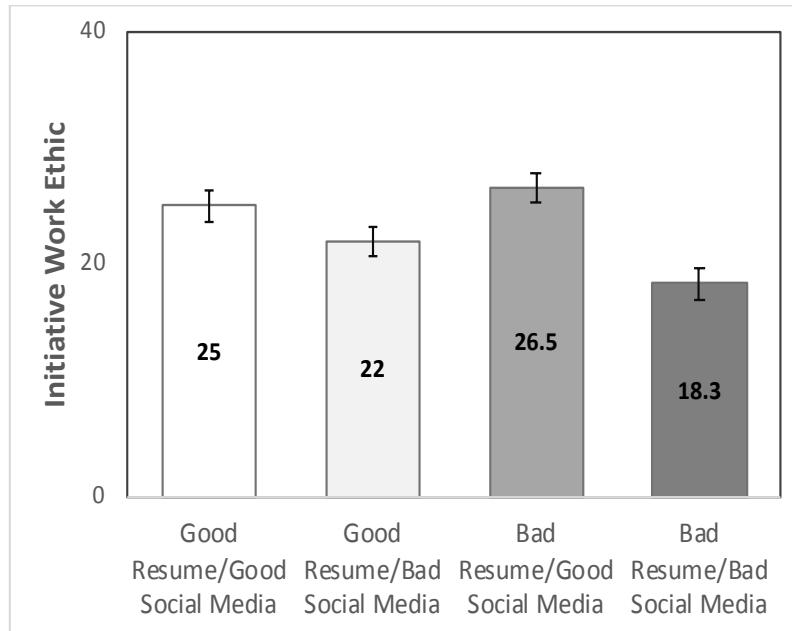

Figure 5. Initiative work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality

3.4 Dependability Work Ethic

Table 7 displays the descriptive statistics for dependability work ethic scores, while Table 8 displays the results of inferential statistics test for dependability work ethic scores.

There was a significant interaction effect between resumes and social media profiles on perceived dependability work ethic, $F(1, 67) = 24.6$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .059$. This indicates that the effect of resume quality on perceived dependability work ethic was dependent on the social media profile quality. Therefore, the interaction term was further examined through simple effects analysis.

Simple effects analysis revealed that a good social media profile (M = 15.8, SD = 2.93) was not rated significantly higher than a bad social media profile (M = 10.3, SD = 3.86) in terms of dependability work ethic when following a good resume, $t(133) = 2.51$, $p = .063$. As for following a bad resume, $t(133) = 9.15$, $p < .001$, the good social media profile (M = 14.9, SD = 3.94) received significantly higher ratings than that of the bad social media profile (M = 10.0, SD = 2.68).

There was a statistically significant difference between the quality of social media profiles, $F(1, 67) = 61.6$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .181$. This indicates that regardless of which resume was displayed (good vs. bad) participants rated the good social media as having a higher dependability work ethic than that of the bad social media profile. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect.

Similarly, there was a significant effect of resume quality (good vs. bad) on dependability work ethic ratings, $F(1, 67) = 25.0$, $p < .001$, $\eta2 = .030$. This indicates that regardless of which social media profile was displayed, participants rated the good resume as having a higher dependability work ethic than that of the bad

resume. However, as pointed out earlier, the interaction effect was significant and therefore the main effect of social media profile should be interpreted in light of the interaction effect. Fig.6 represents the perceived dependability work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality.

Variable	*n*	*M* (*SD*)
Resume		
Good	68	14.8 (3.03)
Bad	68	13.4 (3.40)
Social Media		
Good	68	15.3 (3.50)
Bad	68	10.2 (3.34)

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics for Dependability Work Ethic

Variable	F (1, 67)	p	η^2
Resume	25.0	<.001	.030
Social Media	61.6	<.001	.181
Resume x Social Media	24.6	<.001	.059

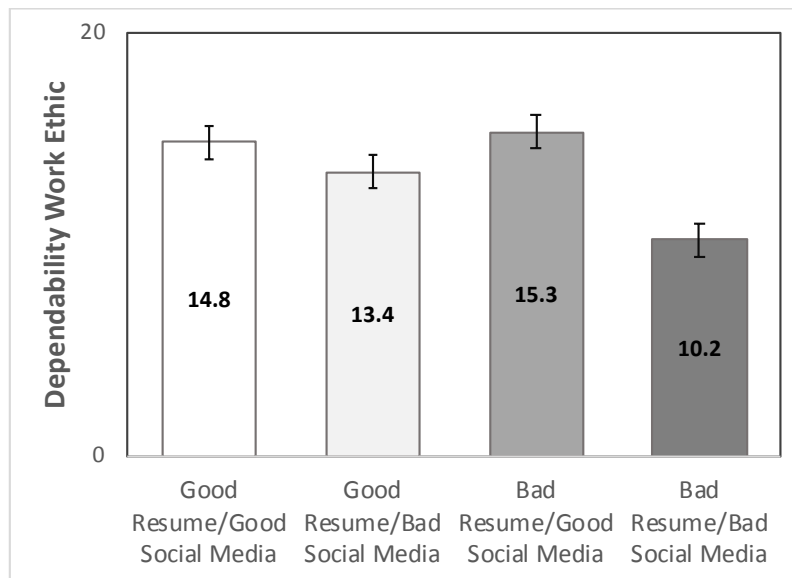Table 8. Dependability Work Ethic ANOVA Results

Figure 6. Dependability work ethic scores as a function of resume and social media quality

IV. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role that social media and limited online information plays in how employers form impressions of potential candidates, based on perceived work ethic scores. The first part of the initial hypothesis in this study (H1a), that a good social media would have a perceived higher work ethic when compared to a bad resume, was supported by the results. As opposed to the first section, the second part of this hypothesis (H1b), that a good social media would have a higher interpersonal, initiative, and dependability work ethic scores than that of a bad resume, was not supported by the results. This finding mirrors the results of other researchers in this field who also stated that impressions via social media can be created quickly[7, 8]. With such little information provided employers must make quick judgements and extrapolate informationoften based on little more than photos. While not every provided hypothesis significant results, it is important to note that the overall work ethic resulted in greater perception levels for the profile that was deemed as a 'good' profile. This agreed with previous research that impressions can be formed very quickly based on the information that is provided in a social media profile [7, 8].

As for the second hypothesis, the first part of the hypothesis in this study (H2a), that a good resume would have a perceived higher work ethic when compared to a bad resume, was not supported by the results. However, the second part of this hypothesis (H2b), that a good resume would have a higher interpersonal, initiative, and dependability work ethic scores than that of a bad resume, was supported by the results. This result is contrary to previous research that found that even a simple spelling error can generate a negative impression of an individual [8]. It is interesting to note that although the overall perceived work ethic was not significantly different, all the different categories of perceived work ethic were found to significantly differ. This is important to note because as more and more interactions become mediated through online means and social media, it is imperative to know what image is being portrayed. While the overall impression might not have a major impact, the key metrics of dependability, initiative, and interpersonal work ethic can be affected by any information that is posted online.

In regard to the third hypotheses both the first (H3a), a good social media resulting in an increased work ethic score, and section (H3b), a bad social media profile resulting in a decrease in work ethic ratings, portions were supported by the results. These results are important because they demonstrate the relationship between social media profiles and the perception of an individual. This role becomes even more important as the day to day lives of many people are increasingly being spent online. This relationship can have a profound impacton the way a social media profile can impact a job candidate. The practice of cybervetting is becoming increasingly common in the work place, placing an importance on having a clean, or good, social media profile [12]. Along with this comes the importance of impression management on social media. While impression management can occasionally carry a negative connotation, it can be an important tool to maintaining a professional appearance as users transition more aspects of their lives online [10].

One limitation that this study encountered would be the number of participants. While a total of 68 participants took part in this experiment, a larger sample size could produce more accurate, significant results, such as supporting the notion of a good resume being rated significantly higher than a bad resume. Another limitation of this study was that it could have encompassed a larger demographic in terms of both race and education. Future studies should look to expand both the sample size along with encompassing a larger and more diverse audience. Other studies should also look to expand upon this study in terms of investigating different perceptions, as this study only focused on perceived work ethic, based on first online impressions.

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