Linking in With Recruiters: How Does LinkedIn Profile Information Impact Ratings of Potential Applicants?

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Two studies were conducted manipulating LinkedIn applicant profiles to examine job-hopping bias. The LinkedIn member was shown to be 1) a job-hopper or not, 2) Black or White, and 3) male or female. Hiring professionals rated the applicant profiles on several dimensions. In Study 1 (N = 200), there was no effect of race or gender, but job-hoppers were rated as less qualified and committed to the organization and less likely to be hired. In Study 2 (N = 231), job-hoppers were additionally found to be less trustworthy and there was a significant interaction of race and job-hopper status.

Keywords: LinkedIn, job-hopping, bias, recruitment, selection

INTRODUCTION

LinkedIn allows users to showcase their professional backgrounds, skills, and experiences (Zide et al., 2014). Despite its popularity for job seeking, there are ongoing uncertainties about the influence and accuracy of information it conveys. For example, because information about sex, race, and color can be gained from pictures readily available in profiles, biases may occur during screening (Di Stasio & Larsen, 2020; Gebru, 2020). However, what has yet to be studied is how the job history information in an applicant's LinkedIn profile may lead to bias in the hiring process. Specifically, individuals who have had a greater number of jobs in a short period of time (i.e., job hoppers) may be viewed more negatively by recruiters. This study examines biases in the hiring process related to job hopping, gender, and race.

BACKGROUND

Job-Hopping

Job-hopping occurs when professionals in any given field frequently move from one employment position to another quickly usually within a year or two (Lake et al., 2018; Pranaya, 2014). Job-hopping has seen recent attention as the nature of career options changes with time (Dokko & Gorli, 2019). For

instance, the "protean career" (Hall, 1996) argues that organizations are no longer in charge of the trajectory of a worker's career, but that the individual worker manages and advances their career options. Organizations simply offer opportunities for professional development and experience. Likewise, the proposed "boundaryless career" (Arthur, 1994) suggests that workers have every opportunity to advance their careers by moving across multiple employers and that single organization does not bind one's career.

Two primary motives for job-hopping have been identified: an escape motive and an advancement motive (Lake et al., 2018). Job-hoppers either change positions frequently to escape what is viewed as undesirable work environments, or they quickly move through various positions to advance their career trajectories and to gain different employment experiences and skills viewed as useful for career enhancement (Pranaya, 2014). Regardless of motive, job-hopping is associated with withdrawal behaviors and high turnover. Job-hopping is an antecedent of turnover and turnover intentions (Chovwen et al., 2014; Saleem & Qamar, 2017). Additionally, job-hopping attitudes have been proposed to moderate the relationship between commitment and turnover intentions (Hemdi & Nasurdin, 2004). Because turnover is costly to organizations (Manjot & Sharma, 2018), applicants with a history of job-hopping may be viewed less favorably by potential employers concerned about retention. Indeed, a 2012 survey of 1,500 recruiters resulted in 39% of them indicating that changing employment (or job-hopping) within one year of hire was the biggest obstacle for unemployed job seekers (Thomson, 2014). Some argue that job-hopping individuals are maladaptive and cannot stay in one position for very long because they cannot integrate into the workspace (Dobrev & Merluzzi, 2018).

Bias in Hiring

Bias against job-hoppers is a topic of debate. Employer surveys suggest that job-hoppers are perceived as disloyal, impatient, and less productive (Fan & De Varo, 2015), possibly stemming from distrust due to transient employment patterns (Camblor & Alcover, 2019). However, job-hopping can also indicate positive traits such as creativity, a global perspective, diverse skills, and adaptability (Manjot & Sharma, 2018; Harris, 2013; Dokko & Gorli, 2019). Organizations that value these traits may find job-hoppers appealing despite potential turnover risks. Experimental research on LinkedIn could further explore these biases.

Racial and gender biases in hiring are well documented, with studies showing discrimination against racial minorities and women. For instance, Bertrand and Mullainathan (2003) discovered that résumés with White-sounding names received 50% more callbacks than those with Black-sounding names despite having identical qualifications. Similarly, gender bias affects women, who, despite constituting 46.8% of the workforce in 2021 and earning more college degrees than men, held only 29.3% of chief executive positions due to stereotypes and negative performance expectations (Heilman et al., 2015). Another factor to consider is that selection biases often occur simultaneously rather than independently. For example, both Black workers and women face discrimination in hiring, with Black women experiencing the highest levels (Ortiz & Roscigno, 2009). We anticipate that job-hopping may exacerbate common biases in selection.

The Current Studies

The studies assessed whether job-hoppers are perceived as less qualified, trustworthy, and committed than those with longer job tenures. While some research suggests positive views of job-hoppers, we hypothesized that recruiters might assess attributes like qualification, trustworthiness, and commitment more negatively in profiles showing job-hopping. Thus, our goal was to explore how job-hopping influences hiring likelihood, focusing on easily assessed profile variables and potential effects of displayed race or gender. Therefore, we formulated the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: *Participants will rate job-hoppers as less qualified, less trustworthy, less committed to the organization, and participants will be less likely to hire the individual than applicants with a LinkedIn profile demonstrating job longevity.*

Hypothesis 2a: *The race of applicant will interact with their job-hopping status, resulting in more negative ratings when the applicant is Black and a job-hopper.*

Hypothesis 2b: *The applicant's gender will interact with job-hopping status, leading to more negative ratings when the applicant is a woman and a job-hopper.*

Hypothesis 3: *There will be a three-way interaction between job-hopping status, race, and gender on employee ratings. Ratings will be most negative when the applicant is Black, a woman, and a job-hopper. Conversely, ratings will be most positive when the applicant is White, a man, and not a job-hopper*

STUDY 1: METHODS

Sample and Procedure

Employed workers (N = 200) with hiring experience were recruited from Prolific, an online research platform, and received $6.00 for completing a 30-minute study. The sample comprised 50% men and 83.33% White, non-Hispanic individuals, with an average age of 40.62 years (SD = 10.94). Most participants (91.92%) worked in white-collar organizations.

Participants provided informed consent, completed the general trust scale, and assumed the role of a hiring manager for a large company seeking a Senior Program Analyst, initiating their search on LinkedIn.com. Each participant viewed a randomly assigned LinkedIn profile, including the profile picture (job-hopper vs. job longevity; Black vs. White; male vs. female). In the job-hopper condition, profiles displayed five jobs in six years, while in the job longevity condition, profiles showed two jobs in six years. Participants also rated the photographs of applicants. Following profile viewing, participants assessed the applicant's qualifications, trustworthiness, likelihood of being hired, and perceived organizational commitment. Last, demographic questions were administered, and participants were debriefed and compensated.

Materials and Measures

Photograph Ratings

Ohanian's (1990) source credibility scale was utilized to mitigate any potential attractiveness bias, encompassing 15 items measuring attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. Participants rated each item on a seven-point scale, alongside an additional item gauging perceived creativity. Internal consistency reliability for each subscale was high ($\alpha_{attractiveness}$ = .89, $\alpha_{trustworthiness}$ = .94, and $\alpha_{expertise}$ = .96). Participants also estimated the candidate's age from seven age ranges. (i.e., under 18, 18-24 years old, 25-34 years old, 35-44 years old, 45-54 years old, 55-64 years old, 65+ years).

Manipulation Check

To verify the effectiveness of the job-hopping manipulation, participants were asked questions about the LinkedIn profile they viewed, such as "How many jobs has the applicant had (including the applicant's current job)?" and "What is the applicant's current job title?"

General Trust

To measure participants' general trust, Yamagishi's (1998) general trust scale was used. The scale consists of 6 items, with responses given on a 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*) scale. The scale measures the participant's general trust in others. An example item is, "Most people are trustworthy." The internal consistency of the general trust scale was α = .91.

Applicant Qualifications

Harrison's (2003) Applicant Qualification Scale (AQS) was used to measure the extent to which participants view the applicants as qualified. The AQS consists of 14 items. Participants responded to statements about the applicant's qualifications using a 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*) Likert

scale. An example item is, “I feel this person would make a good candidate for the job in question.” The internal consistency reliability of the AQS was α = .94.

Perceived Trustworthiness of Applicant

Yeşilbaş and Çetin’s (2019) trust in military leader’s scale was used to measure trustworthiness of the applicants. However, we modified the scale to focus on applicants instead of military leaders. We refer to this scale as the applicant trustworthiness scale (ATS). The scale contains 18 Likert scale items with responses ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). Example items are “the applicant is honest” and “the applicant is truthful.” The internal consistency of the ATS was α = .95.

Hiring Decision

Participants' willingness to hire the applicant was evaluated using a single yes/no item. They were asked “Would you hire this individual?” Hiring choice was coded as 0 = *No* and 1 = *Yes*.

Applicant Commitment

The study assessed recruiters' and hiring managers' trust in an applicant's commitment to the new organization if hired. Perceived likelihood of applicant commitment was gauged using three items, rating the likelihood of commitment for two years and five years on a scale from (*0% likelihood*) to 100 (*100% likelihood*). The overall average score indicated participants' perceived future commitment, with higher scores indicating greater likelihood of staying. The internal consistency reliability for this measure was α = .95.

STUDY 1: RESULTS

Photograph Ratings

ANOVAs were conducted to assess differences between conditions on attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, creativity, and estimated applicant age based on photographs. A significant interaction between applicant race and gender was found for attractiveness ($F(1, 196) = 28.06$, $p < .01$). Bonferroni corrected post hoc analyses revealed differences in attractiveness ratings among various groups. Similarly, significant interactions were found for trustworthiness ($F(1, 196) = 6.56$, $p = .01$) and expertise ($F(1, 196) = 10.01$, $p < .01$), with detailed post hoc analyses conducted. Additionally, there was a main effect of applicant race on creativity ($F(1, 196) = 22.91$, $p = .01$), and a main effect of applicant gender on perceived age ($F(1, 196) = 11.45$, $p = .01$), indicating differences in ratings across groups. These findings suggested potential bias against the white male photograph. Subsequent analyses controlled for attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise, and creativity ratings to ensure accurate interpretation.

Manipulation Checks

To assess the effectiveness of the job-hopping manipulation, an independent samples t-test was conducted with job-hopper condition as the independent variable and the number of jobs manipulation check item as the dependent variable. Results revealed a significant difference between the job-hopping conditions $t(196) = 38.81$, $p < .01$ Specifically, participants in the hopper condition reported an average of 4.90 jobs ($SD = 0.62$), significantly more than those in the non-hopper condition, who reported an average of 2.07 jobs ($SD = 0.38$). This suggests that the manipulation was successful.

Initial Test of Hypotheses

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the study’s variables are displayed in Table 1. Hypothesis 1 proposed that participants would rate job-hoppers as less qualified, trustworthy, committed to the organization, and less likely to be hired than applicants with job longevity. Hypotheses 2a and 2b suggested interactions between race and gender, respectively, with hopper status to predict applicant ratings. Hypothesis 3 proposed a three-way interaction between hopper status, race, and gender. To test these hypotheses, three three-way ANCOVAs with applicant qualifications, trustworthiness, and

commitment as dependent variables were conducted. Additionally, due to its dichotomous nature, a binomial logistic regression was performed to predict hiring choice. Bonferroni corrections were applied to all post hoc comparisons.

Qualifications

In the ANCOVA, we controlled for the effects of trait level trust and ratings of the LinkedIn profile pictures (i.e., age, creativity, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise). Applicant race, applicant gender, and job-hopper status were entered as independent variables predicting perceived qualifications of the applicants. The overall model was significant, $F(13, 184) = 12.02$, $p < .01$. However, after controlling for the covariates, there was only a significant main effect of job-hopper status on perceived applicant qualifications, $F(1, 184) = 4.32$, $p = .04$. Specifically, applicants who had five jobs in six years ($M = 5.36$, $SE = .09$) were perceived as significantly less qualified than applicants who only had two jobs in six years, $M = 5.62$, $SE = .09$, $t(184) = -2.08$, $p = .04$, $d = -.31$.

Trustworthiness

The ANCOVA additionally controlled for the effects of trait level trust and ratings of the LinkedIn profile pictures (i.e., age, creativity, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise). Applicant race, applicant gender, and job-hopper status were entered as independent variables predicting perceived trustworthiness of the applicants. The overall model was significant, $F(13, 184) = 34.46$, $p < .01$. However, after controlling for the covariates, none of the independent variables (nor their interactions) had a significant effect on trustworthiness. Interestingly, the trustworthiness ratings of the applicant's photograph significantly affected the applicant's perceived trustworthiness, $F(1, 184) = 88.81$, $p < .01$.

Commitment

In the ANCOVA, we controlled for the effects of trait level trust and ratings of the LinkedIn profile pictures (i.e., age, creativity, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise). Applicant race, applicant gender, and job-hopper status were entered as independent variables predicting perceived applicant commitment. The overall model was significant, $F(13, 184) = 17.73$, $p < .01$. However, after controlling for the covariates, there was only a significant main effect of job-hopper status on perceived commitment, $F(1, 184) = 88.02$, $p < .01$. Specifically, applicants who had five jobs in six years ($M = 43.17$, $SE = 2.00$) were perceived as significantly less likely to be committed to the organization than applicants who only had two jobs in six years, $M = 69.78$, $SD = 1.95$, $t(183) = -9.38$, $p < .01$, $d = -1.39$.

Likelihood to Hire

In the binomial logistic regression, we controlled for the effects of trait level trust and ratings of the LinkedIn profile pictures (i.e., age, creativity, attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise). Applicant race, applicant gender, and job-hopper status were entered as predictors of whether the participant would hire the applicant. The interactions between the manipulated variables were entered in step two of the model. The results indicated that the overall fit of the model was a significantly better fitting model than an intercepts only model, $c^2(9) = 58.93$, $p < .01$. The addition of the interaction terms did not significantly improve the model $c^2(4) = 7.20$, $p = .13$. After controlling all the covariates in the main effects only model, only job-hopper status was a significant predictor of hiring choice, $B = 1.29$, $SE = .47$, $z = 2.71$, $p < .01$. This indicates that applicants who had five jobs in six years (*probability* = .80, $SE = .05$) were significantly less likely to be hired than applicants who only had two jobs in six years, *probability* = .93, $SE = .03$.

TABLE 1
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN STUDY 1 VARIABLES

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Job Hopper Condition	.52	.50	—											
2. Applicant Race Condition	.49	.50	.06	—										
3. Applicant Gender Condition	.51	.50	-.03	.09	—									
4. Photo Attractiveness	4.85	1.09	.12	**.41**	**.46**	—								
5. Photo Trustworthiness	5.28	1.06	**.20**	**.24**	.10	**.49**	—							
6. Photo Expertise	5.30	1.09	**.17**	**.18**	-.06	**.42**	**.76**	—						
7. Photo Age	3.09	.46	-.10	-.01	**-.23**	**-.18**	-.06	-.04	—					
8. Photo Creativity	4.75	1.16	.12	**.33**	.12	**.41**	**.58**	**.59**	-.13	—				
9. General Trust	4.88	1.05	.00	.12	-.11	.07	**.25**	.13	.11	**.23**	—			
10. AQS	5.49	1.11	**.25**	**.17**	.00	**.30**	**.58**	**.64**	-.09	**.44**	.07	—		
11. ATS	3.61	.59	**.21**	**.19**	.07	**.36**	**.65**	**.57**	-.11	**.56**	**.22**	**.63**	—	
12. Applicant Commitment	56.73	27.76	**.58**	.10	-.10	**.20**	**.48**	**.51**	-.10	**.44**	.11	**.64**	**.58**	—
13. Hiring Choice	.79	.41	**.30**	**.15**	-.07	**.21**	**.39**	**.42**	**-.15**	**.34**	.07	**.75**	**.51**	**.66**

Note. Job hopper condition: 0 = job hopper, 1 = longevity condition. Applicant race condition: 0 = White, 1 = African American. Applicant gender condition: 0 = man, 1 = woman. Hiring choice: 0 = no (do not hire), 1 = yes (hire). Bolded values are significant at $p < .05$.

STUDY 1 DISCUSSION

Study 1 found that job-hoppers were perceived as less qualified and committed than those with longer job tenure. They were also less likely to be hired. However, job-hopping status did not impact perceptions of trustworthiness; subsequently, Hypothesis 1 was only partially supported. Additionally, none of the three-way interactions were significant. Thus, hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 3 were not supported. One obvious possibility for the lack of significant effects is that the study may be underpowered. Another possibility (and perhaps hope) is that race and gender do not significantly affect applicant ratings and likelihood of being hired. We aim to address both possibilities in Study 2. Additionally, the initial test of the study materials revealed that the LinkedIn profile pictures were rated differently based on applicant gender and race. The results indicated that the white male photograph was the most problematic. Therefore, a different white male profile picture was selected for use as the stimulus in Study 2.

STUDY 2: METHODS

Study 2 aimed to replicate the findings of Study 1 while addressing the differences regarding the profile picture ratings found in Study 1. A new photograph was selected for the white male candidate. Pilot testing showed no significant differences in photograph ratings. Consequently, Study 2 used these revised materials to test hypotheses with a second sample of professional recruiters and hiring managers.

Design, Materials/Measures, and Procedure

Study 2 replicated Study 1's design and procedure. Due to no significant differences in photograph ratings from the pilot data, participants were not asked to rate candidate attributes (age, creativity, attractiveness, trustworthiness, expertise) in Study 2. The trustworthiness scale was changed from ATS to Ohanian's (1990) source credibility scale, measuring perceived trustworthiness with five semantic differential items (dependable, honest, reliable, sincere, and trustworthy) rated on a seven-point Likert scale based on characteristics in the LinkedIn profile, with higher scores indicating greater perceived trustworthiness. The internal consistency reliability for the trustworthiness scale was $\alpha = .94$.

Sample

Individuals with hiring experience were recruited via Prolific Academic but were only permitted to take the second survey if they had not taken part in the first (survey participation was tracked through Prolific Academic). A total of 231 hiring professionals provided usable data, compensated $6.00 for their 30-minute participation. The sample was 50% women, 71.9% White, non-Hispanic, with an average age of 41.33 years ($SD = 10.13$). Participants had 7.40 years of hiring experience ($SD = 6.83$) and worked an average of 42.21 hours per week ($SD = 6.00$). Most held white-collar positions, and the organizations varied in size.

STUDY 2: RESULTS

Manipulation Check

An independent samples t-test confirmed the job-hopping manipulation was effective. Participants in the job-hopper condition reported significantly more jobs on average ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 0.74$) compared the non-hopper condition ($M = 2.10$, $SD = 0.40$), $t(229) = 36.3$, $p < .01$. This closely replicates the results of the manipulation check in Study 1, indicating that the manipulation worked as intended.

Test of Hypotheses

The means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations for the study's variables are displayed in Table 2. Using a similar analytical approach as in Study 1, three three-way ANCOVAs were conducted with hopper condition, race condition, gender condition, and their interactions as independent variables to analyze applicant qualification, trustworthiness, and commitment. A binomial logistic regression predicted hiring choice. Bonferroni corrections were applied to all post hoc comparisons.

TABLE 2
MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND INTERCORRELATIONS BETWEEN STUDY 2 VARIABLES

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Job Hopper Condition	.51	.50	—						
2. Applicant Race Condition	.52	.50	.04	—					
3. Applicant Gender Condition	.49	.50	.09	**.22**	—				
4. General Trust	4.96	1.11	.12	.05	-.05	—			
5. AQS	5.67	.99	**.18**	.07	.04	.09	—		
6. Applicant Trustworthiness	5.52	1.11	**.21**	**.14**	.09	**.22**	**.61**	—	
7. Applicant Commitment	60.29	26.91	**.54**	**.20**	.08	**.16**	**.55**	**.59**	—
8. Hiring Choice	.87	.34	**.31**	.12	.12	-.01	**.59**	**.50**	**.66**

Note. Job hopper condition: 0 = job hopper, 1 = longevity condition. Applicant race condition: 0 = White, 1 = African American. Applicant gender condition: 0 = man, 1 = woman. Hiring choice: 0 = no (do not hire), 1 = yes (hire). Bolded values are significant at $p < .05$.

Qualifications

A significant main effect of job-hopper status on perceived applicant qualifications was found, $F(1, 222) = 4.94$, $p = .03$. However, the overall model was not significant, $F(8, 222) = 1.65$, $p = .11$, with the sole significant effect being the main effect of job-hopper status. An exploratory independent samples t-test revealed that job-hoppers ($M = 5.50$, $SE = 0.11$) were rated as significantly less qualified than those with longer job tenures, $M = 5.85$, $SE = .07$, $t(229) = -2.73$, $p < .01$, $d = -.36$. However, this finding should be interpreted cautiously given the overall non-significant model.

Trustworthiness

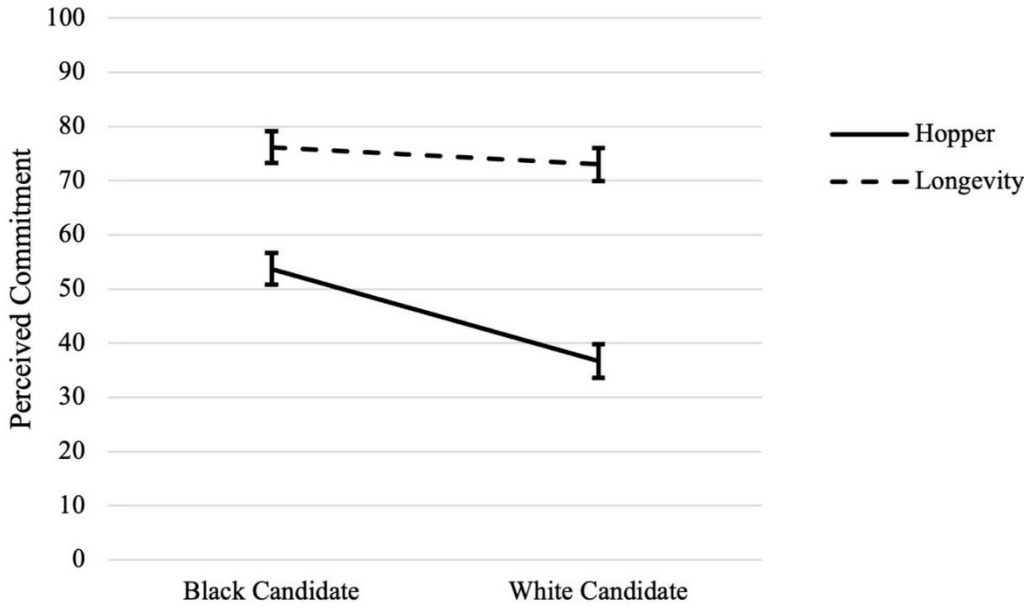
The overall model was significant, $F(8, 229) = 3.42$, $p < .01$. There was a significant main effect of job-hopper status on perceived trustworthiness of the candidate, $F(1, 229) = 7.42$, $p < .01$. The post-hoc analysis revealed job-hoppers ($M = 5.31$, $SE = 0.10$) were perceived as significantly less trustworthy than those with longer job tenures, $M = 5.71$, $SE = 0.10$, $t(222) = -2.72$, $p < .01$, $d = -0.37$. None of the other main effects nor any of the interactions were significant.

Commitment

The overall model was significant, $F(8, 221) = 15.59$, $p < .01$. There was a significant main effect of job-hopper status on the perceived commitment of the candidate, $F(1, 221) = 95.78$, $p < .01$. Job-hoppers ($M = 45.2$, $SE = 21.2$) were perceived as less committed to the organization than applicants with longer job tenures, $M = 74.6$, $SE = 2.11$, $t(221) = -9.79$, $p < .01$, $d = -1.34$. Additionally, there was a significant main effect of candidate race on perceived commitment, $F(1, 221) = 11.43$, $p < .01$. Black candidates ($M = 64.9$, $SE = 2.05$) were perceived as significantly more likely to be committed to the organization than the White candidates, $M = 54.9$, $SE = 2.16$, $t(221) = 3.38$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.46$. A significant interaction between hopper status and race was found, $F(1, 221) = 5.47$, $p = .02$ (see Figure 1). Black job-hoppers ($M = 53.7$, $SE = 2.91$)

were seen as more committed to the organization than White job-hoppers, $M = 36.7$, $SE = 3.06$, $t(221) = 4.05$, $p < .01$, $d = 0.78$.

FIGURE 1
INTERACTION BETWEEN HOPPER STATUS AND RACE ON PERCEIVED CANDIDATE COMMITMENT



Likelihood to Hire

The binomial logistic regression showed that job-hopper status was a significant predictor of hiring choice, $B = 2.49$, $SE = 0.63$, $z = 3.94$, $p < .01$. Job-hoppers (*probability* = .78, $SE = .04$) were significantly less likely to be hired than applicants who only had two jobs in six years, *probability* = .98, $SE = .01$.

STUDY 2: DISCUSSION

The purpose of Study 2 was to replicate the findings from Study 1 utilizing improved materials and to test the hypotheses in a second sample of hiring professionals. Recall, Hypothesis 1 argued that job-hopping would have a main effect on perceived qualifications, perceived trustworthiness, perceived commitment, and likelihood of being hired. Generally, this hypothesis was supported with job-hoppers being viewed as less qualified, less trustworthy, less committed, and were less likely to be hired. Hypothesis 2 argued that there would be interactions between job-hopping and race as well as between job-hopping and gender on these outcomes. We only found evidence for a significant interaction between job-hopping and race for perceived commitment, such that there was no difference between Black candidates and White candidates when they were not job-hoppers. Still, Black candidates were viewed as more likely to be committed than White candidates when they were job-hoppers. Hypothesis 3 proposed a three-way interaction between job-hopping status, race, and gender on the candidate ratings and likelihood to hire. We did not find support for this interaction. These findings effectively replicate our results from Study 1.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

In these two studies, we sought to examine the effect of job-hopping and observable characteristics of candidates on ratings of the candidates and their likelihood of being hired. Across both studies we show that job-hopping status influences perceived qualifications, perceived trustworthiness, perceived

commitment to the organization, and the likelihood that the candidate would be hired. Contrary to our predictions, we largely did not find any effects for gender or race on candidate ratings or hiring choice that would support established issues with gender and racial bias in selection. The studies identified some interesting outcomes, which will be briefly discussed before outlining our research's major implications.

It was noteworthy that ratings of applicant qualifications were consistently lower for job-hoppers than for candidates with job-longevity across both studies. This seems counterintuitive, as the applicant with more jobs, more diverse experiences, differing organizational familiarity, etc. would likely be the more qualified candidate, at least in terms of acquired knowledge. However, this was not the interpretation that participants appeared to make regarding the job-hopper. In this case, one might consider the overqualification factor, which negatively impacts applicant evaluations (Campbell & Hahl, 2022). However, gender moderates the effect of overqualifications as women who are overqualified are favored for the position due to the downplaying of their qualifications that occurs in selection while overqualified men are penalized for being too qualified for the position. It is possible that job-hopping follows a similar pattern in that the job-hopper's qualifications are downplayed compared to the individual with job longevity.

Another finding was that the candidate's trustworthiness was not viewed differently in the first study but was greater for the person with job longevity in the second study. However, this outcome was likely due to a switch in scales. The scale used in Study 1 was deemed too interpersonal to evaluate an unknown candidate, so a more global evaluation of trustworthiness of the person was used for Study 2. As such, this is likely the explanation for the difference between studies. With that in mind, however, it is not surprising that the job-hopper was considered less trustworthy, as it was hypothesized that the multiple departures of different organizations would make the candidate appear harder to trust (to remain at the organization).

One of the most interesting differences between Study 1 and Study 2 was in perceptions of the applicants' commitment. In study one, there was no effect of race in terms of how commitment of the applicant was evaluated. However, in Study 2 there was an interaction between job tenure and race on perceptions of the commitment of candidates in which the Black job-hopper was believed to be more committed to the organization than the White job-hopper (though both were believed to be less committed than the White and Black applicant with job longevity). We do not believe that the difference is due to problems with the LinkedIn model selected, as the original and problematic picture of the White male was replaced for Study 2. Instead, it appears that the black job-hopper was perceived to be more committed than the White one. This is contrary to what was hypothesized, as the established racial bias in selection literature would suggest that applicants of color would be disadvantaged. While this goes against our predictions, the lack of negative effects for race may suggest that racial bias in hiring may be improving. This is an optimistic and desirable suggestion, but may not be the actual explanation, as (Quillian et al., 2017) found in their metal-analysis that racial discrimination remained unchanged for Black applicants during 25 years, and only moderate improvement in racial discrimination occurred for Latinx applicants. Therefore, it is possible that a different, unknown factor influenced the lack of significant findings for the racial (and gender) manipulation or that the fairly homogenous samples used in these studies had an impact.

Limitations and Future Directions

These studies were limited by the lack of ethnic diversity in the samples, which could have impacted the racial manipulations. While LinkedIn use provided external validity, actual hiring decisions involve more complex factors not addressed here, such as using interviews. Despite these limitations, these studies offer insights into how hiring professionals perceive information on LinkedIn about job-hoppers.

Future research should extend these findings by examining these effects in real hiring decisions. While our study used specific criteria (six jobs in five years), future research should explore how varying the number of jobs over the same timeframe impacts job-hopping bias, potentially revealing worsening perceptions with increased job changes. Additionally, investigating industry-specific differences is essential; industries like technology may be more tolerant of job-hopping than sectors like government administration (Lewis & Soroñgon, 2022).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Qualitative data from our studies largely described that the participants' reported concerns stem directly from the applicants' short job tenures, indicating that recruiters and hiring managers may be aware of their biases. Selection experts should be trained to be aware of their own implicit biases (as well as explicit biases that exist in selection). Having multiple-hurdle or panel interviews may present one way to combat bias against job-hoppers. Another can draw from remedial training for selection experts struggling to remain impartial. To help minimize bias during selection, organizations may benefit from follow-up with applicants post-selection to ensure new hires feel that they have experienced a fair selection process. It is quick work to provide new hires with a sound psychometric survey to assess their recruiting and selection experience within 30 days of onboarding. This can be used to provide evidence that new hires are satisfied with the selection process and have not noted any concerns.

Hiring professionals have a slight bias against job-hoppers, which may result in competent candidates being overlooked. It is the responsibility of selection experts to do their upmost to address bias in selection and to help improve this process. Bias against job-hoppers may not be a top priority of many selection experts. Still, any source of bias in these processes can have negative outcomes for both employer and applicant. Additionally, job-hopping is only becoming more common and employers can expect much of the workforce to hold multiple previous positions (Christian, 2022). Therefore, penalty against these types of workers benefits no one and jeopardizes selecting the most qualified candidate for the job.

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