

**FEEDBACK REPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS**

**Types and Frequency of Social Media Information and Job  
Seekers' Attitudes Toward Cybervetting in China**

**SMU REB # 22-038**

**Research Project conducted by:**

**Dr. Nicolas Roulin**

**Zhixin Liu**

Department of Psychology

Saint Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3C3

Email: [nicolas.roulin@smu.ca](mailto:nicolas.roulin@smu.ca)

Many employers or hiring managers are reviewing applicants' social media profiles as part of their hiring process, either as an applicant screening technique or as an online background check. Such “cybervetting” is often perceived negatively by job seekers. Yet, research is largely limited to North American or European social media platforms and job seekers. And we know very little about attitudes toward cybervetting in other regions or cultures. This project thus examined Chinese job seekers’ attitudes with three popular platforms in China (WeChat, QQ, and Weibo).

### **The Issue:**

Past research has identified three central elements of job seekers’ attitudes toward cybervetting: how fair job they perceive this method to be, how much they view it as invading their privacy, and how effective they see it (i.e., as a valid way to assess their job qualifications). Such attitudes depend on the social media platform used. For instance, attitudes are more positive when cybervetting is done on LinkedIn than Facebook or Twitter. But a few important questions remain: Are job seekers’ attitudes toward cybervetting more/less positive in other cultures, such as in China? Do they also vary by Chinese social media platforms? Are such attitudes related to social media posting habits? And, are there individual differences (e.g., in demographics or personality)?

### **The Research:**

We examined attitudes toward cybervetting from 200 Chinese job seekers about the three most popular social media platforms in the country: WeChat’s Moments, QQ’s Qzone, and Sina Weibo. Those platforms are somewhat similar to Facebook, (the defunct) MySpace, and Twitter, respectively. They also reported how frequently they posted different types of information on these platforms, and we examined neutral or positive information (e.g., information about family, work achievements) and negative information (e.g., negative comments about race, gender, or religion, profanity). Finally, they completed a measure of extraversion.

### **The Findings:**

A few key results emerged: (1) Attitudes were generally negative across all platforms, although slightly more positive for WeChat than QQ or Weibo. (2) Chinese job seekers might be less critical about the fairness and job-relevance of information employers can find on social media than North Americans, but attitudes were equivalent for privacy invasion. (3) The more frequently job seekers' posted content on social media, the more positive their attitudes toward cybervetting. This was true for both positive and negative information. (4) Male and more extraverted job seekers had more positive attitudes.

### **The Practical Implications:**

Organizations should be mindful that cybervetting might impede the recruitment of talents across contexts, and especially for female job seekers.

For the full paper published in the *International Journal of Selection & Assessment* (IJSA), see: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/ijsa.12424>