

Web Recruitment: Impact of Aesthetics and Playfulness on User's Initial Affective Reactions as it Relates to Applicant Attraction

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Abstract

Acquiring pools of qualified job applicants can be a costly endeavor for organizations. Many companies have turned toward technology for assistance in attracting talent, thus the design of recruitment websites becomes an important consideration. While there are many aspects to website design, our focus is on a website's "façade," namely playfulness and aesthetics, and their impact on applicant attraction. We explore the relationships among organizations' recruitment website façades, initial affective reactions to the façades, and applicant attraction with that organization. Responses to a questionnaire completed by senior-level university students provide data for analysis. The results support our hypotheses that initial affective reactions mediate the relationship between both website playfulness and website aesthetics with applicant attraction. These findings reflect the importance of website design when the Internet is used as a recruitment channel.

Keywords: Website façade, playfulness, aesthetics, initial affective reactions, applicant attraction, recruitment, mediation, indirect effect.

1. INTRODUCTION

Using digital resources has significantly changed how job seekers research organizations and how organizations recruit potential applicants. Job postings (estimated at 4.7 million in 2010; Hagerty & Light, 2010) can be found through job

search engine sites, job boards, niche job sites, social media, professional networking sites, and company websites. According to the results of a biennial survey on workplace trends (SHRM Workplace Forecast, 2011), 38% of its respondents, all human resources professionals, indicated that an increased use of Internet

recruiting was of major strategic impact. Further, 46% reported they were currently increasing their investment in Internet recruiting. In addition, Pew Internet Surveys (2011) reports that 56% of job seekers use the Internet to look for employment. The benefits that web-based technology offers to organizations in their recruiting efforts include improving recruiting efficiency, increasing the quality and quantity of applicants, and communicating organizational brand identity (Johnson & Gueutal, 2011). However, organizations still need to be confident that a website approach reaches the people the organizations need to reach, is viewed as credible, and captures the viewer's attention through the effective use of color and design (Breagha, 2009).

Given the unlimited options for designing a website and the associated cost of that design, knowing the impact of the website on the potential applicant is important for understanding how recruiting is happening in today's digital age. Previous research (Cober, Brown, Levy, Cober, & Keeping, 2003; Thoms, Chinn, Goodrich, & Howard, 2004; Williamson, Lepak, & King, 2003) found that a website's ease of navigation and artistic features affect how a potential applicant stays engaged in the recruiting process. Karr (2000) found that at least one-quarter of all college students will not continue in the recruitment process if a company's website is poorly designed. Hoffman and Novak (1996) found that potential applicants will leave a website when they become frustrated with use. Given the benefits and potential strategic impact of using the Internet for recruiting processes, it is important to identify how specific aspects of a website affect the potential applicant's job search process. Cober, Brown, Keeping, and Levy (2004), citing Tractinsky, Katz and Ikar (2000), state that the website "façade," or what users first experience, is "what cues users about the inside" (Tractinsky, et al., p. 140), and can be related to an applicant's initial affective reactions. These reactions can then be linked to how interested the applicant remains in applying for the intended position. Our research tests the relationship between applicants' affective reactions and the specific website façade elements of playfulness and aesthetics as proposed in the Cober et al. (2004) model.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section describes the variables of interest in our study and a selection of the existing research impacting our model development. As mentioned, Cober et al. (2004) present a model to guide future research surrounding the use of organizational websites for recruitment. They propose that job seekers are initially affected by the façade of a website. These affective reactions, coupled with system features, influence perceptions of usability and ultimately predict applicant attraction when accounting for moderating and mediating influences.

Website Façade: Playfulness and Aesthetics

The word 'façade' stems from the French and typically refers to the front of a building. In architecture, the facade of a building is the most important from a design point of view as it sets the tone for the rest of the building. The transference of this definition to the technological community becomes apparent as the look and feel of a webpage or screen design suggests what the viewer might expect and feel.

The website façade is a critical element in capturing an applicant's interest because an applicant forms impressions of images very quickly. Results of one study suggest that impressions are made in the first 50 milliseconds of viewing and these snap decisions about the quality of a webpage have a lasting impact on their opinions (Lindgaard, Fernandes, Dudek, & Brown, 2006). This lasting effect of a first impression, a kind of "halo effect," can influence a user's reactions to the site. The authors propose that the halo effect happens because cognitive bias suggests people enjoy being right, so continuing to use a website that gave a good first impression helps to prove to the individual that he or she made a good initial decision.

Research in human computer interaction has initially focused on effectiveness and efficiency of interactions; however, a shift in focus has been made to the whole user experience, which includes emotions and visual aesthetics. The aesthetics of a website are its design elements.

The greater the unity of these elements, the more aesthetically pleasing the website is to the viewer. Moshagen and Thielsch (2010) provide a discussion of early research on aesthetics. Their review of literature notes Birkhoff (1933), von Ehrenfels (1890), and Eyesenck (1941) suggesting that aesthetics of an object depends on two factors, namely simplicity and

complexity, but these studies disagreed regarding the relationship between these factors (Moshagen & Thielsch, 2010). Berlyne's (1971) psychological theory of aesthetics resolves the contrast in these early studies by proposing that aesthetic appraisal is determined by the arousal potential of an object. Thus, this theory suggests that complexity can both increase and decrease aesthetic appraisal (Moshagen & Thielsch, 2010).

A myriad of studies of website visual aesthetics have been conducted. Besides complexity and simplicity, these studies have included text, fonts, proportions, images, icons, color, variety, animations, variety, and many more surrogates for aesthetics. Several of these have focused on the viewer's response to particular aspects of aesthetics. For example, a study by Deng and Poole (2012) suggests significant influences of webpage complexity and order on customer's preferences for webpages and a moderating effect of customer's shopping motivational orientation on his/her preference for webpage complexity. A study by Wang, Minor, and Wei (2011) investigated online consumers' cognitive, affective, and conative responses to web aesthetics. Their findings resulted in dissimilar patterns when two dimensions of web aesthetics, aesthetic formality and aesthetic appeal, were investigated. Perceived aesthetic formality was found to have a positive influence on satisfaction, while perceived aesthetic appeal had a negative influence on satisfaction when consumers pursued purchase task. These two studies alone exemplify the various pieces of aesthetics in screen design and how the pieces can impact the viewers' reactions.

The term 'playfulness' suggests full of fun and frolicsome. This attribute, too, is found in screen designs and has been shown to influence the viewer's response to webpages. Identified by Moon and Kim (2001) as an extension of the Technology Acceptance Model ("TAM"), the playfulness of a website relates to how entertaining the viewer believes it to be; more specifically, the authors define perceived playfulness as the extent to which the individual "perceives that his or her attention is focused on the interaction with the [technology], is curious during the interaction, and finds the interaction intrinsically enjoyable or interesting"(p. 219). Cober et al. provide as an example the Disney website, which the authors describe as "flashy and fun to watch" (2004, p. 628). Moon and Kim (2001) offer the prescient advice that

playfulness would join the TAM's ease of use and usefulness as an important issue, it will play an important role in increasing usability, and that interface design must consider both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations of the viewer.

Webster and Martocchio (1992) provide results of their investigation on microcomputer playfulness, which describes an individual's tendency to interact spontaneously, inventively, and imaginatively with microcomputers. They found that microcomputer playfulness relates positively to mood, involvement, and satisfaction.

Initial Affective Reactions

Affective reactions have been studied in relation to numerous constructs over the years (Watson, 2000; Madden, Allen & Twible, 1988; Brief & Weiss, 2002). Positive and negative affect fall along two independent continua. Positive affect can include reactions such as enthusiasm, excitement, interest, and activity. Negative affect reactions can include distress, guilt, irritability, hostility, and shame. Following the consumer literature, Cober et al (2004) postulated that website façade, specifically playfulness and aesthetics, would elicit positive rather than negative emotions and that emotional reaction is ultimately related to how interested the individual is in engaging in the recruitment process with the organization.

Because affect is found to contain two separate, orthogonal dimensions, a person would not be expected to react both positively and negatively to the same website façade. Rather, an initial affective reaction would be one or the other. Following Cober et al. (2004) and Page and Herr (2002), positive affect is more likely to be the default emotion when experiencing a new item.

However, positive affect has not been significantly studied in the recruitment literature. Ashford and Saks (2002) found a relationship between the actual materials used to recruit a potential applicant and the continuing attitudes that applicant may hold if he or she becomes an employee. If, as Linaard et al. (2006) state, viewers form impressions within 50 milliseconds of seeing a recruitment website, then identifying how an applicant's initial affective reactions are influenced by the website's façade may play a significant role in helping employers understand how to maximize the effectiveness of recruitment webpages and the resulting long-term attitudes of new hires.

Applicant Attraction

Various characteristics of a website have been linked to a person's interest in employment with a particular organization. For example, organizational image has been linked to web recruitment using person-job fit to explore the relationship (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007; Lynes & Marler, 2011). A significant positive relationship between website vividness and applicant attraction was found when an organization possessed a good reputation but provided a low amount of information (Williamson et al., 2010). Paths between website attitudes, organizational attitudes, and employment intention have been explored (Allen et al, 2007). In a multi-method study utilizing eye-tracking, verbal protocol analysis, and survey data, Allen, Biggane, Pitts, Otondo, and Scotter (2013) found that job-seekers focus verbal attention more on content than design, especially when information relates to an actual job opening. In addition, perception of communication features of a website helped explain applicant attitude toward the organization and intent to pursue employment and design helped explain applicant evaluation of the website.

In these studies, the mediating role of initial affective reactions was not considered. These studies examined only the direct effect of a website's façade on applicant attraction. However, Cober et al's (2004) model very clearly postulates that initial affective reactions mediate the relationship. Without examining the influence that affective reactions can have on a person's interest in a particular organization, we do not have a full understanding of the impact of website playfulness and aesthetics on why a person might choose to work for one organization over another.

3. MODEL DEVELOPMENT

Our study builds upon and extends the existing research by looking specifically at playfulness and aesthetics, the initial affective reaction to those website façade components, and the overall impact on applicant attraction to the organization. Therefore, based on the review of the literature and Cober et al's (2004) work in particular, we propose the following relationships between an organization's website façade and applicant attraction to that organization as mediated by initial affective reactions.

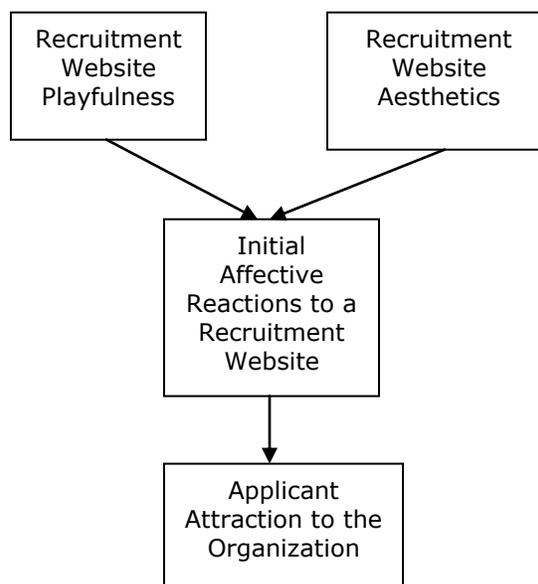


Figure 1.

4. HYPOTHESES

Given the Cober, et al. (2004) research propositions regarding web site playfulness and aesthetics and the Lingaard et al. (2006) finding that an applicant forms an impression almost immediately when viewing a website for the first time, we postulate that an applicant's reaction to a website's façade will more than likely be along the positive affect continuum rather than the negative affect continuum. We propose and test two hypotheses. Both hypotheses are stated in the alternative. The first identifies the relationship between a website's level of playfulness and the impact positive affect will have on the likelihood the viewer will be interested in employment. The second hypothesis identifies the relationship between a website's level of aesthetically pleasing attributes and the impact positive affect will have on the likelihood the viewer will be interested in employment.

H1₁: Initial Positive Affective Reactions mediate the relationship between the Playfulness of a company's Recruitment Website and Applicant Attraction.

H1₂: Initial Positive Affective Reactions mediate the relationship between the Aesthetics of a company's Recruitment Website and Applicant Attraction.

5. METHOD

Sample and Procedure

This study utilized a student population from a private, Catholic university located in the Southwest United States. Our sample consisted of 62 students in several senior level capstone classes over multiple semesters. Data was collected during class time. Even though the students were provided the opportunity to decline participation at no cost to them, all of the students chose to continue participation. No incentives were offered to the students. The participants were primarily traditional undergraduate (75.4%) and master's (14.8%) students majoring in a variety of business subjects. The average respondent was 23.5 years of age. Sixty-one percent were female and 16.4% were white while 83.6% were racial minorities. When asked about their current employment situation, 80.3% answered they were either not employed or only employed part-time (working less than 35 hours per week). Of those working, 82% answered that they have only worked in a full-time capacity for four years or less with 25% indicating that they intend to remain with their current employer for one year or less. Forty-nine percent of the participants stated that they would prefer another job to the one they currently hold and 75% stated that they thought it would be somewhat or extremely difficult to find another job. When asked if the participant is actively involved in the recruitment process, 73.3% answered yes. Therefore, these statistics indicate that the sample of students who participated in this study were appropriate to test our hypotheses since the majority of the participants had experience working and were currently engaged in a recruiting process. See Table 3 in the Appendix for descriptive statistics.

Several different sources were used to identify a total of fifteen organizational websites for the study. Organizations were chosen based on recognition as a local or national leader in recruitment website design, identified through previous research of web recruitment, or were located in the same geographic area as the respondents. Each student was provided with a presentation containing links to 15 different company's recruitment websites. Students were instructed both orally and in writing to view each recruitment website in the order presented in the survey for approximately 20 seconds then complete the hardcopy questionnaire applicable to that particular company. Students did not

navigate through the web pages, but focused solely on the recruitment page. The order of viewing was randomized to account for biases that might occur due to the previous page viewed. Since each student viewed each of the 15 websites, a total of 930 observations were possible.

Measures

Website Playfulness. We used the playfulness items identified by Webster and Martocchio (1992) in their construct development utilizing microcomputers. They utilized five independent studies involving more than 400 participants to develop a valid measure of microcomputer playfulness (Webster & Martocchio, 1992). Characteristics of playfulness included in their study were spontaneous, imaginative, flexible, creative, playful, original, and inventive. These seven items are the basis for the survey questions incorporated in our study. Students were asked to describe the playfulness of each website by selecting the number which best described themselves when interacting with the website. The numbers were on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. A rating of 3 is considered Neutral. A factor analysis established that all items fell on one factor with a total eigenvalue = 4.64. Cronbach's alpha for our scale = .915.

Website Aesthetics. Aesthetics represent the overall stylistic or innovative features of a website. It has many facets such as color, fonts, pictures, the use of whitespace, and unity and has been shown to be positively associated with organizational attractiveness (Cober et al, 2004). The literature provides several items that can potentially measure aesthetics. These include beauty, meaningfulness (Schenkman & Jonsson, 2000), icons, coherency, layout (Ismail & Kadir, 2004; Matthews, 1999), proportion, symmetry, simplicity, complexity, unity, equilibrium, regularity, economy, density, and rhythm (Ngo, 2004). We based our survey items for aesthetics on a combination of characteristics cited. Items measured in our study include proportion, meaningfulness, simplicity, beauty, symmetry, complexity, unity, and equilibrium. Respondents were asked to rate the web page for each of the items from 1 to 5 with 1 being Strongly Disagree and 5 being Strongly Agree. A rating of 3 is considered Neutral.

A factor analysis identified that our eight-item scale loaded on two factors. However, the

second factor contained only two items. Based on previous statistical research that finds that factors with less than three items are generally unstable (Costello & Osbourne, 2005), we dropped the two items, simplicity and complexity, from further analysis. While we do not have a definitive reason for the two-factor outcome, we can speculate that student responses to the degree of simplicity and degree of complexity may have been based on the recruitment website content rather than the website's appearance. When these two items were eliminated, the single factor resulted in an eigenvalue of 4.002. Our six-item aesthetics scale results in a Cronbach's alpha of .882. Nunnally (1978) has indicated 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient; thus, the items are considered an adequate measure of this variable.

Control Variables. We controlled for demographic characteristics when exploring the relationship with a company's website façade and a student's interest in working for that company. Prior research suggests that gender and age are significant in predicting applicant attraction (Williamson et al, 2010). In addition to these two variables, we also tested for the influence of race.

Initial Affective Reactions. Initial affective reactions are measured by the 20-item Positive Affect-Negative Affect Scale ([PANAS]; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). This scale measures a person's current mood and emotional response to a stimulus, which is, for our study, the organization's recruitment webpage. The scale includes items such as interested, excited, enthusiastic, and attentive to measure positive affect. Distressed, upset, irritable, and hostile measure negative affect. For our study, we measured positive affect with 10 items. Items in our study are measured on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being very slightly or not at all to 5 being extremely. Participants are asked to rate their emotional response to the website immediately after viewing the organization's recruitment webpage and before they continued to the next organization's website. The ten items that form the positive affect scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .951.

Applicant Attraction. There are several instruments that measure aspects of job seeker's interest in employment with an organization. In order to measure the student's employment interest in the organization, we

used the following five items from the organizational attractiveness scale by Turbon and Keon (1993):

1. I would exert a great deal of effort to work for this company
2. I am interested in pursuing my application with this company
3. I would like to work for this company
4. I would accept a job offer
5. I am no longer interested in this company except as a last resort

Students were asked to respond using a scale of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) with the last question reversed coded. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale is .936.

Bias Analysis

Efforts were taken to reduce bias by randomizing the order in which students viewed recruitment websites for data collection. However, since each participant in our study evaluated more than one of the organization's recruiting webpages, our concern surrounded clustering at the student level for analysis (Williamson et al, 2010). For the 62 participants, each evaluated 15 companies resulting in 930 possible observations in our dataset. We tested for autocorrelation by evaluating the relationships between our independent variables and our dependent variable by website. This resulted in significant findings for all 15 websites despite the smaller number of observations (62) when using linear regression. Our results suggest that autocorrelation is not a concern in the analysis.

6. RESULTS

An exploration of the variance of playfulness and aesthetics within our chosen websites was conducted. In order to identify those websites that exhibited low or high playfulness measures, the seven items used to measure the playfulness construct were averaged. This provided a playfulness score for each respondent for each organization. This score was compared to a score of 3, which represents Neutral on the Likert scale used in the survey. This resulted in 12 of the 15 companies having a significant deviation from the Neutral measure for Playfulness at the .05 level. Nine of these companies reflect positive Playfulness while 3 are considered to be Unplayful. The overall average playfulness score for all websites combined was 3.32 with a standard deviation of

1.02. Table 1 reflects the mean differences in average playfulness of organizational websites:

Organization	Mean Difference	t
Goldman Sachs	1.214	12.483*
Johnson & Johnson	.989	12.424*
General Electric	.716	7.481*
C.I.A.	.684	8.023*
Walt Disney	.594	5.710*
Kohl's	.579	5.231*
Verizon	.483	4.410*
IBM	.359	2.374*
BP America	.345	3.284*
Sprint	.194	1.593
Microsoft	.192	1.584
Valero	.038	.372
Deloitte & Touche	-.332	-3.012*
Google	-.622	-5.189*
Macy's	-.651	-4.358*

* - Denotes websites which are significantly different than 3 at the .05 level.

Table 1. Variance in Playfulness of Websites

Microsoft, Sprint and Valero were the three organizations that did not have a statistically significant difference from the neutral value of 3 on the Playfulness scale. Deloitte & Touche, Macy's, and Google webpages were scored below Neutral indicating these webpages lacked Playfulness. The remaining 9 organizations acquired scores suggesting the façade was Playful.

The same procedure followed for the Playfulness measure was used to determine if variations existed for Aesthetics in the 15 websites viewed. The items for this construct were also averaged to provide an aesthetics score for each respondent for each organization. This score was compared to a score of 3, which represents Neutral on the Likert scale used in the survey. Twelve of the fifteen websites had an Aesthetics score significantly greater than the Neutral value of 3. Two websites, Deloitte & Touche and Macy's, were not significantly different than our Neutral measure at the .05 level. Google was the one website which had a significant unfavorable Aesthetics rating by viewers. While Macy's also had an Unplayful score, it was not significantly different from neutral due to its wider confidence interval. The overall average aesthetics score for all websites combined was 3.48 with a standard deviation of .857. Table 2

displays the differences from neutral and the significance level.

Organization	Mean Difference	t
Johnson & Johnson	.882	9.906*
Goldman Sachs	.831	7.713*
General Electric	.803	10.489*
C.I.A.	.791	10.945*
Walt Disney	.715	8.114*
Verizon	.637	6.573*
BP America	.605	6.411*
Microsoft	.505	5.283*
Kohl's	.487	5.198*
IBM	.457	3.927*
Valero	.455	5.620*
Sprint	.336	3.169*
Deloitte & Touche	.185	1.783
Google	-.238	-2.229*
Macy's	-.290	-1.923

* - Denotes websites which are significantly different than 3 at the .05 level.

Table 2. Variance in Aesthetics of Websites

Our hypotheses propose both a direct and indirect effect of Playfulness, Aesthetics, and Initial Affective Reactions on the Applicant Attractiveness based on viewing a company's recruitment website. While structural equation modeling is often used to test complicated causal relationships amongst constructs, our proposed relationship can be determined with traditional linear regression analysis and a follow up test of significance.

In order to determine if mediation (indirect effects) exists, we examined the relationships of our constructs according to the diagram below:

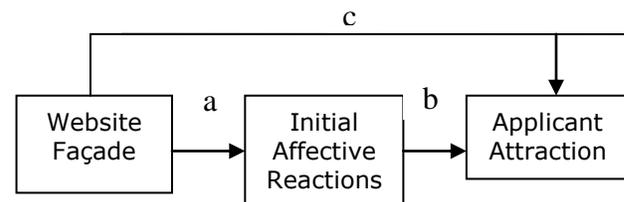


Figure 2.

In order to test the hypotheses, we use the methods proposed by Preacher and Hayes (2008) and the SPSS software. This approach

utilizes bootstrap confidence intervals, which is preferred over other common approaches for identifying the indirect effects of the mediator variable. We used the default setting of 1000 bootstrap samples to correct for biases in the distribution of the indirect effect.

Table 4 (Appendix) provides details of our statistical analysis of the direct and indirect relationships of our variables under study. The results presented have been controlled for age, gender, and race.

The statistical tests result in support of both the first and second null hypotheses. Our analysis indicates that Playfulness and Aesthetics directly affects our dependent variable, Applicant Attractiveness ($p = .000$). However, our hypotheses suggest that initial affective reactions to these two facets of website façade provides an indirect effect on the applicant attraction construct. We proposed that positive affect would mediate this established direct relationship. Significant relationships between website façade factors and positive affect factors are evident. Both website Playfulness and Aesthetics were significantly related to positive affect measures. Results suggest Partial Mediation rather than Full Mediation of positive affect factors since both the façade variable and the emotion variable remain significant when used to predict Applicant Attraction to the organization.

Despite the result of an indirect effect of positive affect response, it is necessary to determine if this result is statistically significant. A Z-test was performed using the unstandardized beta of the indirect effect and the standard error of the indirect effect (Holmbeck, 2002). We were able to use the coefficient and standard error of the indirect beta from the results of bootstrapping provided by the SPSS add-in developed by Hays (2013). The Z-value for the indirect effect of positive emotions with playfulness is 10.304.

The Z-value for the indirect effect of positive emotions with aesthetics is 10.213. These values indicate that the effect of the mediator is statistically significant.

7. DISCUSSION

The results of our study establish not only the impact a website's façade has on a applicant's attraction to an organization, but also the role that initial affective reactions, specifically positive affect, play in the process. We found

that positive affect mediates the relationship between both a company's website's playfulness and its aesthetics with a viewer's interest in employment with that company.

The design and content of a recruitment website can influence a viewer's reaction to an organization, ultimately influencing their interest in employment. As part of a report to organizations regarding the use of human resource information systems, Johnson and Gueutal (2011) conducted an informal study with college students regarding organizational web presence, and found students viewed the firm "with a less technologically advanced and dynamic recruiting website as a less attractive employer, and as failing to be a leader in its industry (even though it was)" and believed that the website sent the message that the organization lacked innovation and quality (p. 8). Our research helps guide companies in their efforts to attract qualified applicant pools by addressing the playfulness and aesthetics of their recruitment webpage, so that companies can establish an inviting yet sophisticated web presence.

Aesthetic properties of a website which include proportion, meaningfulness, beauty, symmetry, unity, and equilibrium should be considered when designing the organization's recruitment website. Characteristics of playfulness, which include spontaneity, imaginativeness, flexibility, creativity, originality, and inventiveness, are also considerations that should not be overlooked in the facade design. These design details influence the positive affect of the viewers and ultimately impact applicant interest in the organization. This finding supports a portion of the theoretical framework proposed by Cober et al. (2004).

8. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

While our study did support the influence of façade on positive affect, we did not examine the role that negative affect may have on applicant attraction. Given that the initial reactions are immediate and normally individuals take more time to develop negative responses to new objects (Lingaard et al, 2006; Page & Herr, 2002), we were not able to investigate negative affect with our current design. However, future research under a more experimental or time-series method could investigate whether negative affect, if any, may

be derived from viewing organizational recruitment websites.

Another limitation of this study is the sample of respondents. Data were collected from primarily traditional undergraduate students at only one university. Further support for positive affect as a mediator's role in a website's impact on applicant attraction may be found by expanding the characteristics of the sample. In addition to age, race, and gender as control variables, factors used in other studies of a similar nature include outcome expectancy, familiarity, and employer reputation.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The use of digital resources and company websites for the recruitment of qualified applicants is extensive. The design and content of these pages can directly impact the viewer's interest in applying for open positions. This study provides additional data for organizations wishing to expand their pool of job applicants via attention to playfulness and aesthetics. According to our findings and in support of other studies, companies should continue to maintain recruitment websites that are visually appealing to the job seeker. Webpages that are aesthetically pleasing and playful stimulate positive affect, which ultimately increases the job applicant's attraction to the organization.

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Appendix

	Observations	Mean	Median	Maximum	Minimum	Std. Dev.
Age	915	23.51	22.00	48	20	4.937
Gender	915	.64	1.000	2	0	.513
Race	915	5.23	5.000	8	2	1.047
Playfulness	916	3.37	3.429	5	1	.944
Aesthetics	916	3.53	3.500	5	1	.747
Positive Affect	914	2.18	2.000	5	1	.995
Applicant Attraction	909	4.55	4.600	7	1	1.518

Note: The number of observations differs based on missing data.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Path	IV	Mediator	DV	Coeff	se	t	P	AdjR2	Bootstrap se	Indirect Beta
a	Playfulness	Positive Affect		.5650	.0295	19.1629	.0000			
b		Positive Affect	Applicant Attraction	.6109	.0496	12.3079	.0000			
c	Playfulness		Applicant Attraction	.7628*	.0473	16.1270	.0000	.3351	.0335	.7628-.4176=.3452
ab	Playfulness	Positive Affect	Applicant Attraction	.4176**	.0520	8.0348	.0000			Partial Mediation
a	Aesthetics	Positive Affect		.6681	.0385	17.3612	.0000			
b		Positive Affect	Applicant Attraction	.6327	.0484	13.0852	.0000			
c	Aesthetics		Applicant Attraction	.9353*	.0607	15.4073	.0000	.3343	.0414	.9353-.5125=.4228
ab	Aesthetics	Positive Affect	Applicant Attraction	.5125**	.0643	7.9668	.0000			Partial Mediation

* - Total Effect of IV on DV.

** - Direct Effect of IV on DV.

Table 4. Results of Tests for Initial Affective Reactions as a Mediator Variable between Website Façade and Applicant Attraction.