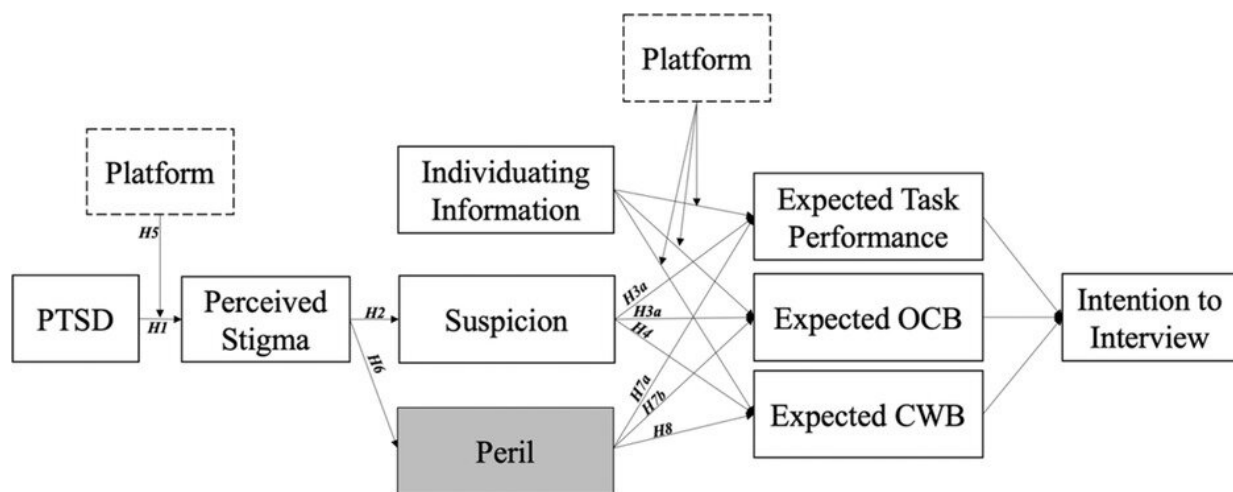


The impact of social media disclosures on veteran hiring

June 23 2022



Research model. Note: OCB = organizational citizenship behaviors; CWB = counterproductive work behaviors. We tested platform effects only in Study 2 and Study 3. We added the construct Peril to our model in Study 4. Credit: *Personnel Psychology* (2022). DOI: 10.1111/peps.12520

Asper Assistant Professor Wenxi Pu wants to shine a light on the stigmatizing effects that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has on veterans who are looking to re-enter the workforce. Alongside co-authors Philip L. Roth, Jason B. Thatcher, Christine Nittrouer, and Mikki Hebl, Dr. Pu examines the role of social media disclosures of PTSD on hiring assessments of veterans in their paper entitled "Post-traumatic stress disorder and hiring: The role of social media disclosures

on stigma and hiring assessments of veterans." The paper is published in *Personnel Psychology*.

Supporting [veterans](#) returning from combat zones and re-entering [civilian life](#) through social media platforms is becoming increasingly popular, with many of these platforms connecting veterans with PTSD to resources as they make the transition. PTSD, a typically invisible stigma in offline contexts, can become starkly visible online since a significant number of veterans disclose their PTSD status on [social media platforms](#). These online disclosures may be inadvertently discovered by hiring managers performing social media assessments (i.e., using social media to check job candidates). The disclosure of one's PTSD status through joining an online group or posting to such platforms can have negative effects on hiring decisions, due to the bias against those struggling with combat-borne mental illnesses. The consequences might include greater suspicion of those with PTSD and the fear of PTSD-related outbursts. Oftentimes this means veterans with PTSD are given lower hiring-related ratings.

There are crucial ethical and legal implications of the authors' results, since stereotypes about veterans with PTSD can influence hiring decisions, oftentimes without hiring managers' awareness. The law has not yet caught up to technology in this way, since social media assessments can inadvertently identify aspects of a job applicant that would otherwise remain private and can lead to differential impact on an applicant regardless of the legality of using the discovered information in the hiring process. This can be a significant barrier for veterans attempting to secure private sector employment.

Dr. Pu's co-authored paper covers these concerns by examining the stigma around veterans with PTSD during social media assessments. The research joins the debate about using [social media](#) searches in the hiring process and offers implications for organizations looking to hire

veterans. The study contributes to social identity theory, staffing literature, and stigma literature.

More information: Wenxi Pu et al, Post-traumatic stress disorder and hiring: The role of social media disclosures on stigma and hiring assessments of veterans, *Personnel Psychology* (2022). [DOI: 10.1111/peps.12520](https://doi.org/10.1111/peps.12520)

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