How to Catch an Employer’s Eye: A Pilot Study
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Introduction

- Resumes provide an overview of an applicant’s academic and professional experience
- Employers spend an average of 8 to 10 seconds on a resume before moving onto the next one
- Eye-tracking data allows for a better understanding of eye movement and fixation points on a resume

Pilot Study Objective
To refine and practice procedures for future studies that aim to understand how employers read resumes by using eye-tracking technology to monitor eye movements as participants read a student resume.

Method

Pilot Participants
12 college students (8 female, 4 male; 19-24 yrs old)
- 41.7% reported experience writing resumes
- 16.7% reported experience reviewing resumes

Procedure
- Participants received study briefing and filled out demographic questionnaire
- Participants fitted and calibrated with glasses
- Participants given scenario and asked to view the following resumes as an employer
  - 6 participants viewed the “original” resume, while 6 viewed the “modified” resume for 10 seconds to capture their first impressions
  - Participants told to look for traits to fulfill a specific job opening, then viewed the same resume for another 10 seconds
- Participants answered open-ended questions to investigate likes, dislikes, and suggestions

Results

Task 1: What are viewers’ first impressions?

With only 10 seconds to view the resume, most participants didn’t make it past the first half of the page.

Task 2: Is the resume appropriate for a specified job?

When asked if this candidate was appropriate for a specific job, participants tended to look at the more defined objective statement and project headers on the modified version.

Recommendations

Based on the eye-tracking and qualitative results gathered during this pilot study, students should consider implementing the following recommendations when updating their resume:

- List relevant project experience, work experience, and skills in the top half page
- Create and bold titles in the project and work experience sections
- Include a specific objective statement

References

Sample Resume. Retrieved from https://careerservices.erau.edu/resources/resume-cv-tips/