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.

Figure 1: Tobii Pro Glasses 2

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

Task 1 6 participants viewed the "original" resume, while 6 viewed the "modified" resume for 10 seconds to capture their first impressions

Task 2 Participants told to look for traits to fulfill a specific job opening, then viewed the same resume for another 10 seconds

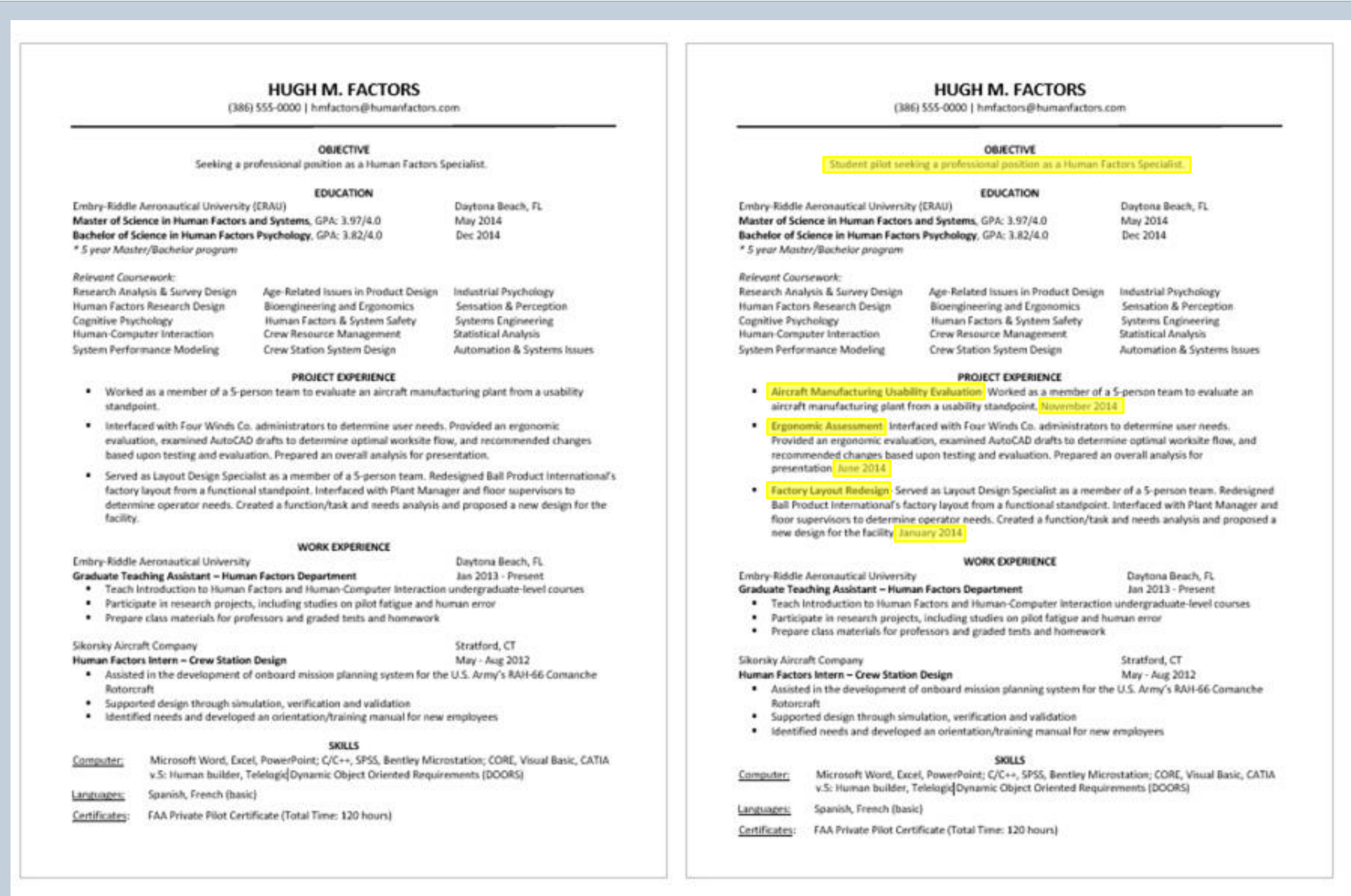Participants answered open-ended questions to investigate likes, dislikes, and suggestions

Results (center figures)

Figure 2: Original resume (left), Modified resume (right)

The "modified" version had the same content as the "original", along with a more specific objective statement and the addition of project dates and bolded project titles (Yellow Highlight).

Results

Task 1: What are viewers' first impressions?

Fixation Intensity From 10 Seconds

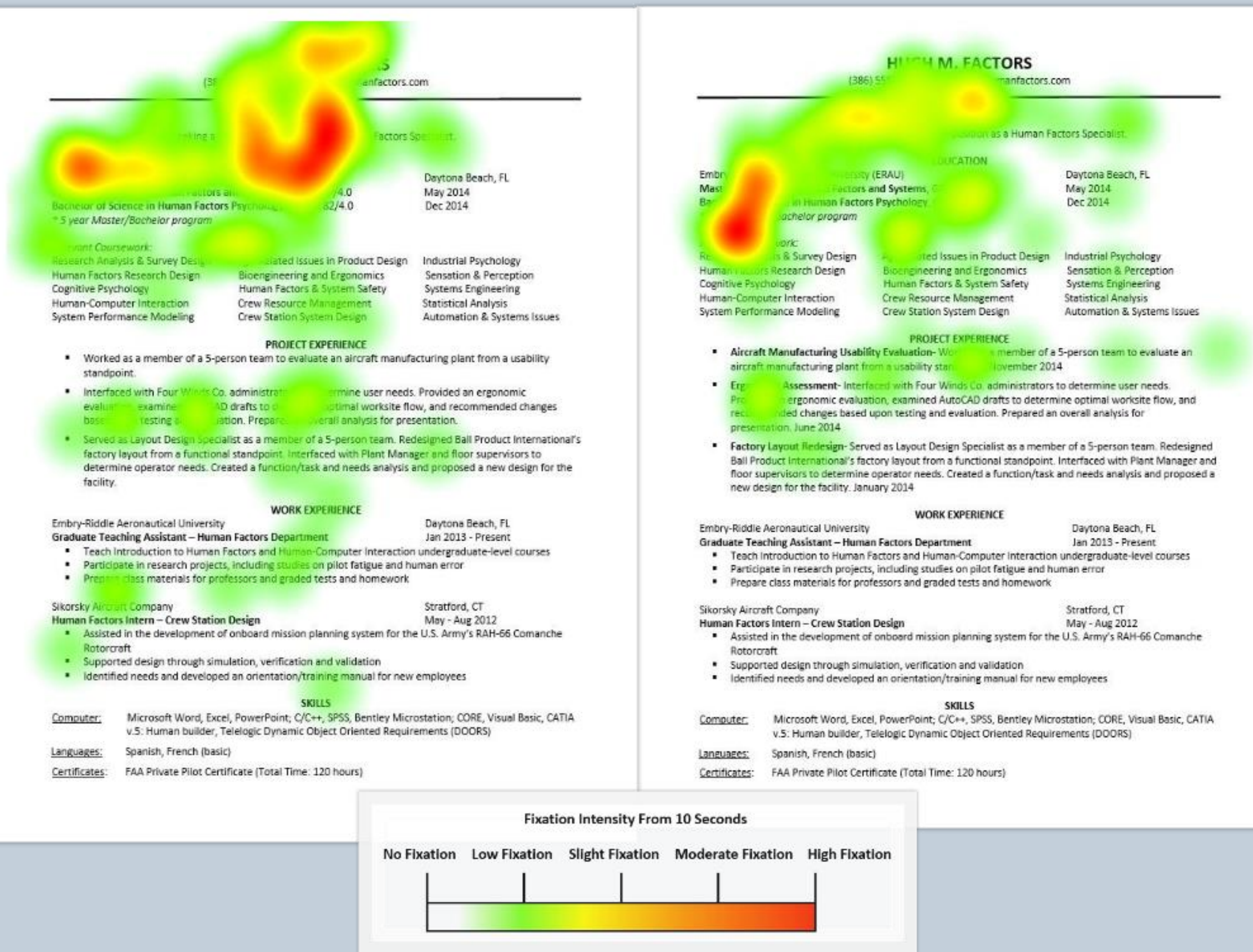No Fixation | Low Fixation | Slight Fixation | Moderate Fixation | High Fixation

Figure 3: Original resume (left), Modified resume (right)

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

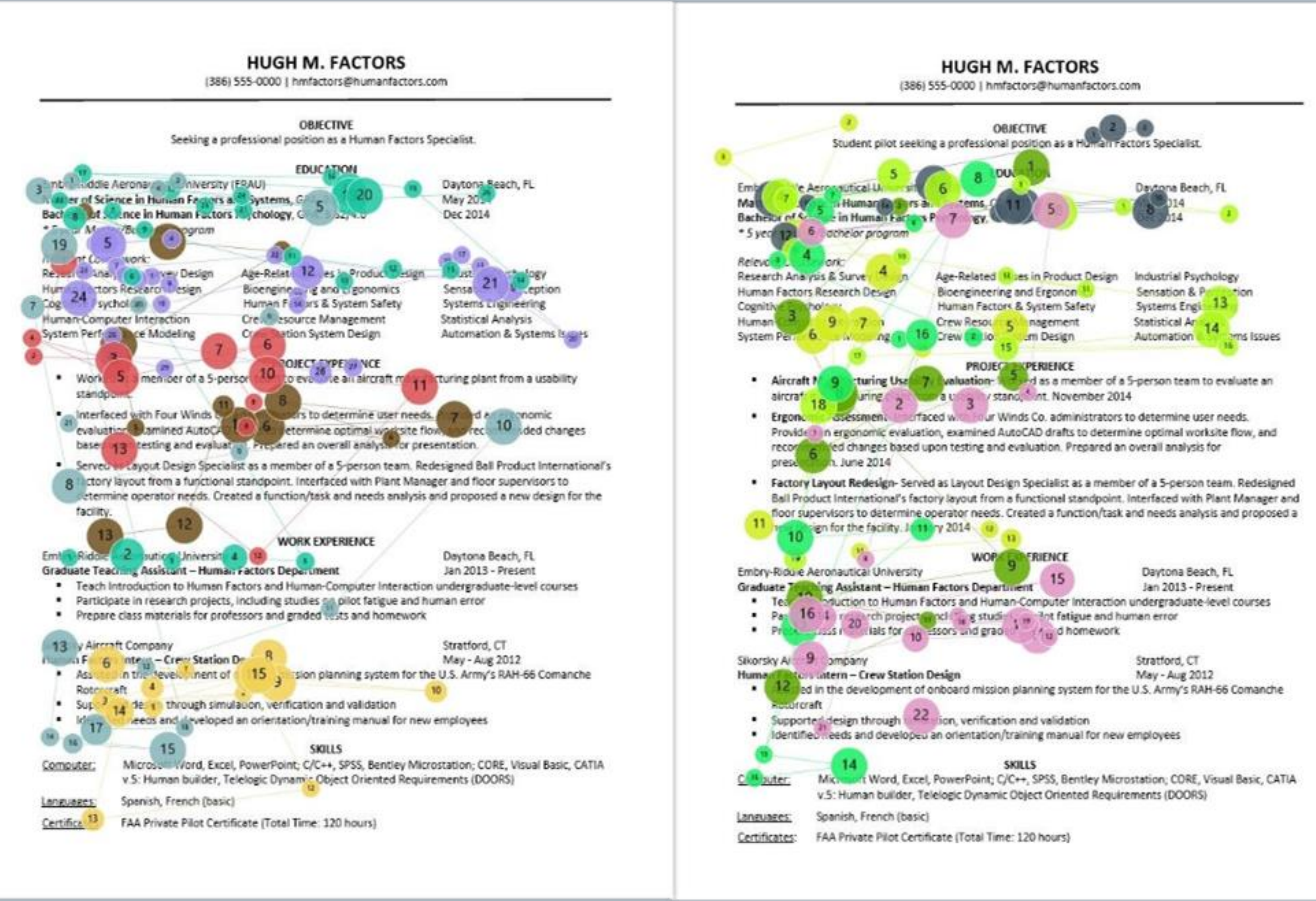## Task 2: Is the resume appropriate for a specified job?

Figure 4: Original resume (left), Modified resume (right)

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

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