

The Influence of Perceived Competition on Intentions to Fake in Employment Interviews

by

Jordan Ho

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ABSTRACT

THE INFLUENCE OF PERCEIVED COMPETITION ON INTENTIONS TO FAKE IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWS

Jordan Ho
University of Guelph, 2018

Advisor:
Dr. Deborah Powell

Many applicants fake, or intentionally misrepresent information, in employment interviews. Recent theories of faking propose that applicants may fake more when there are situational cues that signal intense competition for the job. We tested this proposition by manipulating the number of competitors and selection ratio in selection scenarios, and assessed individuals' faking intentions. We also examined whether Honesty-Humility moderated the relation between competition and faking intentions. Hypotheses were tested using a between-subjects study with 775 participants. Results show that faking intentions increased with few competitors and a small selection ratio. Honesty-Humility did not moderate the relation between competition and faking intentions. Findings support competition as a situational predictor of faking intentions, lending support to models of faking.

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The influence of perceived competition on intentions to fake in employment interviews

Many job applicants intentionally misrepresent their skills, or other information about themselves in employment interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2007). This use of deceit is known as *interview faking* (Levashina & Campion, 2006), which extant research suggests may be problematic for various reasons. First, interview faking can be related to poorer job performance (Schneider, 2015). Second, applicants who fake in interviews have been found to possess personality characteristics, such as low Honesty-Humility and high Machiavellianism (Roulin & Bourdage, 2017), that are related to undesirable job outcomes (e.g., counterproductive workplace behaviour; Lee, Ashton, & de Vries, 2005). Faking has also been found in some cases to inflate interview scores (e.g., Study 2 of Buehl & Melchers, 2017), which may lead to inaccurate hiring decisions. What is further problematic is that even experienced interviewers are largely incapable of accurately detecting faking in interviews (Roulin, Bangerter, & Levashina, 2015). Finding methods of reducing interview faking is thus a vital issue for organizations, given the near ubiquity of interviews for making hiring decisions (Huffcutt & Culbertson, 2011), and that hiring an applicant who misrepresented themselves is believed to potentially result in significant financial losses (Dagenais, 2014).

To date, potential methods of reducing interview faking have primarily involved identifying dispositional attributes that motivate individuals to fake (e.g., personality characteristics; Roulin & Bourdage, 2017), but situational or contextual factors that increase faking have remained understudied. For instance, Roulin, Krings, and Bingelli (2016) posited that perceptions of competition (i.e., an inherent situational demand by two or more individuals for some environmental resource in short supply; Kohn, 1992) may play a dominant role in motivating job applicants to fake. Applicants may see cues during the selection process that

trigger perceptions of competition, such as the number of other applicants competing for the job and the number of job positions available. These two cues are commonly displayed on LinkedIn (<https://linkedin.com>), for instance, which is the most widely used social networking site for recruiters and job seekers (Adams, 2013), and is used by 81% of Inc. 500 companies for talent acquisition (Barnes & Lescault, 2012). Overall, this information might suggest that competition is often highlighted in many job contests.

Given the widespread role of competition in selection, it is vital to determine whether there are disadvantages of organizations highlighting competition to applicants. Thus, in the present study we investigated if perceived competition for the job is related to intentions to fake in selection scenarios.

Theoretical Background

The present study aimed to test a recent theoretical model of job applicant faking (Roulin et al., 2016), which proposes that applicants and organizations have imperfectly aligned interests due to the competitive nature of the hiring process. Whereas organizations hope to obtain accurate and honest information from applicants, being entirely truthful may not be in one's best interests if it leads to an unfavourable impression. Applicants may perceive that not faking could leave them at a competitive disadvantage (Griffith & McDaniel, 2006). Furthermore, relying solely on honest strategies may not be enough to secure the job, therefore motivating applicants to fake as a means of outcompeting each other (see *Table 1* for a description of the different types of faking strategies, as outlined by Levashina & Campion, 2007). Overall, as suggested by various models of applicant faking (e.g., McFarland & Ryan, 2006; Roulin et al., 2016; Levashina & Campion, 2006), applicants may only fake when they are motivated to do so.

Because job positions are a limited resource, applicants may be motivated to fake in order to outcompete each other. In the present study, we empirically tested Roulin et al.'s (2016) proposition that applicants will have greater intentions to fake when they perceive greater competition for the job.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived competition will be positively related to intentions to fake in an interview scenario

Situational Antecedents of Faking Intentions

To date, research has focused on examining characteristics of applicants that are related to competition (e.g., competitive worldviews) and are associated with faking intentions (Roulin & Krings, 2016). Research has also focused on examining individual difference antecedents to faking (e.g., Law, Bourdage, & O'Neill, 2016), and has shown that applicants with certain personality profiles can adapt their faking across interviews in response to competition (Roulin & Bourdage, 2017). However, situational cues that signify intense competition have largely been ignored, despite the emphasis of competition within some organizations (Fletcher, Major, & Davis, 2008). We argue that there is a need to examine situational antecedents of faking because whereas organizations have little to no control over individual differences in applicants, organizations can change aspects of their selection process that might motivate faking.

Situational and contextual factors, such as the type of interview questions asked (i.e., past behaviour versus situational questions; Levashina & Campion, 2007), have been found to affect faking in interviews. However, there may be cues in selection scenarios that signal competition to applicants and trigger their intentions to fake. We propose that two situational cues that are present in nearly every job contest (the presence or number of competitors and the selection ratio) may promote faking intentions.

The present study aimed to test how two features of selection scenarios (number of competitors and selection ratio) may promote faking intentions. The number of competitors refers to the number of individuals applying for a given job, whereas the selection ratio refers to the proportion of applicants who are hired within an applicant pool (Catano, Wiesner, & Hackett, 2012). More specifically, a low selection ratio entails a small proportion of applicants being hired and hence a more selective or more competitive situation; a high selection ratio entails a large proportion of applicants being hired and hence a less selective or less competitive situation. We chose to examine these two situational factors because they are likely ubiquitous across selection (i.e., one can assume that obtaining a job entails competing against other applicants, and that only a subset of the applicant pool will receive job offers).

We recognize, however, that applicants are not always made aware of the number of individuals that are competing for the same job position, or the percentage of applicants that will receive job offers. We therefore aimed to examine how *knowledge* of the number of competitors and the selection ratio may influence faking intentions in the present study. Furthermore, we examined both cues simultaneously because they can be directly related (e.g., increasing the number of applicants will decrease the selection ratio), allowing us to hold either variable constant while minimizing any potential confounding effects and examine how specific combinations of these cues may affect faking intentions.

Number of competitors.

Social comparison (i.e., the tendency to self-evaluate by comparing oneself to others; Garcia, Tor, & Schiff, 2013) research can be drawn on to guide propositions about how the number of competitors may affect faking intentions. Social comparison theory proposes that individuals are driven to improve their performance in a task while reducing discrepancies

between theirs and other individuals' levels of performance, which manifests as competitiveness (Festinger, 1954). In the end, this competitive drive is proposed to result in competitive behaviour due to comparison concerns (i.e., the desire to achieve or maintain a position that is superior relative to others; Garcia et al., 2013).

In their social comparison model of competition, Garcia et al. (2013) proposed that a phenomenon dubbed the *N-effect* leads to an increase in the intensity of competitive behaviour as the number of competitors decreases, and a decrease in competitive behaviour as the number of competitors increases. This phenomenon may seem counterintuitive because having fewer competitors is an objectively less competitive situation, whereas having more competitors is an objectively more competitive situation. However, the N-effect is thought to occur because when competing against few individuals, comparison concerns intensify and result in stronger effort toward competing, whereas when competing against many individuals, comparison concerns decrease and result in weaker effort toward competing (Garcia et al., 2013). In other words, individuals tend to lose interest in comparing their performance to others' and become less motivated to compete (e.g., may give up), potentially because the chances of success when competing against many individuals is small (Garcia et al., 2013).

Support for the N-effect has been found across various types of competitions and games (e.g., Ku et al., 2005; Pillutla & Ronson, 2005; Ehrenberg & Bognanno, 1990), and across different experimental methodologies and datasets (Garcia & Tor, 2009). The N-effect has been found to replicate even when expected payoffs, or rewards, are controlled for (Garcia & Tor, 2009; Tor & Garcia, 2010). Furthermore, evolutionary psychology research has suggested that individuals are more willing to negatively impact their competitors' chances of success when competing against fewer individuals (Barker & Barclay, 2016). Overall, the N-effect appears to

be a robust phenomenon in the social and evolutionary psychology literatures, but it is also important to determine whether the N-effect translates to competitions that take place in the labour market.

We aimed to examine in the present study if the N-effect can be generalized to an interview faking context, as well as test its boundary conditions (i.e., if the N-effect is found across scenarios with small and large selection ratios) through a series of focused contrasts. We therefore propose that when controlling for the selection ratio, few competitors will lead to greater faking intentions than will many competitors.

Hypothesis 2a: Holding a small selection ratio constant, faking intentions will be greater when there are few competitors than when there are many competitors.

Hypothesis 2b: Holding a large selection ratio constant, faking intentions will be greater when there are few competitors than when there are many competitors.

Selection ratio.

To our knowledge, extant research has not explicitly studied how the selection ratio affects faking intentions or faking behaviour. There does, however, exist research demonstrating that under smaller selection ratios, one ends up selecting relatively more applicants who faked on a personality inventory (e.g., Peterson, Griffith, & Converse, 2009). In other words, the effects of faking tend to be more pronounced in more competitive scenarios (i.e., with smaller selection ratios). It is important to note, however, that the selection ratio was not disclosed to participants in these studies and hence could not have affected participants' behaviour. We cannot therefore infer that competition caused an increase in faking in these studies, although it appears that a small selection ratio may promote faking intentions because it signals high competition (Roulin et al., 2016).

We note that in the present study, it was important to manipulate the selection ratio in conjunction with the number of competitors, as these two factors can be confounded. For instance, recent studies have examined the influence of competition on faking intentions by manipulating either the number of competitors (Melchers, Buehl, & Wank, 2018) or selection ratio (Buehl & Melchers, in press). Although they provide valuable insight into how competition may affect faking intentions, one limitation of these studies was that they did not control for the number of competitors and the selection ratio in their study conditions (e.g., a low selection ratio condition had many more competitors than a high selection ratio condition; Buehl & Melchers, in press). A strength of the present study therefore is that we controlled for both the number of competitors and the selection ratio, allowing us to test the boundary conditions of whether the selection ratio affects faking intentions (i.e., across scenarios with few and many competitors). We therefore propose that when controlling for the number of competitors, a small selection ratio will lead to greater faking intentions than will a large selection ratio.

Hypothesis 3a: Holding few competitors constant, faking intentions will be greater under a small selection ratio than under a large selection ratio.

Hypothesis 3b: Holding many competitors constant, faking intentions will be greater under a small selection ratio than under a large selection ratio.

Perceived Competition as the Mechanism Driving Faking Intentions

We also propose that perceived competition will act as the mechanism underlying the relation between the number of competitors and faking intentions, and the relation between selection ratio and faking intentions. In other words, knowledge of the number of other applicants competing for the same job position or the selection ratio may promote faking

intentions, through signalling the level of competition in a selection scenario (Roulin et al., 2016).

Hypothesis 4a: Perceived competition will mediate the relation between number of competitors and faking intentions.

Hypothesis 4b: Perceived competition will mediate the relation between selection ratio and faking intentions.

Personality: Honesty-Humility as a Moderator Variable

Roulin et al. (2016) argued in their faking model that although competition will be perceived (to varying degrees) by all job applicants, there will be individual differences in how applicants will behave in response to this competition. Applicants who, for instance, have high levels of integrity, honesty, or have negative attitudes toward faking may be more likely to reject faking as a method of adapting to fierce competition. Applicants with these traits may value authenticity throughout the selection process even if it means failing to obtain the job (Brown & Hesketh, 2004). Conversely, applicants who have low levels of integrity, honesty, or have positive attitudes toward faking are posited to be more willing to fake in response to fierce competition (Roulin et al., 2016). Applicants with these traits may see faking as an appropriate or necessary strategy for obtaining the job (Brown & Hesketh, 2004). Individual difference characteristics, such as personality and attitudes, may thus help to shed light on how competition may promote faking intentions in some applicants more than others.

The present study examined a trait from the HEXACO model of personality called Honesty-Humility, which is defined as individual differences in sincerity, fairness, modesty, and greed (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Individuals high in Honesty-Humility tend to be more sincere, fair-minded, and humble, whereas those low in Honesty-Humility tend to be more manipulative, self-

serving, and believe they are superior to others (Lee & Ashton, 2004). Honesty-Humility was chosen for examination in the present study because it has been found to be the central factor underlying impression management in the workplace (Wiltshire, Bourdage, & Lee, 2014; Bourdage, Wiltshire, & Lee, 2015). Moreover, Honesty-Humility has been found to be related to a variety of outcomes such as selfish decision making when there is no risk of punishment (Hilbig & Zettler, 2009), greater willingness to make unethical business decisions (Lee, Ashton, Morrison, Cordery, & Dunlop, 2008), counterproductive workplace behaviour (Lee et al., 2005), as well as the Dark Triad and the desire for power (Lee et al., 2013). Given Honesty-Humility's close theoretical alignment with traits such as honesty and integrity, we propose that Honesty-Humility would moderate the relation between perceived competition and faking intentions, such that low Honesty-Humility individuals will be more willing to fake in order to outperform their competitors (Roulin et al., 2016).

Hypothesis 5: Honesty-Humility will moderate the relation between perceived competition and faking intentions, such that perceived competition will more positively predict faking intentions when Honesty-Humility is low.

Method: Pilot Study

The pilot study involved a 2 (number of competitors: few, many) x 2 (selection ratio: small, large) between-participants experimental design. The purpose of the pilot study was to test if the manipulation of a few competitors and small selection ratio led to greater perceived competition than many competitors and large selection ratio.

Participants

We recruited participants via advertisement on social media platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter) and email. Participants in the pilot study comprised 85 participants, who were randomly presented with one of four scenarios.

Procedure

Participants followed a link to a Qualtrics survey, and were randomly presented with one of four scenarios (see *Appendix A*). Participants were asked to answer one item asking them to rate how competitive (1 = *not at all competitive* to 5 = *extremely competitive*) they would feel towards another applicant in the given scenario. All responses were completely anonymous.

Materials

Scenario development.

We designed the scenarios based off similar studies in the interview faking and social psychology literature (Roulin & Krings, 2016; Hogue, Levashina, & Hang, 2013; Garcia & Tor, 2009). Scenario 1 (few competitors, small selection ratio) informed participants that only 1 in 10 of the interviewed applicants would obtain the job. Scenario 2 (few competitors, large selection ratio) informed participants that 5 in 10 of the interviewed applicants would obtain the job. Scenario 3 (many competitors, small selection ratio) informed participants that only 5 in 50 of the interviewed applicants would obtain the job. Scenario 4 (many competitors, large selection ratio) informed participants that 25 in 50 of the interviewed applicants would obtain the job.

A control condition where the scenario did not provide any information about the number of competitors or selection ratio was considered. However, Garcia et al. (2013) have detailed how uncertainty in the environment (e.g., lacking information about the quantity of a resource

such as the number of job positions available, or the identity of one's competitors) is a situational factor that can potentially increase comparison concerns and competitiveness. Garcia et al. acknowledged that there exists limited research on the relation between environmental uncertainty and competitiveness, but also noted examples from past research that provide support for the existence of such a relation. For instance, Wit and Wilke (1999) found that when environmental uncertainty is large, people cooperate less with others than when environmental uncertainty is small. In addition, Garcia and Tor (2007) showed that comparison concerns and competitiveness decreased substantially when they removed uncertainty about one's ranking in a competition relative to a rival. Thus, a control condition that provides no information about the selection ratio and number of competitors was not included because such uncertainty may have influenced participants' responses and perceptions of competition in unanticipated ways.

Results

A contrast revealed that participants in the few competitors and small selection ratio cell ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.04$) perceived more intense competition than did those in the many competitors and large selection ratio cell ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.07$), $d = .59$, 95% CI [-.03, 1.21], $t(39) = .96$, $p = .34$. Although this difference was not statistically significant, the effect size was in the predicted direction and not small, and would probably have emerged as statistically significant with a larger sample size. Thus, the manipulation of perceived competition was deemed to be successful. More data were not collected due to time constraints.

Method: Main Study

The present study used a 2 (number of competitors: few, many) x 2 (selection ratio: small, large) between-participants experimental design.

Participants

Prior to conducting the study, we ran power analyses for each hypothesis using the *psych* package in *R* (Revelle, 2017) or G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) to determine the necessary sample size for achieving a power of .80. For each effect size, we followed Bosco, Aguinis, Singh, Field, and Pierce's (2015) guidelines for effect sizes in industrial-organizational psychology (i.e., small, median, and large effect sizes correspond to r 's of .07, .16, and .32, respectively). For hypothesis 1, we assumed a median effect size of $r = .16$, given that to our knowledge, no prior estimates of the hypothesized effect size exist. A power analysis indicated that 304 participants would be needed to achieve a power of .80, with an alpha of .05. We also took a confidence interval width approach (also called accuracy in parameter estimation; AIPE), which determines the sample size that is needed in order to achieve a confidence interval width that does not exceed the effect size (Brand & Bradley, 2016). AIPE analyses conducted using the *MBESS* package in *R* (Kelley, 2016) revealed that a sample size of 571 would be needed to achieve a confidence interval width of .16.

For hypotheses 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b, we assumed median effect sizes of $d = .32$ (converted from $r = .16$), because pilot study results indicated median effect sizes of number of competitors and selection ratio on perceived competition. A power analysis indicated that 122 participants per group, or 488 participants overall, were needed to achieve a power of .80. We were also interested in determining the precision of the predicted contrast effect sizes. We therefore ran a-priori contrast based AIPE analyses for hypotheses 2a, 2b, 3a, and 3b to determine the number of participants necessary to achieve a 95% confidence interval no wider than the estimated effect size ($d = .32$). The AIPE analyses determined that with an assurance of .90 (i.e., 90% of the time,

the confidence interval observed in a particular study will be sufficiently narrow), We needed 304 participants per group, or 1216 participants overall.

For hypotheses 4a and 4b, we assumed median effect sizes of $r = .16$ for paths a , b , and c' in my proposed mediation models. We ran Monte Carlo power analyses in a web application for the predicted indirect effects (Schoemann, Boulton, & Short, in press), which determined that we needed 475 participants total.

For hypothesis 5, we treated the interaction between the two predictors (perceived competition and Honesty-Humility) as a predictor in a multiple linear regression. We assumed an incremental prediction effect size of $sr^2 = .02$ (Frazier, Tix, & Barron, 2004), which we converted to $f^2 = .0205$. A power analysis run using *MBESS* determined that we would need 385 participants total. A summary of sample size analyses for each hypothesis, estimated and observed effect sizes, required n , and observed power are reported in *Tables 2 and 3*, respectively.

The proposal for the present study is archived on the Open Science Framework. This proposal includes preregistered hypotheses, analysis plans, and materials. Anonymized data and *R* code will be posted upon completion of the project.

Power analyses and AIPE analyses suggested target N s of 488 and 1,216, respectively. Participants in the present study were 1,294 undergraduate students recruited from two sources: the University of Guelph Psychology SONA Research Participation System ($n = 955$) and the University of Guelph Marketing and Consumer Studies Research Participation System ($n = 339$). Data were collected between September 18, 2017 and December 1, 2017. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 48 ($M = 19.01$, $SD = 2.14$). 33.55% of participants identified as male, 66.06% as female, .26% as 'other', and .13% did not respond to the item. Participants reported having

been an applicant in an average of 3.35 employment interviews in the past, having on average 20.53 months of part-time work experience, and on average 6 months of full-time work experience. 73.29% of participants identified as being White/European, 8.13% as Southeast Asian, 6.19% as South Asian, and 12.39% as other. Most (66.84%) participants were in the first year of their degree ($M_{\text{year}} = 1.51$).

Materials

Scenario development.

The same scenarios used in the pilot study were used in the main study (see *Appendix A* for the full vignettes).

Perceived competition.

We measured perceived competition in the hypothetical interview scenario with 1 item based off a similar study (Study 4 of Garcia & Tor, 2009) and generated by the authors of the present study: “As you wait alone for your interview, you notice another applicant exiting their interview. Based on all of the information given to you, how competitive would you feel toward that other applicant?”. Responses were indicated on a 5-point rating scale, where 1 = *not at all competitive* and 5 = *extremely competitive*.

Faking intentions.

We measured faking intentions in the hypothetical interview scenario using the 16-item ($\alpha = .88$) Short Interview Faking Behaviour Scale (IFB-S; Bourdage, Roulin, & Tarraf, 2015). Since the original items on the IFB-S pertain to past behaviours, we modified these items to reflect intentions. For example, the items “I exaggerated my responsibilities on my previous jobs” and “I invented some work situations or accomplishments that did not really occur”

became: “I would exaggerate my responsibilities on my previous jobs” and “I would invent some work situations or accomplishments that did not really occur”, respectively. Responses were indicated on a 5-point rating scale, where 1 = *to no extent* and 5 = *to a very great extent*.

Honesty-Humility.

We measured Honesty-Humility using the 32-item ($\alpha = .87$) Honesty-Humility scale from the HEXACO-200 personality inventory (Lee & Ashton, 2004, 2006). Example items included, “Having a large level of social status is not very important to me” and “I want people to know that I am an important person of high status”. Responses were indicated on a 5-point rating scale, where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Demographics.

Demographic items asked participants for their age, gender, ethnicity, year and program of study, number of past interviews they participated in as an applicant, and months of part-time and full-time work experience.

Instructed response and attention check items.

Instructed response items have been found to an effective method of screening participants without negative reactions (Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, & DeShon, 2012). An instructed response item (“Please select option C”) was therefore included within both the IFB-S items and within the Honesty-Humility items (i.e., two instructed response items overall) to screen participants who provided insufficient effort in responding to the survey. We removed cases where participants answered *either* or both of these two instructed response items incorrectly. Responses were also screened for whether participants paid sufficient attention to the study scenarios. We included two items asking “Including yourself, how many people are applying for

this job?”, and “Out of everyone applying, how many people are being hired for this job?”. We removed cases where participants answered (on *either* or both of the two items) with a value greater than ten points above or below the correct value on the first item (e.g., if the scenario involved fifty applicants competing, participants must answer within a range of forty to sixty to have their case included for analysis), and with a value greater than ten percent of the total number of applicants above or below the correct value on the second item (e.g., if the scenario involved twenty-five out of fifty applicants receiving job offers, participants must answer within a range of twenty to thirty to have their case included for analysis).

Procedure

Participants from the two different subject pools completed the same study, albeit with slightly different procedures. Participants from the Psychology subject pool first completed the Honesty-Humility items at the beginning of the semester as part of a mass testing survey, and participated in the main study on a later occurrence. Conversely, participants from the Marketing & Consumer Studies subject pool completed the Honesty-Humility items at the end, and as part of, the main study. Participants were invited to participate in a study where they would be asked about the strategies they use to perform well in employment interviews, and followed a Qualtrics link to complete the study. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. After reading the interview scenario, participants were asked to indicate to how competitive they would feel toward another interviewee, and then to what extent they would be willing to engage in various strategies (i.e., faking tactics) if they were interviewing for that company that day. Participants then completed two items to ensure that they paid attention to the scenario. Next, participants were asked to complete demographic items. Participants from the Marketing & Consumer Studies subject pool completed Honesty-Humility items after the demographic items.

Results

Prior to conducting analyses, $n = 266$ cases where participants completed the study more than once were removed from the data set (i.e., data were only kept from the first time participants completed the study). Next, $n = 63$ cases where participants started the survey, and quit prior to completing any outcome measures were removed from the data set. Prior to hypothesis testing, data were screened for insufficient effort responding by removing $n = 51$ cases where participants incorrectly answered instructed response items, and $n = 139$ cases where participants incorrectly answered attention check items. No data were missing among outcome measures in the remaining 775 cases, likely because cases where participants did not complete any outcome measures were previously screened out.

To justify pooling together the data collected from the psychology and marketing & consumer studies participants, we compared their scores on the main outcome measures. A two-sample t -test revealed that there was no significant difference in faking intentions between the psychology pool participants ($M = 2.69$, $SD = .62$) and the marketing & consumer studies pool participants ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .61$), $d = .03$, 95% $CI [-.13, .19]$, $t(773) = .39$, $p = .70$. Moreover, a two-sample t -test revealed that there was no significant difference in perceived competition between the psychology pool participants ($M = 3.79$, $SD = .95$) and the marketing & consumer studies pool participants ($M = 3.87$, $SD = .94$), $d = -.08$, 95% $CI [-.24, .07]$, $t(773) = -1.05$, $p = .30$. Because there were no significant differences between the two samples on either of our main outcome measures, we decided to pool these data for subsequent analyses.

We then determined whether our manipulation of few competitors and a small selection ratio led to greater perceived competition than did many competitors and a large selection ratio. A contrast revealed that participants in the few competitors and small selection ratio condition

($M = 3.90$, $SD = .93$) perceived more intense competition than did those in the many competitors and large selection ratio condition ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .92$), $d = .29$, 95% CI [.09, .49], $t(387) = 2.82$, $p = .005$. Thus, the manipulation check was deemed to be successful.

Perceived Competition and Faking Intentions

Hypothesis 1 posited that perceived competition would be positively related to faking intentions. This hypothesis was tested by conducting a Pearson correlation between these two variables.¹ The correlation between perceived competition and faking intentions was $r = .19$, 95% CI [.12,.25], $N = 775$. Based on Bosco et al.'s (2015) benchmarks for effect sizes in I-O Psychology, this is a median-size positive relationship. The CI is quite narrow and consistent with a somewhat small to median positive relationship. Overall, Hypothesis 1 was supported, such that perceiving fiercer competition was associated with having greater intentions to fake.

Situational Cues Associated with Faking Intentions

Number of competitors.

Hypothesis 2a posited that holding a small selection ratio constant, few competitors would lead to greater faking intentions than would many competitors. Because the overall omnibus test was significant, $F(1, 771) = 14,636.95$, $p < .001$, we proceeded with our planned focused contrasts. Hypothesis 2a was tested with an a priori contrast comparing faking intentions in cell 1 ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .61$) to cell 3 ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .61$). Results indicate that within a small selection ratio, there is a significant and somewhat weak positive effect of number of competitors on faking intentions, $d = .21$, 95% CI [.02,.42], $t(391) = 2.12$, $p = .02$, such that knowledge of few competitors led to greater faking intentions than did knowledge of many competitors. The

confidence interval, however, is somewhat large and consistent with anywhere from a near-zero to a median positive relationship.

Hypothesis 2b posited that holding a large selection ratio constant, few competitors would lead to greater faking intentions than would many competitors. Hypothesis 2b was tested with an a priori contrast comparing faking intentions in cell 2 ($M = 2.65$, $SD = .62$) to cell 4 ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .64$). Results indicate that within a large selection ratio, there is a non-significant and near-zero effect of number of competitors on faking intentions, $d = .02$, 95% $CI [-.18, .22]$, $t(380) = .16$, $p = .44$, such that knowledge of few competitors did not lead to greater faking intentions than did knowledge of many competitors. The confidence interval is somewhat large and consistent with anywhere from a weak negative to a weak positive relationship.

Because we conducted more than one contrast, we adjusted for multiple comparisons using the Benjamini-Hochberg FDR method (Benjamini & Hochberg, 1995). This procedure is used to control for the rate of false positive results in the overall significant values found, while retaining good statistical power (Groppe, Urbach, & Kutas, 2011a) even under various levels of test dependence (Benjamini & Yekutieli, 2001) and violation of test assumptions (Groppe, Urbach, & Kutas, 2011b). To determine whether the significant result found for Hypothesis 2a was a Type I error, we set a false discovery rate of .05 and used the *multtest* package in *R* (Pollard, Gilbert, Ge, Taylor, & Dudoit, 2018) to compute a Benjamini-Hochberg FDR-adjusted p -value of .03 for the result of Hypothesis 2a, which remained statistically significant.

Overall, Hypothesis 2a, but not 2b, was supported. These results suggest that knowledge of competing against few applicants for a job can increase faking intentions when there is a small, but not large, selection ratio.

Selection ratio.

Hypothesis 3a posited that holding few competitors constant, a small selection ratio would lead to greater faking intentions than would a large selection ratio. Hypothesis 3a was tested with an a priori contrast comparing faking intentions in cell 1 ($M = 2.80$, $SD = .61$) to cell 2 ($M = 2.65$, $SD = .62$). Results indicate that holding few competitors constant, there is a significant and somewhat weak positive effect of selection ratio on faking intentions, $d = .24$, $95\% CI [.04,.44]$, $t(387) = 2.41$, $p = .01$, such that knowledge of a small selection ratio led to greater faking intentions than did knowledge of a large selection ratio. The confidence interval, however, is somewhat large and consistent with anywhere from a near-zero to a median positive relationship.

Hypothesis 3b posited that holding many competitors constant, a small selection ratio would lead to greater faking intentions than would a large selection ratio. Hypothesis 3b was tested with an a priori contrast comparing faking intentions in cell 3 ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .61$) to cell 4 ($M = 2.64$, $SD = .64$). Results indicate that holding many competitors constant, there is a non-significant and near-zero effect of selection ratio on faking intentions, $d = .05$, $95\% CI [-.15,.25]$, $t(384) = .48$, $p = .32$, such that knowledge of a small selection ratio did not lead to greater faking intentions than did a large selection ratio. The confidence interval is somewhat large and consistent with anywhere from a weak negative to a somewhat weak positive relationship.

To determine whether the significant result found for Hypothesis 3a was a Type I error, we set a false-discovery rate of .05, and our adjustment for multiple comparisons yielded a Benjamini-Hochberg FDR-adjusted p -value of .03, which remained statistically significant.

Overall, Hypothesis 3a, but not 3b, was supported. These results suggest that a small selection ratio can increase faking intentions when there are few, but not many, competitors.

Perceived Competition as the Mechanism Driving Faking Intentions

Hypotheses 4a and 4b were tested using a structural equation model (SEM), which is depicted as a path diagram in *Figure 2*. We performed a SEM analysis based on data from 775 participants using the *lavaan* package in *R* (Rosseel et al., 2017), on the sixteen questions from the IFB-S (Bourdage et al., 2015), the one question measuring perceived competition, and the two exogenous variables in our study: number of competitors and selection ratio. We could not include the Honesty-Humility items in our SEM model because those data were not available for 40.64% of participants ($n = 466$ remaining).

Because the construct of interview faking has been conceptualized and shown to be comprised of four factors (slight image creation, extensive image creation, deceptive ingratiation, and image protection; Bourdage et al., 2015; Levashina & Campion, 2007), we created a higher order factor representing overall interview faking, with each of the four interview faking dimensions (each consisting of four items from the IFB-S) loading onto this higher order factor. We used confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to test the measurement model and compare the fit of the four-factor model to the fit of a one-factor model. The hypothesized four-factor structure had superior fit ($CFI_{Robust} = .94$, $GFI = .98$, $RMSEA_{Robust} = .06$, $SRMR = .05$) compared to the one-factor structure ($CFI_{Robust} = .62$, $GFI = .92$, $RMSEA_{Robust} = .15$, $SRMR = .10$). We then used χ^2 difference testing to demonstrate that the four-factor model provided superior fit to the data compared to the one-factor model: $\Delta\chi^2(4) = 1078$, $p < .001$. Thus, there was evidence to support usage of the four-factor structure of interview faking in the subsequent SEM analyses.

We also performed a CFA to determine the factor loadings for each item. Factor loadings above .50 indicate adequate fit of items to latent constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Four items were each used to measure slight image creation ($\alpha = .78$), extensive image creation ($\alpha =$

.86), deceptive ingratiation ($\alpha = .82$), and image protection ($\alpha = .78$). Factor loadings ranged from .51–.74, .75–.83, .54–.88, and .66–.74, respectively. Items therefore loaded adequately onto each of the four factors of interview faking.

To evaluate model fit, we chose the MLM estimator (Rosseel et al., 2017)—that is, maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors and a Satorra-Bentler scaled test statistic (Satorra & Bentler, 1994)—over other estimation methods (e.g., maximum likelihood estimation) because the data did not meet the assumption of multivariate normality. The hypothesized model yielded an acceptable fit to the data (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Gefen et al., 1998): $\chi^2(146) = 507.68, p < .001$; $CFI_{Robust} = .92$; $RMSEA_{Robust} = .060, 90\% CI [.054, .065]$; $SRMR = .07$. We did not conduct post-hoc modifications because of the acceptable fit of the data to the model.

Hypothesis 4a posited that perceived competition would mediate the relation between number of competitors and faking intentions. The indirect path ($a*b = -.035, 95\% CI [-.115, .046], p = .40$) was not statistically significant. Thus, the relation between number of competitors and faking intentions was not mediated by perceived competition, and Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

Hypothesis 4b posited that perceived competition would mediate the relation between selection ratio and faking intentions. The indirect path ($a*b = -.124, 95\% CI [-.206, -.042], p = .003$) was statistically significant, indicating a negative indirect effect of selection ratio on faking intentions, via perceived competition. There was no direct effect ($c' = -.082, 95\% CI [-.267, .104], p = .39$) found from selection ratio to faking intentions once perceived competition was included in the model, whereas the direct effect *without* perceived competition was $c = -.180, 95\% CI [-.344, -.016], p = .03$. The Sobel test indicated that the change in the direct effect was

statistically significant (*Sobel test statistic* = -2.97, $p = .003$). The proportion of the total effect accounted for by the indirect effect was 60.19%, and the ratio of the indirect effect to the direct effect was 1.51. Thus, the relation between selection ratio and faking intentions was mediated by perceived competition, and Hypothesis 4b was supported. These results suggest that the selection ratio, but not number of competitors, influences faking intentions through increasing perceptions of competition for the job.

Honesty-Humility as a Moderator

Hypothesis 5 posited that Honesty-Humility would moderate the prediction of faking intentions by perceived competition, such that perceived competition would more positively predict faking intentions when Honesty-Humility is low. To test this hypothesis, we included both perceived competition and Honesty-Humility as unique predictors of faking intentions, and also included the interaction term as a unique predictor, which consisted of the cross-product of participants' mean-centered perceived competition and Honesty-Humility scores (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013). These relations were tested using a multiple linear regression that included perceived competition and Honesty-Humility (predictors) and faking intentions (outcome).

Together, perceived competition, Honesty-Humility, and the interaction term predicted 6.8 percent of the variance in participants' faking intentions, $F(3,462) = 11.11$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .07$, 95% *CI* [.03, .11]. Perceived competition was found to uniquely predict 2 percent of the variance in participants' faking intentions, $t(462) = 2.77$, $p = .01$, $sr^2 = .02$, 95% *CI* [-.01, .04], $\beta = .12$. Honesty-Humility was found to uniquely predict 5 percent of the variance in participants' faking intentions, $t(462) = -4.92$, $p < .001$, $sr^2 = .05$, 95% *CI* [.01, .09], $\beta = -.22$. The interaction between perceived competition and Honesty-Humility was found to uniquely predict 0 percent of

the variance in participants' faking intentions, $t(462) = .07, p = .95, sr^2 = .00, 95\% CI [-.00, .00], \beta = .00$. Since the interaction term was non-significant, in contrast to Hypothesis 5, Honesty-Humility did not moderate the relation between perceived competition and faking intentions. These results suggest that perceived competition had a similar effect on faking intentions, regardless of individual differences in Honesty-Humility.

Exploratory and Hypothesis-Generation Analyses

In addition to testing our pre-registered hypotheses, we conducted exploratory analyses to examine main effects of number of competitors (few or many) and selection ratio (small or large) on faking intentions using a 2x2 between-participants ANOVA. Levene's test was non-significant, $F(3,771) = .04, p = .99$, indicating that the ANOVA homogeneity of variance assumption was fulfilled. There was no significant interaction between number of competitors and selection ratio, $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .00, 95\% CI [.00,.01], F(1,771) = 1.81, p = .18$. Despite the pattern of faking intentions means (*Figure 1*) suggesting that there is an interaction, there may have been insufficient statistical power to detect it. If we take the upper limit of the confidence interval for this result ($\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .01$), the observed power for detecting such a small effect in this study was only .65. To achieve a power of .80 for detecting this effect, 1,072 participants are required.

There was no main effect of number of competitors on faking intentions, $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .00, 95\% CI [.00,.01], F(1,771) = 2.50, p = .11$. There was, however, a main effect of selection ratio on faking intentions, $\eta^2_{\text{partial}} = .01, 95\% CI [.00,.02], F(1,771) = 4.13, p = .04$. These results suggest that knowledge of the selection ratio has a greater influence on faking intentions than knowledge of the number of competitors. Overall, given that these were not among our pre-registered hypotheses, we cannot make any definitive conclusions as we were only interested in

examining simple effects (i.e., how the number of competitors and the selection ratio influenced faking intentions across different levels of these independent variables).

We also conducted exploratory analyses to examine how demographic variables related to faking intentions. For instance, individuals may be more willing to fake when they have more interview experience, because they may learn over time what the ‘best’ interview responses are that employers want to hear, or become better at identifying the constructs that are typically assessed in job interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2006). The number of past interviews that participants were an applicant in was, however, unrelated to faking intentions ($r = -.02$, 95% *CI* [-.09, .05] in the present study). A lack of work experience has also been proposed to increase individuals’ willingness to fake, because of the limited time available to gain further work experience or skills required for a particular job (Levashina & Campion, 2006). However, neither part-time ($r = -.05$, 95% *CI* [-.12, .02] or full-time work experience ($r = -.04$, 95% *CI* [-.11, .03] were related to faking intentions in the present study. It could be the case that interview or work experience were not related to faking intentions in the present study because we controlled for applicant qualifications in our scenarios (i.e., participants were informed that they would be competing for the job against similarly qualified applicants). Participants with less interview or work experience may have been more willing to fake if they were instead told that they were competing against more qualified applicants. Overall, we cannot make any firm conclusions about the influence of interview or work experience on faking intentions at this point.

Discussion

Faking may have negative implications for selection given its deceitful nature, making it vital to identify what motivates this behaviour in the first place. The present study empirically links perceived competition to faking intentions, which adds preliminary support for Roulin et

al.'s (2016) model of faking and for the predominant role that competition can play in selection. We examined two situational cues that are present in nearly any selection process (number of competitors and selection ratio) and found through a series of contrast hypotheses that faking intentions only increased when a small number of competitors and small selection ratio were presented. Thus, individuals may be increasingly motivated to fake or engage in competitive behaviour when there is both a small chance of obtaining the job and the performance of other job applicants becomes more salient due to increased comparison concerns (Garcia et al. 2013).

We also found support for perceived competition as a mediator of the relation between selection ratio and faking intentions. This finding suggests that perceived competition can act as a mechanism that drives the relation between at least one situational cue in a selection scenario and faking intentions. Conversely, we did not find evidence for perceived competition as a mediator of the relation between number of competitors and faking intentions. The path between number of competitors and faking intentions ($a = -.11, p = .26$) was in the expected direction, however, which is consistent with previous research on the N-Effect (Garcia et al., 2013). One plausible explanation for why this effect was small and nonsignificant could be that the difference between ten (few) and fifty (many) competitors for a job was perceived by participants as being relatively minor. In other words, fifty competitors may not have been considered as being a high number of applicants, whereas a stronger manipulation of, for instance, a hundred competitors might have yielded a stronger effect. For instance, Collins and Han (2004) studied applicant pools for a diverse sample of ninety-nine organizations, and found that on average, there were 96.22 applicants per position. Future research should therefore use a higher number of competitors to examine its potential effect on faking intentions.

Another plausible explanation for why the number of competitors was not significantly related to faking intentions is that the number of competitors and the selection ratio may operate through different mechanisms. Garcia et al. (2013) noted that competitive behaviour may be driven by not solely competitive feelings, but other attitudinal indicators such as comparison concerns, motivation to compete, and the desire to win. In the present study, participants were asked how competitive they would feel toward another applicant competing for the same position. There is evidence to suggest that number of competitors drives social comparison concerns (e.g., assessing how inclined someone is to compare their interview performance to other applicants' performance) rather than competitive feelings (Garcia & Tor, 2009). Unfortunately, we did not directly measure but did control for comparison concerns in the present study, as participants were told that they were competing against equally qualified applicants. Future studies could examine how different situational cues may trigger different attitudes (e.g., competitive feelings, comparison concerns, motivation to compete) that lead to faking intentions.

Whereas the number of competitors may drive comparison concerns (Garcia & Tor, 2009), the selection ratio may operate by conveying the risk (i.e., small chances of success) that is involved in a competition. Evidence suggests that humans try to avoid losses whenever possible (Kühberger, 1998), and that when the chances of winning a competition are unlikely (e.g., when one is competitively disadvantaged or perceives having a low chance of success), individuals tend to opt for alternative means of beating the competition (Mishra, Barclay, & Lalumière, 2014). Thus, it is possible that competitive interview situation could be perceived as being a risky or difficult-to-win scenario, and that the motivation to avoid losing the job outweighed comparison concerns (i.e., from the number of competitors). Future research should

explicitly measure individuals' perceptions of risk and their comparison concerns in order to examine how these different mechanisms may be associated with the number of competitors and the selection ratio.

We also note that when either the number of competitors was large (i.e., an objectively more competitive, but *subjectively less* competitive situation because of the N-Effect) or the selection ratio was large (i.e., a less selective and hence less competitive situation), faking intentions did not increase and remained similarly low. This may represent a boundary condition of the influence of either of these factors on faking intentions, such that a large number of competitors could offset the influence of a small selection ratio (more selective situation) on faking intentions, and that a large selection ratio (less selective situation) could offset the influence of a small number of competitors. Thus, the results of this study suggest that applicants might be less inclined to fake if organizations frame information in a way that does not highlight the competitiveness of the selection process.

In the present study, the observed correlation between perceived competition and faking intentions might be an underestimate of the true effect size, given that our vignettes informed participants that they would be competing for the hypothetical job with only similarly qualified, but not higher-qualified applicants. The effect of perceived competition might have been larger if participants were told that they were also competing against higher-qualified applicants, as they would need to perform to an even greater extent in the interview to beat the competition (Roulin et al., 2016). That is, less-qualified applicants may perceive that they are at a greater competitive disadvantage when competing against higher-qualified applicants, and hence may take additional risks (e.g., fake in an interview) to win against their competitors (Mishra et al., 2014). Furthermore, applicants may perceive that when the competition is fiercer, not faking could

leave them at an even greater competitive disadvantage (Griffith & McDaniel, 2006).

Mathematical models have also suggested that increasing the competitive pressure in a job contest (i.e., increasing the ratio of high quality to low quality applicants) should increase faking in interviews, because less qualified applicants may recognize that unless they fake desired qualities or job experience, they have minimal chances of success (Midjord, 2012, 2011).

Therefore, the extent to which individuals are motivated to fake in interviews likely depends on the level of perceived competition, which may result from the quality of other applicants or the competitiveness of the selection process.

We also hypothesized that Honesty-Humility would moderate the relation between perceived competition and faking intentions, but this hypothesis was not supported. One might argue that support for this hypothesis was not observed because participants were presented with a hypothetical scenario, and hence may not have accurately judged the extent to which they would have faked in a real job interview. Although this explanation is plausible, one could also draw on trait-activation theory (Tett & Burnett, 2003) to argue that the result we found would replicate using real interviews. Tett and Guterman (2000) showed that behavioural intentions in hypothetical scenarios were accurately predicted by personality. Moreover, we note that although Hypothesis 5 was not supported, it remains an interesting finding because it suggests that perceived competition might have a uniform influence on individuals, regardless of their personality profile. From a practical standpoint, organizations should be wary that even after screening out individuals with low Honesty-Humility, emphasizing the competitiveness of the job might still increase faking intentions for high Honesty-Humility individuals. Thus, an appropriate strategy for minimizing faking intentions could be to make efforts not to emphasize

the competitive nature of the selection process (Roulin et al., 2016)—in this case, by not emphasizing a small selection ratio for the job.

Limitations and Future Directions

The main limitation of the present study was that we only examined intentions to fake, not actual faking behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), for instance, would suggest that the results of the present study may generalize to faking behaviour, based on the assumption that intentions must precede behaviour. Furthermore, the meta-analytic relation between behavioural intentions and actual behaviour has been shown to be positive (Armitage & Conner, 2001). Faking intentions have also been found to be positively associated with interview faking behaviour (Law et al., 2016). Nonetheless, confidence in our findings can be further enhanced by conducting additional studies with actual interviews.

Another limitation of this study was the use of a cross-sectional design. Although we took steps to enhance internal validity by using random assignment to four different conditions (i.e., two levels of number of competitors, and two levels of selection ratio), common method variance was a potential issue because our main outcome variables (perceived competition and faking intentions) were measured on the same occasion. We did use some procedural remedies to address common method variance, however (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). For instance, we informed participants about the study's purpose, assured them of their anonymity, and informed them that there were no correct or incorrect answers to the survey. Other recommended techniques for limiting common method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), such as obtaining measures of the predictor and criterion variables from different sources, were unfortunately inappropriate for the present study. This was the case because we were interested in examining how participants' *own* perceptions of competition would influence their faking

intentions. Self-reports of faking intentions were therefore necessary, given that other-reports of faking tend to be inaccurate (Roulin et al., 2015).

We also performed Harman's single-factor test to examine if common method variance was pervasive in our dataset (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This technique involves entering all survey items into a principal components analysis. Then, if a single factor emerges, or if one factor accounts for more than 50% of the variance in the variables, then common method variance is likely present (Harman, 1967). Four factors emerged from the unrotated factor solution, and the first factor explained only 35% of the variance, which suggests that common method variance is not problematic in the present study.

We performed a second test of common method variance using a procedure demonstrated by Markel and Frone (1998). This technique involves re-estimating the SEM model with the inclusion of all the indicator variables loading on a common latent factor. Then, the standardized regression weights of this model are compared to those of the original model without the common latent factor. The results showed that all the differences were less than 0.2, and the original patterns of statistical significance remained unchanged. This suggests that common method variance was not a major concern in the present study. Nonetheless, future studies can further minimize the potential influence of common method variance by establishing stronger time precedence (Kline, 2015), for example with longitudinal designs measuring perceptions of competition prior to an interview (e.g., after reading an advertisement for a job), and later measuring faking intentions and faking behaviour after the interview.

Another limitation of our study was our use of a student sample. For instance, labour market participants have been found to engage in slightly greater use of impression management strategies than students (Peck & Levashina, 2017). We do note, however, that Peck and

Levashina (2017) did not distinguish between honest forms of impression management and deceptive forms (i.e., faking) in their study; thus, it is unclear whether differences in faking exist across student and field samples. It is plausible that because students often have little work experience, they would perceive a need to fake to a greater extent in interviews. However, as we noted earlier, there were no post-hoc significant relations between faking intentions and part-time work experience ($r = -.05$), full-time work experience ($r = -.04$), or interview experience ($r = -.02$) in our sample. Thus, a lack of work or interviewing experience may potentially be ruled out as potential concerns about the generalizability of our findings to a field sample with more labour market experience. Furthermore, as suggested by Law et al. (2016), the use of a student sample can present certain advantages over using a field sample. For instance, real applicants may not admit that they would be willing to fake in an interview out of fear that it could jeopardize their chances of obtaining the job if employers learned this information.

Another limitation of our study might pertain to the small ethnic diversity of our sample, wherein the majority of participants were White/European. A study across 31 different countries by Fell, König, and Kammerhoff (2016) revealed cross-cultural differences in applicants' attitudes toward faking in employment interviews. For instance, countries scoring higher on in-group collectivism had more positive attitudes toward faking. Different ethnic groups have also been found to have different preferences for engaging in impression management tactics, such as self-promotion (Paulhus, Westlake, Calvez, & Harms, 2013). However, the small ethnic diversity of our sample may have also been beneficial, as this could have minimized any influences that having a variety of cultures may have had on our results. Overall, future research should examine the influence of competition on faking using field samples, and across a variety of cultures and nations.

Another limitation of this study was that we could have made greater use of stimulus sampling (Highhouse, 2009). That is, the stimulus materials that were employed in this study involved only two levels of each independent variable (i.e., few versus many competitors, and small versus large selection ratio), and hence may not fully reflect the full range of job competitions that are found in organizations. For instance, our stimuli only included job competitions with ten or fifty applicants, whereas some job competitions may involve far greater than fifty applicants. Future studies should use stimuli with a more diverse range of numbers of competitors and selection ratios, which would help to increase external validity (Highhouse, 2009).

Another limitation pertaining to stimulus sampling was that we only examined two potential situational cues that signify competition. Based on the present study's finding that perceived competition is positively related to faking intentions, future research should examine other situational cues that may signify competition. Other than the number of competitors and the selection ratio, other situational or contextual cues that might increase perceptions of competition are perceptions of a competitive climate or culture (Roulin et al., 2016), the prestige or reputation of the organization along with the desirability of the job, the scale of competition (i.e., local versus global; Barker & Barclay, 2016), knowledge of a competitive disadvantage relative to other applicants (Mishra et al., 2014), the applicants' accountability for the information presented during the interview (Paulhus et al., 2013), and social category fault lines (Garcia et al., 2013). Future studies could also utilize a qualitative approach by conducting focus groups with job seekers to learn what would motivate them to fake in an interview, in order to learn what these competitive cues are.

Conclusion

The present study examined perceived competition for the job as a situational antecedent of intentions to fake in an employment interview. We investigated two situational cues that signify competition (the number of competitors and the selection ratio), namely how knowledge about these cues would influence intentions to fake in an interview. We found that the selection ratio, but not number of competitors, was related to greater faking intentions through driving perceptions of competition. Moreover, Honesty-Humility did not moderate the relation between perceived competition and faking intentions. On a broader level, the present study shows that perceiving fiercer competition in a selection scenario does appear to be related to greater willingness to fake, which contributes to the job applicant faking literature via shedding light on how situational factors—not just individual difference antecedents—can also affect the strategies that individuals choose to utilize in the selection process. It is vital to conduct further research on what other situational and contextual factors may motivate individuals to fake, as organizations have the capability to redesign their selection process in a way that discourages the use of deception.

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Footnotes

1. We also ran our analyses for each hypothesis with outliers removed and found the same pattern of results. We present the results with outliers included in this manuscript, but results without outliers are available from the authors upon request.

Table 1. Taxonomy of Interview Faking Tactics (Levashina & Campion, 2007)

Dimensions of interview faking	Definition	Tactics
Slight image creation	Minor attempts at faking used to create an image of a good job applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Embellishing - Tailoring - Fit enhancing
Extensive image creation	More extreme attempts at faking used to create an image of a good job applicant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constructing - Inventing - Borrowing
Image protection	Attempts to protect or repair one's image	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Omitting - Masking - Distancing
Deceptive ingratiation	Tactics that are used to gain favour with the interviewer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opinion conforming - Interviewer or organization enhancing

Table 2. Sample Size Analysis by Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Type of sample size analysis	Cells involved or contrasted	Estimated effect size [95% CI]	Target total <i>n</i>
1	Power analysis	1, 2, 3, 4	$r = .16$ [.05, .27]	304
1	AIPE	1, 2, 3, 4	$r = .16$ [.08, .24]	571
2a	Power analysis	1 vs 3	$d = .32$ [.07, .57]	488
2a	AIPE	1 vs 3	$d = .32$ [.16, .48]	1216
2b	Power analysis	2 vs 4	$d = .32$ [.07, .57]	488
2b	AIPE	2 vs 4	$d = .32$ [.16, .48]	1216
3a	Power analysis	1 vs 2	$d = .32$ [.07, .57]	488
3a	AIPE	1 vs 2	$d = .32$ [.16, .48]	1216
3b	Power analysis	3 vs 4	$d = .32$ [.07, .57]	488
3b	AIPE	3 vs 4	$d = .32$ [.16, .48]	1216
4a	Monte Carlo power analysis	1, 2, 3, 4	$a*b = .026$ [.00, .06]	475
4b	Monte Carlo power analysis	1, 2, 3, 4	$a*b = .026$ [.00, .06]	475
5	Power analysis	1, 2, 3, 4	$f^2 = .02$ [-.01, .05]	385

Note. AIPE = Accuracy in Parameter Estimation

Table 3. Observed Power by Hypothesis

Hypothesis	Cells involved or contrasted	Observed effect size [95% CI]	Observed power (1- β)
1	1, 2, 3, 4	$r = .19$ [.12, .25]	~1.00
2a	1 vs 3	$d = .21$ [.02, .42]	.90
2b	2 vs 4	$d = .02$ [-.18, .22]	.09
3a	1 vs 2	$d = .24$ [.04, .44]	.96
3b	3 vs 4	$d = .05$ [-.15, .25]	.17
4a	1, 2, 3, 4	$a*b = -.035$ [-.115, .046]	.35
4b	1, 2, 3, 4	$a*b = -.124$ [-.206, -.042]	~1.00
5	1, 2, 3, 4	$f^2 = .00$ [-.00, .00]	.04

Note. Observed power calculated using the *pwr* package in R (Champely et al., 2017), Post-hoc Statistical Power Calculator for Hierarchical Multiple Regression computer software (Soper, 2018), and MedPower computer software (Kenny, 2017).

Table 4. Data Cleaning Steps

<i>N</i> before removal	Reason for case removal	<i>n</i> cases removed	<i>N</i> cases remaining
1294	Completed the study more than once	266	1028
1028	Quit before completing any outcome measures	63	965
965	Incorrectly answered instructed response items	51	914
914	Failed attention check items	139	775

Note. To test Hypothesis 5, only cases where participants completed both IFB-S and Honesty-Humility measures could be used in the analysis. Only $n = 466$ cases met this criteria.

Table 5. Summary of Perceived Competition by Experimental Cells

<i>Cell</i>	<i>n</i>	Perceived Competition mean	<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 (Few competitors, small selection ratio)	198	3.90	3.77	4.03	0.93
2 (Few competitors, large selection ratio)	191	3.79	3.66	3.92	0.91
3 (Many competitors, small selection ratio)	195	3.94	3.80	4.08	1.01
4 (Many competitors, large selection ratio)	191	3.63	3.50	3.77	0.92

Note. *SD* represents standard deviation. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of the 95% confidence interval for the mean, respectively. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population means that could have created a sample mean.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Perceived Competition	3.82	0.95											
2. Faking Intentions	2.69	0.62	.19** [.12, .25]										
3. Slight Image Creation	3.14	0.76	.17** [.10, .24]	.78** [.75, .81]									
4. Extensive Image Creation	1.81	0.86	.13** [.06, .19]	.75** [.72, .78]	.47** [.42, .52]								
5. Deceptive Ingratiation	3.16	0.83	.16** [.09, .22]	.75** [.72, .78]	.52** [.47, .57]	.34** [.28, .40]							
6. Image Protection	2.64	0.84	.11** [.04, .18]	.74** [.70, .77]	.40** [.34, .46]	.42** [.36, .47]	.39** [.33, .45]						
7. Gender	1.67	0.48	.04 [-.03, .11]	-.05 [-.12, .02]	-.01 [-.08, .06]	-.06 [-.13, .01]	-.02 [-.09, .05]	-.05 [-.12, .02]					

8. Age	19.01	2.13	-.00 [-.07, .07]	-.11** [-.18, -.04]	-.10** [-.17, -.03]	-.03 [-.11, .04]	-.13** [-.20, -.06]	-.07* [-.14, .00]	-.12** [-.19, -.05]					
9. Year in Program	1.51	0.88	-.05 [-.12, .02]	-.12** [-.19, -.05]	-.12** [-.19, -.05]	-.08* [-.15, -.01]	-.08* [-.15, -.01]	-.09* [-.16, -.02]	-.19** [-.26, -.12]	.40** [.34, .46]				
10. Number of past interviews	3.35	3.41	-.05 [-.12, .02]	-.02 [-.09, .05]	-.02 [-.09, .05]	.01 [-.06, .08]	-.01 [-.08, .06]	-.03 [-.10, .04]	-.11** [-.18, -.04]	.41** [.35, .46]	.26** [.19, .33]			
11. Months of part-time work experience	20.49	18.04	-.02 [-.09, .05]	-.05 [-.12, .02]	-.05 [-.12, .02]	.02 [-.05, .09]	-.01 [-.08, .06]	-.12** [-.18, -.05]	.04 [-.03, .11]	.12** [.05, .19]	.12** [.05, .19]	.22** [.15, .29]		
12. Months of full-time work experience	5.99	12.82	-.02 [-.09, .05]	-.04 [-.11, .03]	-.06 [-.13, .01]	.01 [-.06, .08]	-.05 [-.12, .02]	-.03 [-.10, .04]	-.15** [-.22, -.08]	.40** [.33, .45]	.26** [.20, .33]	.36** [.30, .42]	.32** [.25, .38]	

Note. $N = 775$. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 7. Regression Results Using Faking Intentions as the Criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	<i>b</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>beta</i>	<i>beta</i> 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> ²	<i>sr</i> ² 95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>r</i>	Fit	Difference
(Intercept)	2.67**	[2.62, 2.73]							
Perceived Competition	0.08**	[0.02, 0.14]	0.12	[0.04, 0.21]	.02	[-.01, .04]	.14**		
Honesty-Humility	-0.29**	[-0.40, -0.17]	-0.22	[-0.31, -0.13]	.05	[.01, .09]	-.23**		
<i>R</i> ² = .067**									
95% CI[.03,.11]									
(Intercept)	2.67**	[2.62, 2.73]							
Perceived Competition	0.08**	[0.02, 0.14]	0.12	[0.04, 0.21]	.02	[-.01, .04]	.14**		
Honesty-Humility	-0.29**	[-0.40, -0.17]	-0.22	[-0.31, -0.13]	.05	[.01, .09]	-.23**		
I(Perceived Competition * Honesty-Humility)	-0.01	[-0.11, 0.12]	0.00	[-0.09, 0.09]	.00	[-.00, .00]			
<i>R</i> ² = .067**								$\Delta R^2 = .00$	
95% CI[.03,.11]								95% CI[-.00, .00]	

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the beta-weight and semi-partial correlation are also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *beta* indicates the standardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *r* represents the zero-order correlation. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 8. ANOVA Results Using Faking Intentions as the Criterion

Predictor	Sum of Squares	<i>df</i>	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	partial η^2	partial η^2 90% CI [LL, UL]
(Intercept)	5594.90	1	5594.90	14636.95	.000		
Number of Competitors	0.96	1	0.96	2.50	.114	.00	[.00, .01]
Selection Ratio	1.58	1	1.58	4.13	.042	.01	[.00, .02]
Number of Competitors x Selection Ratio	0.69	1	0.69	1.81	.179	.00	[.00, .01]
Error	294.71	771	0.38				

Note. LL and UL represent the lower-limit and upper-limit of the partial η^2 confidence interval, respectively.

Table 9. Summary of Study Results

Hypothesis	Supported
1: Perceived competition will be positively associated with faking intentions	Yes
2a: Few competitors will lead to greater faking intentions, holding a small selection ratio constant	Yes
2b: Few competitors will lead to greater faking intentions, holding a large selection ratio constant	No
3a: A small selection ratio will lead to greater faking intentions, holding few competitors constant	Yes
3b: A small selection ratio will lead to greater faking intentions, holding many competitors constant	No
4a: Perceived competition will mediate the relation between number of competitors and faking intentions	No
4b: Perceived competition will mediate the relation between selection ratio and faking intentions	Yes
5: Honesty-Humility will moderate the relation between perceived competition and faking intentions, such that perceived competition will more positively predict faking intentions when Honesty-Humility is low	No

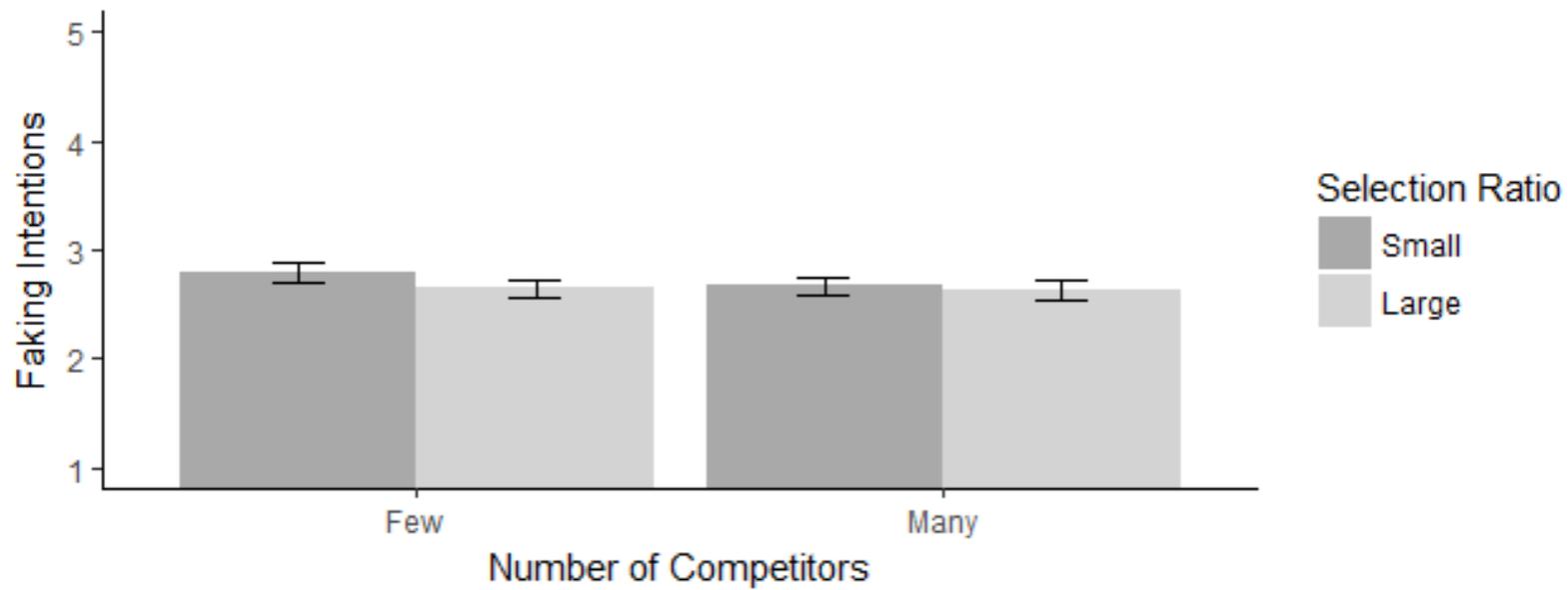


Figure 1. Comparison of faking intentions among experimental cells.

Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals around the mean. *Faking intentions* measured on a 5-point scale (where 1 = to no extent and 5 = to a very great extent).

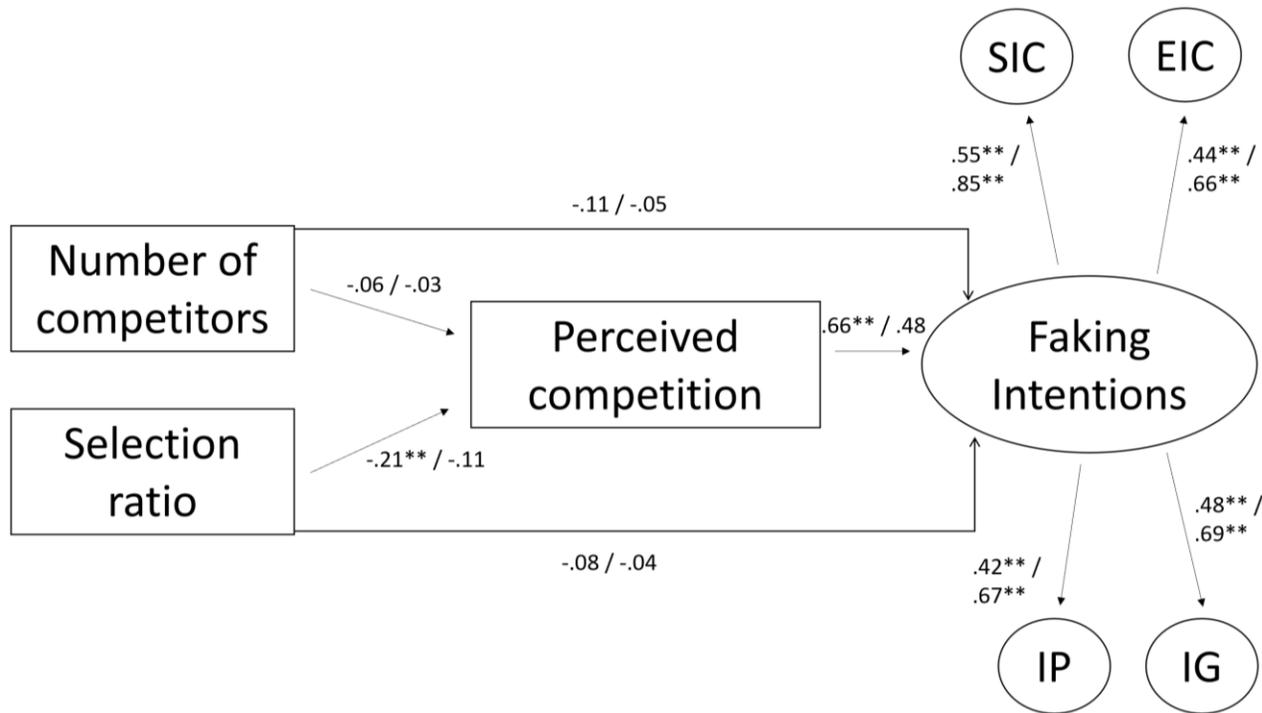


Figure 2. Structural model of Hypotheses 4a and 4b.

$N = 775$. Values to the left of the slash are unstandardized path estimates; values to the right of the slash are standardized path estimates. Fit estimates: $\chi^2(146) = 507.68, p < .001$; $CFI_{Robust} = .92$; $RMSEA_{Robust} = .060, 90\% CI [.054, .065]$; $SRMR = .07$. Also not shown are the indirect paths from number of competitors to faking intentions ($a*b = -.04, 95\% CI [-.12, .05], p = .40$) and from selection ratio to faking intentions ($a*b = -.12, 95\% CI [-.21, -.04], p = .003$). SIC = Slight image creation; EIC = Extensive image creation; IP = Image protection; IG = Deceptive ingratiation. $** p < .01$

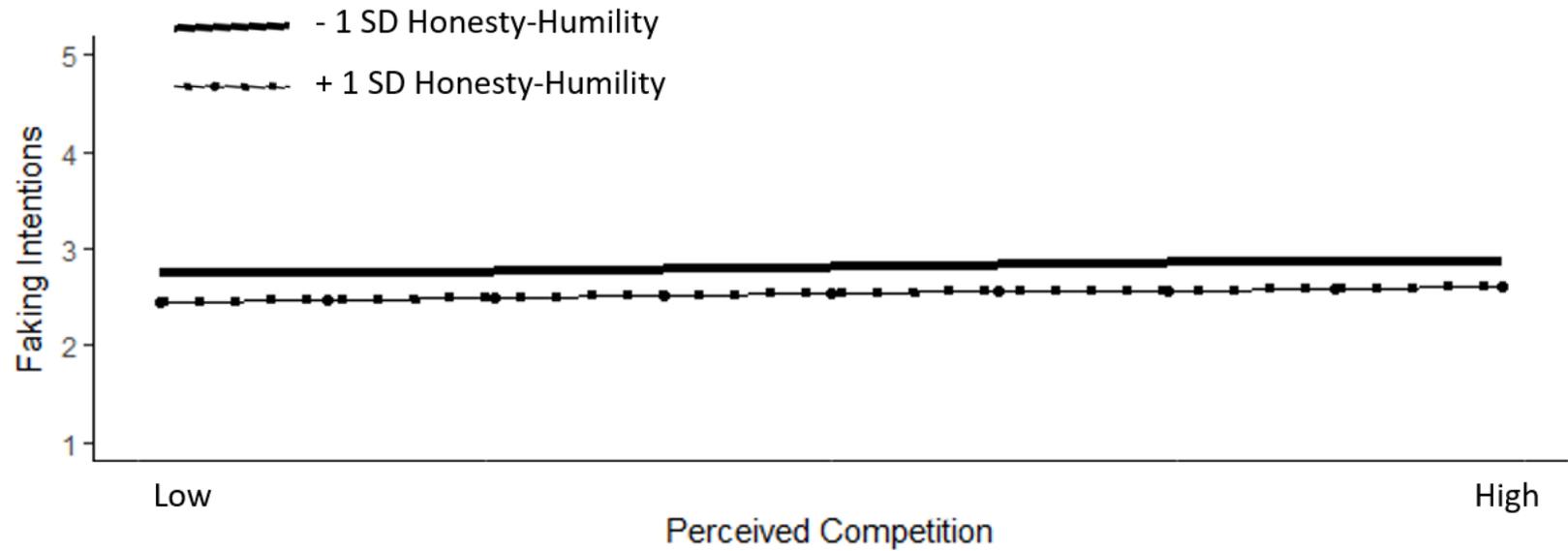


Figure 3. The effect of competition on faking intentions across values of Honesty-Humility.

Perceived competition measured on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *not at all competitive* and 5 = *extremely competitive*). *Honesty-Humility* measured on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*).

Appendix A

Study scenarios

Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following four scenarios:

1) Please imagine that you have been invited for an interview at a company that you would very much like to work for. You know for a fact that:

- You are competing for this job against equally qualified applicants
- Your chances of obtaining the job depend only on how well you do on the interview
- Including yourself, there are 10 people in total being interviewed
- Out of these 10 people, only 1 will get the job

As you wait alone for your interview, you notice one other applicant exiting their interview.

Based on this information, how competitive would you feel toward that other applicant?
(where 1 = not at all competitive, and 5 = extremely competitive)

2) Please imagine that you have been invited for an interview at a company that you would very much like to work for. You know for a fact that:

- You are competing for this job against equally qualified applicants
- Your chances of obtaining the job depend only on how well you do on the interview
- Including yourself, there are 10 people in total being interviewed
- Out of these 10 people, 5 will get the job

As you wait alone for your interview, you notice one other applicant exiting their interview.

Based on this information, how competitive would you feel toward that other applicant?
(where 1 = not at all competitive, and 5 = extremely competitive)

3) Please imagine that you have been invited for an interview at a company that you would very much like to work for. You know for a fact that:

- You are competing for this job against equally qualified applicants
- Your chances of obtaining the job depend only on how well you do on the interview
- Including yourself, there are 50 people in total being interviewed
- Out of these 50 people, only 5 will get the job

As you wait alone for your interview, you notice one other applicant exiting their interview.

Based on this information, how competitive would you feel toward that other applicant?
(where 1 = not at all competitive, and 5 = extremely competitive)

4) Please imagine that you have been invited for an interview at a company that you would very much like to work for. You know for a fact that:

- You are competing for this job against equally qualified applicants
- Your chances of obtaining the job depend only on how well you do on the interview
- Including yourself, there are 50 people in total being interviewed
- Out of these 50 people, 25 will get the job

As you wait alone for your interview, you notice one other applicant exiting their interview.

Based on this information, how competitive would you feel toward that other applicant?

(where 1 = not at all competitive, and 5 = extremely competitive)

Appendix B

Honesty-Humility items (from the HEXACO-200 Personality Inventory)

- 1) If I want something from a person I dislike, I will act very nicely toward that person in order to get it.
- 2) If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a million dollars.
- 3) Having a high level of social status is not very important to me.
- 4) I deserve more influence and authority than most other people do.
- 5) I don't see anything wrong with using flattery to get ahead in life.
- 6) I wouldn't cheat a person even if he or she was a real "sucker".
- 7) Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.
- 8) I am an ordinary person who is no better than others.
- 9) I sometimes try to make people feel guilty so that they will do what I want.
- 10) I wouldn't feel bad about deceiving people who allow themselves to be deceived.
- 11) I prefer to have high-status, successful people as my friends.
- 12) I wouldn't want people to treat me as though I were superior to them.
- 13) I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.
- 14) I would be tempted to buy stolen property if I were financially tight.
- 15) I would like to live in a very expensive, high-class neighborhood.
- 16) I am special and superior in many ways.
- 17) If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.
- 18) I would still pay my taxes even if I would not get caught for avoiding them.
- 19) I would like to be seen driving around in a very expensive car.

- 20) Sometimes I feel that laws should not apply to someone like me.
- 21) I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.
- 22) I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.
- 23) I would enjoy being a member of a fancy, high-class casino.
- 24) I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.
- 25) If I want something from someone, I ask for it directly, instead of manipulating them into giving it.
- 26) I would like to know how to smuggle things across the border.
- 27) I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.
- 28) Some people would say that I have an over-inflated ego.
- 29) I often get people to do favors for me by making them feel that they owe me.
- 30) I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.
- 31) If there is some chance of improving my social status, I take big risks.
- 32) I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.

Appendix C

Interview Faking Behaviour Scale (Short)

- 1) I would exaggerate my responsibilities on my previous jobs
- 2) I would distort my answers based on the comments or reactions of the interviewer
- 3) I would distort my answers to emphasize what the interviewer was looking for
- 4) I would inflate the fit between my values and goals and the values and goals of the organization
- 5) I would tell fictional stories prepared in advance of the interview to best present my credentials
- 6) I would make up stories about my work experiences that were well developed and logical
- 7) I would invent some work situations or accomplishments that did not really occur
- 8) If I did not have a good answer, I would borrow work experiences of other people and make them sound like my own
- 9) I would try to find out the interviewer's views and incorporate them in my answers as my own
- 10) I would try to express the same opinions and attitudes as the interviewer
- 11) I would try to appear similar to the interviewer in terms of values, attitudes, or beliefs
- 12) I would compliment the organization on something, however insignificant it may actually be to me
- 13) If asked directly, I would not mention my true reason for quitting previous jobs
- 14) If asked directly, I would not mention some problems I had in past jobs
- 15) I would cover up some "skeletons in my closet"

16) I would clearly separate myself from my past work experiences that would reflect poorly on me

Appendix D

Demographics items

- 1) What gender do you identify as:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other _____
- 2) What is your age (in years)?
- 3) What is your program of study?
- 4) What year of your program are you currently in?
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
 - 4
 - 5
 - Other (e.g., part-time)
- 5) What is your first language?
- 6) What is your ethnic background? (multiple answers possible)
 - Aboriginal (First Nations/Metis/Inuit)
 - White/European
 - Black/African/Caribbean
 - Southeast Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino, etc.)
 - Arab (Saudi Arabian, Palestinian, Iraqi, etc.)

- Latin American (Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Brazilian, Colombian, etc.)
 - West Asian (Iranian, Afghani, etc.)
 - Other (please specify) _____
- 7) Approximately how many employment interviews have you participated in (as an applicant)?
- 8) Approximately how many months of part-time work experience do you have?
- 9) Approximately how many months of full-time work experience do you have?