

The Influence of Situational Factors on Interview Anxiety

by

Jordan Moore

**A Thesis
presented to
The University of Guelph**

**In partial fulfilment of requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
Psychology**

Guelph, Ontario, Canada

© Jordan Moore, September, 2021

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF SITUATIONAL FACTORS ON INTERVIEW ANXIETY

Jordan Moore

Advisor:

University of Guelph, 2021

Dr. Deborah Powell

This study sought to determine whether two situational factors within a job interview could impact applicant interview anxiety. More specifically, the study investigated whether providing interview questions to applicants before officially beginning the interview or attempting to mimic a feelings elicited from rapport building using a script could reduce applicant interview anxiety. We also investigated whether applicants' intolerance of uncertainty would moderate the relation between question provision and interview anxiety. After conducting real selection interviews for a research assistant position, applicants ($N = 205$) completed a questionnaire asking about their interview anxiety and intolerance of uncertainty. Ultimately, our hypotheses were not supported, as interview anxiety did not differ across conditions and intolerance of uncertainty did not moderate the relation between question provision and interview anxiety. Thus, we did not find any evidence to suggest that the situational factors we identified have an impact on interview anxiety.

Keywords: interview anxiety, job interviews, rapport, uncertainty,

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I'd like to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Deborah Powell, for all of her support over the past two years. Not only was she able to hold my hand through the worst parts of the process, but she always showed a remarkable patience with me regardless of how long it took me to answer emails or return drafts back to her. Without her, I never could have finished a project like this. The admiration she receives from all her students is well-earned!

Thank you to Dr Harjinder Gill for her work on my thesis committee. It is always scary to work for so long on a project and show it to someone for the first time, but it is equally comforting and reassuring to receive such positive and constructive feedback from someone I respect as much as Jinder. Thank you for helping me and Deb to make the project what it was.

Thank you to my cohort; Hannah Teja, Christina Gilbert, Kyle Planche, Ashley Cole and Julia Kearney. Whether it was working through stats labs, complaining about TAs, practicing my thesis defense or watching Love is Blind in Blackwood Hall, it was amazing to know I always had great people who were there for me. I'd also like to thank my lab; Simonne Mastrella, Irene Zhang, Melissa Pike, Jordan Ho and Brooke Charbonneau. Although the pandemic didn't allow us to continue with our lab hangouts, I really appreciated your efforts to make me feel at home in Guelph and will miss seeing you all. I'd also like to extend a special thank you to Brooke for all her help in training my research assistants. I couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you to all of my research assistants. It was not easy to coordinate the schedules of 14 different interviewers, but their ability to keep me in the loop whenever possible made it

much easier. Thank you all for your time and diligence. None of this would be possible without you!

Thank you to the I/O department in Guelph for all that they've done for me. Thank you to the graduate students who came before me for being so kind and offering their support whenever possible and thank you to the faculty who challenged me and allowed me to grow both intellectually and professionally.

I'd also like to acknowledge the financial support systems that allowed me to get where I am today. The grants and loans that I received allowed me to access the education that I needed to pursue my goals and I will not forget how important this was to my journey. I can only hope that these supports can one day be reinstated to help those who need them the most.

Lastly, I would like to thank my friends and family at home for their love and support. Most importantly, thank you to my parents for spending time and reading with me as a kid. Thank you for your faith in my abilities and unconditional love. I'm still not sure that you know *exactly* what I study or what I do for a living (most don't), but I know you've always supported me in it and cheered me on regardless. And for that, I will love you forever and like you for always.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
1. The Impact of Situational Factors on Interview Anxiety	1
1.1 Interview anxiety	1
1.2 Interview anxiety as a State.....	3
1.3 Situational Impact on Social Anxiety	6
1.4 Uncertainty	7
1.5 Rapport.....	9
2. Methods	13
2.1 Participants	13
2.2 Procedure.....	14
2.3 Manipulation	15
2.4 Measures	16
2.4.1 Interview anxiety	16
2.4.2 Trait intolerance of uncertainty.....	18
3. Results	20
3.1 Manipulation Checks.....	20
3.2 Planned Analyses.....	20
3.3 Exploratory Analyses	22
3.3.1 Interview Performance	22
3.3.2 Interview Anxiety Subscales.....	22

3.4 Qualitative Analyses	22
4. Discussion	25
4.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, and Future Directions.....	33
4.2 Conclusion.....	35
References	36
Table 1	44
Table 2	46
Table 3	47
Table 4	48
Table 5:	49
Appendix A: Email to Applicants	51
Appendix B: Cover Letter to Participants	53
Appendix C: Rapport Script.....	55
Appendix D: Control Script	57
Appendix E: Question Script.....	59
Appendix F: Interview Guide	61
Appendix G: Manipulation Checks	66
Appendix H: Modified Measure of Anxiety in Selection Interviews (MASI).....	67
Appendix I: Intolerance of Uncertainty – Short Form (IUS-12).....	69
Appendix J: Demographic Questionnaire	70

1. The Impact of Situational Factors on Interview Anxiety

In employee selection, the interview is one of the most common methods of applicant assessment (McCarthy & Cheng, 2014). Although interviews are rated quite favourably among applicants when compared to other selection tests (Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004), it is possible for applicants to feel anxiety during an interview. Social psychology research suggests that the highly evaluative nature of the assessment combined with the applicant's uncertainty regarding their ability to make a positive impression can lead to feelings of anxiety (Carless & Imber, 2007; Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Indeed, research shows that a large proportion of job applicants report experiencing interview anxiety (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). Although it is currently defined as a situation-specific trait (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004) the present study will seek to investigate the role that two situational factors play on one's experience of interview anxiety, using a randomized experiment. Research such as this is important, as it will provide a better conceptual understanding of interview anxiety, and could have implications for how organizations choose to implement job interviews in the future.

1.1 Interview anxiety

Interview anxiety is defined as “feelings of nervousness or apprehension that are relatively stable within job applicants across employment interview situations” (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004; p.612). Since it has been defined, researchers have suggested that interview anxiety has a negative impact on applicant interview performance. This assertion is well supported in other fields, as general anxiety has been shown to have a negative impact on general task performance (Seipp, 1991) and test anxiety has been shown to impair test performance (Putwain, Connors, & Symes, 2010). These relations are said to exist as anxiety can act as a

distractor to the individual and decrease the cognitive resources at their disposal (Putwain et al., 2010). Recent meta-analytic evidence suggests that this relation does extend to interview anxiety, as it is negatively correlated with interview scores (Powell et al., 2018). Despite this negative relation, McCarthy and Goffin (2004) suggested that interview anxiety is not necessarily related to job performance, and that it could work to reduce the predictive validity of job interviews. This assertion was recently supported, as a study performed by Schneider et al. (2019) did not find evidence to suggest that interview anxiety predicted job performance and also found evidence that increased interview anxiety reduced the predictive validity of the interview, as the interview appeared to be less effective at predicting job performance among more anxious applicants. The implication of this finding is that applicants who experience high levels of interview anxiety may struggle to get hired for jobs that they would be able to perform successfully. Therefore, gaining a better understanding of interview anxiety and how to reduce it could help applicants get jobs that they are qualified for.

Given that interview anxiety appears to be associated with decreased interview performance, as well as the interview's predictive validity, reducing interview anxiety would be beneficial to both the applicant and the organization. For this reason, McCarthy and Goffin (2004) suggested that research be devoted to reducing applicant interview anxiety to improve their chances of acquiring jobs that they are qualified for. Although more recent research has investigated the reduction of interview anxiety, these interventions tend to focus on the applicant, rather than the interview. For example, research conducted by Feiler and Powell (2016) found that implementing single session interventions centered on fostering positive self image and perspective-taking significantly reduced interview anxiety in job applicants. Although studies

such as this are beneficial and increase our understanding of interview anxiety and how to reduce it, they do not investigate how the organization can reduce the applicant's levels of state interview anxiety.

1.2 Interview anxiety as a State

Interview anxiety has typically been defined as a relatively stable trait (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004; McCarthy et al., 2017); however, there is reason to believe that it could have the attributes of a state as well. When conceptualized as more of a state, general anxiety has been defined as “an unpleasant emotional state or a condition marked by apprehension” with “feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry” (Spielberger, 1985; p. 176). Conversely, trait anxiety refers to a set of more stable individual differences in one's experience of anxiety (Spielberger, 1985). Unlike trait anxiety, state anxiety can vary across time depending on stressors that an individual encounters. Because this study aimed to utilize interventions to reduce interview anxiety, we will be focusing on state interview anxiety.

In the case of interview anxiety, past studies have utilized measures that view interview anxiety as either a situation-specific trait or as a state. This distinction was described by Powell et al. (2018), who explained that research on interview anxiety generally uses measures to assess general trait anxiety, interview-specific trait anxiety, generic state anxiety and state anxiety with directed recall of the interview. Measures of general trait anxiety do not refer to the interview setting specifically and use items such as “I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter” (Cook, et al., 2000). Situation-specific trait measures ask the individual about their anxiety within the interview specifically, but do not limit the questions to one specific interview and instead ask about their experiences generally. These measures utilize items such as, “I am

overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly when I am in job interview situations” (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). Generic state measures ask about the anxiety that one is feeling broadly. These measures contain items such as “I felt worried” (Horn & Behrend, 2017). While these generic state measures of interview anxiety are administered soon after the interview, they do not make specific reference to the interview that was just conducted. Given that measures that are designed for specific contexts tend to exhibit lower errors in measurement (Schmit et al., 1995), generic measures of state anxiety are likely not appropriate for interview anxiety, which is situation specific. Other studies have measured interview anxiety using directed recall of the interview, which makes specific reference to the interview that the individual had just completed. These measures use items such as “During the interview, I had butterflies in my stomach” (Tross & Maurer, 2008). Although it does not appear that other researchers have explicitly made a case for interview anxiety being more of a state, many studies appear to utilize measures which assess it as such.

In addition to being commonly used, these state measures could also be the strongest method to assess interview anxiety. Meta-analytic findings reported by Powell et al. (2018) indicate that measures of state anxiety with directed recall of their interview exhibited a stronger negative correlation between self-reported anxiety and interview performance than did generic state anxiety, general trait anxiety and interview-specific trait anxiety. In addition to this finding, research by Feiler and Powell (2014) also suggests that state interview anxiety may differ from trait interview anxiety. In Feiler and Powell’s study, job applicants completed a measure of trait interview anxiety several days before an interview, as well as a state measure immediately afterwards. These state and trait measures of interview anxiety differed slightly in terms of their

wording but both featured the same number of items design to assess the same constructs. The state measure referred to the interview which had just been conducted, whereas the trait measure asked about how the applicant feels in interviews generally. Applicants reported significantly lower levels of state interview anxiety than trait interview anxiety with a medium effect size. After undergoing a treatment condition to reduce interview anxiety through field perspective taking, the difference between state and trait scores appeared to increase further ($d = -1.64$). These findings by Feiler and Powell (2014), which suggest there could be a difference between trait and state interview anxiety, in combination with those of Powell et al. (2018), which suggest that state measures of interview anxiety are more strongly related to interview performance, could indicate that the level of interview anxiety that one reports after a specific interview could differ from their trait levels of interview anxiety. This could mean that applicants overestimate how anxious they get in interviews, or that their levels of interview anxiety could differ based on situational factors within the interview. Given that this study sought to assess how situational factors can influence interview anxiety, we will examine state interview anxiety with directed recall of the interview.

Although there does not appear to be any research assessing the impact of situational factors on interview anxiety, there is evidence to suggest that factors within the interview can impact applicant reactions broadly. Some interviewers will utilize “stress interviews” in an attempt to gain insight into an applicant’s ability to regulate their emotions. Interviewers will attempt to induce stress in applicants through unfriendly treatment, expressing dissatisfaction with applicant answers, or using difficult questions (Chen et al., 2019). Research indicates that interviewers using these tactics appear to gain a better understanding of candidates’ emotional

regulation abilities, but that the use of these tactics have a negative impact on applicant perceptions of organization attractiveness (Chen et al., 2019). The present study seeks build upon these findings and determine how other situational factors can impact interview anxiety.

By determining whether situational factors influence applicants' state levels of interview anxiety, our findings could potentially have important implications for organizational policy regarding interview procedures. As previously stated, the present study appears to be the first to examine whether there are situational factors that an organization can modify to reduce applicant interview anxiety.

1.3 Situational Impact on Social Anxiety

It is well documented within early social anxiety research that certain social contexts are more anxiety provoking than others. In their review, Schlenker & Leary (1982) described a number of contexts in which social anxiety would be expected to increase. First, they suggest that the status of the other in a social situation can increase one's experience of social anxiety (Jackson & Latane, 1981). One could be perceived as being of higher status if they are judged to be powerful, attractive or esteemed. This increase in anxiety can be further amplified, as these high-status individuals are often perceived as being harder to please (Tedeschi et al., 1973). Second, they assert that individuals are likely to feel greater anxiety when they are motivated to make a positive impression on others. Building off of this, they suggest that one's expected likelihood of achieving a positive impression also has an impact on one's social anxiety. That is, if an individual is highly motivated to make a positive impression but has very little confidence in their ability to do so, they will likely feel greater anxiety than someone with equal motivation and greater confidence. Finally, the authors report that individuals feel a greater sense of anxiety

in situations that are uncertain or ambiguous. That is, when one feels a sense of uncertainty about how to act or what to expect in a given situation, they feel more anxious. Many of these contextual factors are bound to occur in an interview setting (i.e. power imbalance, motivation to make positive impression) and would be difficult to manipulate. For this study, we sought to identify situational factors that could be easily manipulated to determine if they had an impact on job applicants' experience of interview anxiety.

1.4 Uncertainty

One's ability to tolerate uncertainty has been shown to be an important individual difference related to the experience of anxiety. Boelen, Vrinssen, and van Tulder (2010) found that in a sample of adolescents, intolerance of uncertainty was related to worry and social anxiety while controlling for negative affectivity, age, and gender. In addition to this finding, cognitive behavioural group therapy has been shown to decrease intolerance of uncertainty among adults with social phobia, which is associated with reductions in social anxiety following treatment (Mahoney & McEvoy, 2012). These findings suggest that intolerance of uncertainty has a direct relation with social anxiety.

Although uncertainty has been studied extensively in the context of social anxiety and generalized anxiety disorder, it has yet to be explored in the context of job interviews. Rather than reducing applicants' trait level intolerance of uncertainty, we will aim to reduce the uncertainty of the situation, utilizing a between-subjects experiment. Although this kind of manipulation has not been analyzed in the context of the selection interview, situational uncertainty has been manipulated in previous public health research (Rosen & Knauper, 2009). The results of this research indicated that when participants were provided with information

designed to reduce their uncertainty regarding whether or not they had a fictitious disorder, they exhibited less worry than those whose situational uncertainty increased (Rosen & Knauper, 2009). This finding suggests that it is possible to manipulate one's situational uncertainty, and that this could in turn influence related variables such as worry.

One way to reduce the situational uncertainty could be by providing applicants with the interview questions before beginning the interview. We expect that becoming familiar with the questions will give applicants a better idea of what to expect in the subsequent interview. This reduction in uncertainty should, in turn, reduce anxiety. Although question provision has never been studied in relation to interview anxiety, it has been shown to offer several benefits to the organization. Previous research on question provision shows that providing questions ahead of time allows the interviewer to better measure the underlying constructs they are interested in (Klehe et al., 2008), increases the interviewer's ability to predict future job performance (Maurer et al., 2008), and increases applicant perceptions of fairness (Day & Carroll, 2003). It is possible that this increase in predictive ability and perceptions of fairness could be due in part to a decrease in interview anxiety through decreased uncertainty.

The present study will utilize a between-subjects randomized experiment to test the effect of question provision on interview anxiety. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of three conditions, one of which involves receiving questions ahead of time, and two others which do not receive questions before beginning the interview. This process is described in greater detail in the methods section. In this study, we hypothesized that:

H1: Individuals who receive questions ahead of time will report lower levels of interview anxiety than those who do not receive their questions before beginning the interview.

The present study also tested intolerance of uncertainty as a moderator of this relation. Given that an intolerance of uncertainty appears to exhibit a causal relation with social anxiety, we anticipate that it will exhibit a relation with interview anxiety as well. We predict that a situational reduction in uncertainty will be more beneficial for those with higher trait levels of intolerance of uncertainty, than those with low trait intolerance of uncertainty. Therefore, we hypothesized that:

H2: There will be an interaction between the condition and trait levels of intolerance of uncertainty, such that participants with higher intolerance of uncertainty scores will show a greater decrease in interview anxiety when provided with interview questions than those with lower intolerance of uncertainty scores.

1.5 Rapport

In addition to uncertainty, the present study sought to determine whether mimicking a sense of rapport in the interview could also reduce applicant interview anxiety. Rapport as a construct has been defined in a number of different ways by researchers. For example, some have described it as the perception of a positive interpersonal interaction (Gremier & Gwinner, 2000), while others have described it as perceived similarity (Nickels et al., 1983). Perhaps the most comprehensive definition of rapport was proposed by Granitz et al. (2009), who suggest that it is made up of three components: approach, personality and homophily. Approach refers to the degree to which others feel comfortable in approaching an individual. Personality refers to the characteristics of the individuals interacting with one another. Certain personality traits, such as empathy and humour, have been shown to increase one's ability to build rapport with others (Carless & Imber, 2007; Conway & Peneno, 1999; Nguyen, 2007). Homophily refers to the

tendency of individuals to be more attracted to those more similar to themselves. This component can be further broken down into two sub-components of shared status and shared values. Combining this three component definition by Granitz et al. (2009) with that of Nicely (2012), we define rapport as “the mutually agreeable atmosphere of respect, liking, and compatibility shared by two people” (Nicely, 2012; p.6) which results from combining approachability, personality traits, and feelings of similarity. As an extension of this definition, the process of rapport building can therefore be described as the expression of verbal and nonverbal behaviours that are used to express one’s approachability, personality, and similarity to another individual.

Within the job interview, rapport building is typically operationalized as informal conversation which centers around topics such as personal hobbies or the weather (Barrick et al., 2012). Although rapport was once put forth as an essential aspect of the selection interview (Higham, 1971), other researchers have suggested that devoting too much time to rapport building could actually reduce the validity of the interview (Claster & Schwarz, 1972). It has been identified as one of the dimensions of an interview that determines the degree to which it can be classified as “structured,” as it is believed to detract from this structure the more it is utilized (Levashina et al., 2014). For this reason, many researchers have urged practitioners to limit or eliminate rapport building entirely from structured interviews (Chapman & Zweig, 2005). Despite this suggestion, many interviewers and applicants continue to view these unstructured interactions positively (Chapman & Zweig, 2005). In addition to this positive perception, it has been identified as one of the core components of the job interview (Stevens,

1998). Indeed, Chapman and Zweig (2005) indicated that interviewees expected rapport building to occur in their interviews.

Because job applicants expect rapport building to occur before officially beginning their job interview, it is possible that the complete absence of rapport building could be perceived as a violation of social norms. Broadly speaking, social norms can be defined as how individuals are expected to behave in certain situations (Sunstein, 1996). One of the more basic social norms that appears across cultures, is the norm of reciprocity. This is generally defined as a pattern of reciprocal behaviour, meaning that an individual treats another the way that the other has treated them (Perugini et al., 2003). In the case of the interview, it is possible that when an applicant enters the interview attempting to build rapport, a lack of reciprocation could be perceived as a violation of this norm. Geller et al. (1974) previously theorized that when one feels that they are being ignored, they perceive this behaviour as a violation of implicit social norms. Their findings indicated that individuals who were ignored were more likely to report feeling frustrated, anxious, and nervous than those who did not experience this norm violation. Although interviewees are not ignored outright by the interviewer, it is possible that a lack of rapport building could be perceived similarly to this. In sum, job applicants likely approach the interview expecting to build rapport with the interviewer. If this does not occur, they may perceive this as a violation of social norms and feel more anxious.

In addition to the complete absence of rapport building being perceived as anxiety provoking, rapport building appears to offer several benefits to the interviewer as well. Beyond simply being perceived as relaxing for the applicant (Chapman & Zweig, 2005), these unstructured interactions could provide important information to the interviewer. Rapport

building appears to be an effective way to assess the interviewee's personality (Blackman & Funder, 2002), as well as address possible cultural misunderstandings (Lim et al., 2006). While some would suggest that these benefits do not outweigh the threat that rapport building poses to the overall structure of the interview, research has demonstrated that impressions made during rapport building were highly correlated with objective ratings of interview performance. This finding indicates that the initial impressions conveyed during these less structured interactions were related to their later responses to subsequent interview questions (Swider et al., 2016). These findings suggest that allowing for rapport building before beginning the interview could be less harmful to its validity than previously thought. Given that incorporating limited rapport building is unlikely to harm the interview's validity, we will incorporate it to determine if it could also lower applicant interview anxiety.

To our knowledge, just one study has examined the relation between rapport and interview anxiety. Nicely (2012) utilized a field study, in which participants were asked to report the degree to which they built rapport with their interviewer (i.e. "the interviewer evoked feelings of trust"), as well as their interview anxiety and self-rated interview performance. The results indicated that interview anxiety mediated the relation between rapport and self-rated interview performance. However, because this research was correlational in nature, it is possible that individuals with lower interview anxiety were simply stronger at building rapport than others. The present study sought to build upon this research using a randomized experiment. Our goal was to determine whether randomly assigning participants to a rapport building condition will decrease applicant interview anxiety, which has yet to be assessed in the context of selection

interviews. This study's design will also allow for exploratory analyses regarding objective interview performance in relation to rapport building.

Given the theoretical background of social norm violations outlined by Geller et al. and rapport building outlined by Nicely (2012), we hypothesized that:

H3: individuals that are in the rapport condition will exhibit lower self-reported levels of interview anxiety than those who do not build rapport with the interviewer.

We sought to test these hypotheses in the context of a randomized experiment using a sample of university students applying for a research assistant position. All applicants took part in synchronous, video-conference interviews.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

Applicants were recruited through job ads posted on a university job recruitment website, university Facebook pages, and undergraduate psychology course pages. A total of 350 people were interviewed from October 2020 to April 2021, with 230 interviewees agreeing to participate in the study after finishing their interview. After filtering out participants who failed at least one of two attention checks, we were left with a final sample of 205 participants. There was a relatively even distribution of participants across experimental conditions, with a few more participants in the control group ($n = 72$, 35.41%) than in the question provision ($n = 66$, 32.06%) or rapport conditions ($n = 67$, 32.54%). The vast majority of the sample identified as women ($n = 179$, 87.32%), with some identifying as men ($n = 25$, 11.96%) and a small number identifying as non-binary, or choosing not to disclose their gender ($n = 5$, 2.39%). The sample showed some variability in terms of what year of study they were in, with a the majority being in

their second year ($n = 74$, 35.41%), or third year ($n = 67$, 32.06%) of study, followed by fourth year ($n = 33$, 15.79%) and first year ($n = 26$, 12.44%). A small subset of the sample reported being in their fifth year or greater, or a transfer student ($n = 9$, 4.31%). The majority of the sample identified as White/European ($n = 109$, 52.15%), South Asian ($n = 38$, 18.18%), or Southeast Asian ($n = 14$, 6.70%). Most participants were enrolled in a biological science ($n = 74$, 35.41%) or psychology program ($n = 69$, 33.01%).

2.2 Procedure

Structured video interviews were conducted for undergraduate students applying to a research assistant position at the University of Guelph. A total of 16 research assistants were trained on how to conduct interviews, with 14 of them conducting interviews while the remaining two research assistants offered secondary ratings of interview recordings. All research assistants received several hours of interview training from a graduate student in industrial-organizational psychology. In the Fall semester, two interviewers were assigned to the control and rapport conditions, while three interviewers were assigned to the question condition. In the Winter, two interviewers were assigned to the rapport and question conditions, while three interviewers were assigned to the question condition. The training that each interviewer received differed slightly depending on the manipulation to which they were assigned.

All students who applied were offered an interview. Once applicants contacted the listed email address, they were provided with information about the research assistantship being offered, as well as the study being conducted. Participants were then reminded of the study after completing the interview and an email was sent immediately following their interview to invite them to fill out the Qualtrics survey. Applicants were assured both before and after the interview

that their participation was voluntary and anonymous, meaning that their participation, or lack thereof, would have no impact on their ability to be hired for the position. Those who agreed to participate in the study filled out a self-report questionnaire assessing their state levels of anxiety using directed recall of the interview, as well as their trait levels of intolerance of uncertainty. These measures are described below. Participants also filled out several other measures which were not utilized in the present study.

All interviews were recorded in Microsoft Teams and scored by both the interviewer and a second research assistant who watched the recorded interview. To ensure that applicants had an equal chance of getting hired across conditions, the top 2-3 candidates were selected from each condition and sent to the hiring professor to make a final decision, based on student resumes and transcripts.

2.3 Manipulation

This study utilized a between-subjects experimental design. Participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: a rapport building condition, a question provision condition and a control group with minimal rapport building and no question provision. In the rapport building condition, the interview began with the interviewer introducing themselves and spending approximately two minutes reading through a script designed to build rapport with the applicant. The script was designed to evoke the three components of rapport (approachability, personality and homophily; see Appendix B). Once the rapport building phase was completed, the interviewer began recording the interview. Interviewers in this condition were trained to build rapport in a way that allows them to encapsulate the three dimensions of rapport previously identified (approachability, personality and homophily).

In the question provision condition, the interviewer did not engage in any rapport building beyond the bare minimum (i.e. “Hello, my name is _____, how are you?”), before beginning the interview. The applicants were then provided with the five interview questions they were to be asked and given 5 minutes to read over them. At this time, the interviewer and interviewee would turn off their individual cameras to allow for the interviewee to have a feeling of privacy while reviewing the questions. This time was kept relatively short to ensure that this manipulation reduced uncertainty but did not increase applicant preparedness. This treatment was designed to allow applicants to become familiar with the questions, rather than to plan out their answers in detail. Finally, in the control condition the interviewer would again engage in no rapport building beyond greeting the applicant and introducing themselves. After each research assistant interviewed one applicant, the lead researcher reviewed the interview footage to ensure that the interviewers were adhering to the treatment conditions they were placed in and following the appropriate structured interview practices.

2.4 Measures

2.4.1 Interview anxiety

Applicants filled out a modified version of the Measure of Anxiety in Selection Interviews (MASI; McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). The measure is broken down into five distinct facets of interview anxiety: communication, appearance, social, performance and behavioural. Past research has established the concurrent, divergent, convergent, criterion-related, and incremental validity of the MASI (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). Because this measure was originally intended to assess interview anxiety as a situation-specific trait, items were modified slightly, such that they specifically refer to the interview that the applicants just finished, rather

than interviews in general. For example, a sample item from the original MASI states “I become so apprehensive in job interviews that I am unable to express my thoughts clearly.” This question clearly pertains to interviews in general rather than any interview specifically. The language of the question was modified to reflect the interview that the participants had just finished to better assess anxiety at the state level rather than trait. The revised sample item stated, “I became so apprehensive in the job interview that I was unable to express my thoughts clearly.” Similar modifications were applied to all included MASI items.

In addition to modifying items to better assess the participant’s state during their most recent interview, several items were dropped due to a lack of relevance to the manipulations in this study. Three items were dropped from the appearance subscale of the MASI. These dropped items included, “Before a job interview I am so nervous that I spend an excessive amount of time on my appearance.” This item was dropped because it pertains to behaviour which occurs before the interview takes place and the participant’s response would not be influenced by treatment. The other two appearance subscale items that were dropped were, “if I do not look my absolute best in a job interview, I find it very hard to be relaxed,” and “I feel uneasy if my hair is not perfect when I walk into a job interview.” These items were dropped because the anxiety being measured here appear to stem from the individual’s appearance, which will not be modified in the present study. In addition to the appearance subscale items, one item was dropped from the social subscale of the MASI as well because of the video interview context This item states, “when meeting a job interviewer, I worry that my handshake will not be correct.” This item was dropped because the present study used online interviews exclusively, precluding the use of handshakes. Because of these modifications, the MASI utilized in the present study contained 23

items, all of which were scored on a 5-point Likert scale with 1 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree.

2.4.2 Trait intolerance of uncertainty

Intolerance of uncertainty was measured with the 12-item Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale, Short Form (IUS-12; Carleton, Norton, and Asmundson, 2007). This measure is comprised of two subscales: prospective and inhibitory intolerance of uncertainty. The prospective subscale consists of seven items, such as, “I can’t stand being taken by surprise.” The inhibitory subscale consists of 5 items, such as, “When it is time to act, uncertainty paralyses me.” All items on the IUS-12 are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all characteristic of me) to 5 (entirely characteristic of me) The short form was used due to the factor instability and high inter-item correlations of the original IUS. The IUS-12 has demonstrated strong convergent validity, as it has been highly correlated with validated measures of depression and anxiety. The measure has also shown strong incremental validity, as it was able to account for variance in anxiety and worry measures beyond what was predicted the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck et al., 1996) and Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI; Beck et al., 1988). In sum, the IUS-12 has demonstrated strong validity in previous research.

Three manipulation check questions were utilized when participants filled out their post-interview surveys. To assess whether applicant uncertainty was reduced, participants rated their agreement with the statement “I felt uncertain of what would happen during the interview before beginning.” To assess whether rapport had been built effectively by the interviewer, participants were asked whether the interviewer “created a sense of warmth during the interview” (Nicely, 2012). Those in the rapport building condition are expected to report higher levels of warmth

than those in the control group. Participants were also asked to rate their agreement with the statement, “I felt prepared for the interview before it began,” which was used to assess their levels of preparation and ensure that it did not differ by condition.

We also collected data regarding anxiety subscale scores, as well as interview performance. No hypotheses were made in relation to these variables, but exploratory analyses were conducted to observe whether the experimental groups differed in performance and interview anxiety subtypes.

3. Results

3.1 Manipulation Checks

We utilized *t*-tests to determine whether the conditions differed in terms of their answers to manipulation check questions. The manipulation checks assessed applicant preparation, uncertainty and rapport. As anticipated, the question condition ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.10$) did not exhibit greater levels of preparation than the control group ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.14$), $t(136) = -1.11$, $p = 0.27$. This indicated that those in the question group did not feel more prepared for the interview than those in the control group. The uncertainty manipulation check also showed no difference between the control group ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.06$) and the question provision condition ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.81$), $t(136) = -1.46$, $p = 0.15$. There was also no difference on the rapport manipulation check between the rapport ($M = 3.54$, $SD = 1.11$) and control condition ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.16$), $t(137) = -0.48$, $p = 0.63$. This lack of significant effects appears to indicate that the manipulations were not effective in reducing applicant uncertainty or establishing a sense of rapport with the interviewer.

3.2 Planned Analyses

Means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients are included in Table 1. Before testing our hypotheses with *t*-tests, we used a Levene's test to ensure that there were equal variances across groups. The results of the test showed that the assumption of equal variances was not violated, $F(2, 202) = 1.21$, $p = .30$, and we proceeded to test our hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 stated that applicants in the question condition would exhibit lower mean levels of interview anxiety than those in the control condition. The results of the *t*-test indicated that there was no mean difference in interview anxiety, $d = 0.06$, 95% CI [-0.27, 0.40] between

individuals in the question condition ($M = 2.97$, $SD = 0.69$), compared to those in the control group ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.59$), $t(136) = -0.38$, $p = .35$ (one-sided). By Cohen's (1988) standards, the effect reported was negligible. Thus, hypothesis 1 was not supported.

A regression was used to test our hypothesis 2. We hypothesized that individuals with high levels of intolerance of uncertainty would experience a greater decrease in interview anxiety scores when provided questions compared to those with lower intolerance of uncertainty scores. A linear model was run including intolerance of uncertainty, the experimental condition they were in (control or question provision) as well as an interaction term as predictors. This regression is summarized in Table 2. The results indicated that while intolerance of uncertainty showed a significant relation with interview anxiety ($b = 0.46$, 95% CI [0.28, 0.65], $sr^2 = .09$, 95% CI [.02, .16] $p < .01$), neither the question condition ($b = 0.29$, 95% CI [-0.40, 0.97], $sr^2 = .00$, 95% CI [-.01, .01], $p > .05$), nor the rapport condition ($b = 0.23$, 95% CI [-0.49, 0.96], $sr^2 = .00$, 95% CI [-.01, .01]) were significant. The interaction between intolerance of uncertainty and the question provision was also not significant ($b = -0.08$, 95% CI [-0.32, 0.16], $sr^2 = .00$, 95% CI [-.01, .01]). Thus, we did not find support for hypothesis 2 and conclude that although there is evidence that intolerance of uncertainty exhibits a relation with interview anxiety, intolerance of uncertainty does not moderate the relation between question provision and interview anxiety.

Hypothesis 3 predicted that applicants in the rapport condition would exhibit lower mean levels of interview anxiety than those in the control condition. Our test of hypothesis 2 indicated that there was no mean difference in interview anxiety, $d = 0.03$, 95% CI [-0.31, 0.36] between individuals in the rapport condition ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 0.68$), compared to those in the control

group ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 0.59$), $t(137) = -0.15$, $p = .44$ (one-sided). According to Cohen's standards (1988), this effect was also negligible. Thus hypothesis 3 was also not supported.

3.3 Exploratory Analyses

3.3.1 Interview Performance

We also conducted exploratory analyses to determine whether the conditions differed in terms of their interview performance. Surprisingly, applicants in the control condition ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.422$) appeared to perform better than those in the question provision group, ($M = 3.83$, $SD = 0.52$), $d = 0.42$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.76]. A similar trend was found when comparing the control ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.42$) to the rapport condition ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 0.52$), indicating that those in the control group performed better than those in the rapport condition, $d = 0.73$, 95% CI [0.40, 1.08]. This indicates that individuals in the control condition actually performed better than those in the rapport and question conditions, though this difference could be due to interviewer differences, rather than the experimental treatment impacting performance.

3.3.2 Interview Anxiety Subscales

Exploratory analyses were also conducted to determine if the conditions differed on any of the interview anxiety subscales. As with the overall anxiety scale, all of the subscale differences between the question provision and rapport conditions and the control group were negligible. These results are summarized in Tables 3 and 4.

3.4 Qualitative Analyses

In addition to the quantitative analyses covered, we also asked participants "In general, do you think that receiving interview questions before the interview begins would be beneficial

to you? Briefly explain your position.” Of the 67 participants in the question provision condition, 34 explicitly stated that getting 5 minutes with the questions was beneficial to them in the interview, while 22 spoke broadly about receiving the questions ahead of time being beneficial to interviewees. Of these 22, some said the questions would be beneficial to interviewees in general, while others referred specifically to themselves being able to benefit from this practice. It is possible that these 22 individuals did not consider their 5 minutes with the questions to be enough to consider it to be “before the interview begins,” but rather perceived this as part of the interview. It is also possible that the deliberately broad wording of the question led these individuals to speak more generally. Of these 56 participants who spoke positively about receiving questions ahead of time, 23 mentioned the increased time to prepare their answers. For example, one reported that receiving the questions “was extremely helpful as it gave me a chance to collect my thoughts and adequately prepare.” Just 5 participants indicated negative feelings about receiving questions ahead of time. Three of these individuals reported that it led them to overthink their answers, while the other two felt rushed when presented with all of the questions at once. One wrote, “honestly receiving the questions before the interview made me more apprehensive and I felt that I had to rush.” Two applicants reported that receiving questions ahead of time could be beneficial but that it could also lead to overthinking. One reported, “I am the type of individual that likes to answer questions on the fly. If I have extra time to think about questions often times I find that I overthink them.”

The same question was asked of participants in the control and rapport conditions. Given that neither of these groups received questions ahead of time, their qualitative results are reported together. Of 142 participants, 94 reported that receiving questions before the interview would be

beneficial without reservations. These individuals typically reported that more time with the questions would allow them to answer questions more effectively. One reported that, “having the time to prepare in advance and to be aware of the questions that will be asked of me would be very beneficial as I would be able to practice my answers ahead of time, which could potentially decrease nervousness, anxiousness, stuttering and increase confidence levels.”

In addition to this group, 23 participants reported feeling as if receiving questions could be beneficial, but with some reservations. These reservations fell into three categories. The first concern was that quick thinking could be an important skill to assess in the interview. For example, one participant wrote that while reviewing the questions could help them answer the question, “not being given the question beforehand creates a level of spontaneity that can allow the interviewer to look into how the candidate thinks on the spot and under pressure.” The second concern was that giving applicants more time with questions could lead to an increase in faking among other applicants. For example, one candidate wrote, “I believe my answers would be better, but I would have less chance getting the job due to others being able to create fake answers for the questions.” Last, some participants felt that knowing the questions could improve their performance, but they worried it could lead them to overthink their answers. One wrote that while it could help them answer questions more effectively, “it also could increase stress levels to make sure that you answer each question correctly. Having question beforehand may lead individual to try and memorize their responses.”

There were also 17 participants who thought that receiving interview questions would not benefit them. Many of these individuals reported that having questions before the interview would lead them to overthink their answers, potentially increasing their stress levels. Another

common theme was that these individuals felt their answers would be less genuine with more time to prepare. One participant encapsulated both of these lines of thinking, writing that “I don't think this would have been beneficial to me, as this could have led me to overthink the questions and my responses. I feel that being asked on the spot made my answers more genuine.” In addition to these types of answers, some reported that they had ample experiences to draw from, and that they opposed providing questions because it would disproportionately benefit their competitors. One such example said, “It would help me to have the question beforehand, but not as much as I believe it may help other applicants, thus I am against the early release of questions.” Several participants also voiced concerns of other applicants faking their answers if given more time to prepare.

4. Discussion

The goal of this study was to determine if providing interview questions to applicants a few minutes before beginning the interview, or using a script meant to elicit a sense of rapport with interviewers could reduce applicant anxiety. We also hypothesized that intolerance of uncertainty could moderate the relation between question provision and interview anxiety. Ultimately, our hypotheses were not supported. We did not find any evidence to suggest that participants who received questions ahead of the interview, or who heard a rapport script, reported lower levels of interview anxiety than those who did not. While intolerance of uncertainty did show a positive relation with interview anxiety, it did not moderate a relation between question provision and interview anxiety.

We found that interview anxiety was negatively associated with interview performance, which was consistent with previous meta-analytic findings (Table 1; Powell et al., 2018).

Communication ($r = -.24$) and performance anxiety ($r = -.24$) were most highly correlated with interview performance, while the behavioural ($r = -.11$) subscale was not significantly related to one's interview performance. It is also worth noting that interview anxiety appeared to be slightly higher in this sample than in previous research on interview anxiety. In both early research on interview anxiety (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004), as well as more recent studies (Schneider, Powell, & Bonaccio, 2019), interview anxiety has typically been rated around the mid-point of the five-point scale. The present study had mean interview anxiety levels of 2.95, indicating that the sample may have been more anxious than those in similar studies conducted in the past. This difference could be attributed to the online medium, as research suggests that online selection tests, particularly the ability to see oneself during the assessment, could impact applicant test anxiety (Wegge, 2006). However, it is also possible that this increase in interview anxiety could be due to the use of a different interview guide from what past research has utilized, or some other extraneous variables.

The lack of support for the hypotheses could have occurred for a number of reasons. The most simple explanation is that interview anxiety could be a fairly stable characteristic of the individual. This idea was originally suggested by McCarthy and Goffin (2004), who defined interview anxiety as a relatively stable trait. However, given that state measures of interview anxiety exhibit a stronger relation to interview performance than do trait measures (Powell, Stanley, & Brown, 2018), they do appear to be different, although related, constructs. Additionally, research by Feiler and Powell (2014) indicated that the state-level interview anxiety reported by participants appeared to differ from their trait levels of interview anxiety.

These results suggest that it is possible that state interview anxiety is not necessarily a static trait, and thus could be responsive to interventions.

This assertion that anxiety can be reduced through interventions has been supported in the test anxiety literature. Test anxiety is defined as the anxiety one experiences during an assessment (Putwain, Woods, & Symes, 2010). This anxiety is theorized to stem from a fear of negative evaluation (Loew et al. (2008), which has also demonstrated a positive relation with interview anxiety (Zhang, 2020). Meta-analytic findings have shown that test anxiety can be reduced using interventions such as systematic desensitization, rational emotive training and stress inoculation training, among other techniques (Ergene, 2003). In a similar vein, there is evidence to suggest that interview anxiety can be reduced through interventions. More specifically, applicants reported lower levels of interview anxiety when they were provided with instructions which fostered positive self-images, and when they focused their attention externally (Feiler & Powell, 2016). In both the interview anxiety and test anxiety literatures there is evidence that interventions can be effective, and thus state anxiety is not likely an unchangeable trait.

Although this past research has indicated that it is possible to reduce anxiety in tests generally, as well as interviews specifically, the nature of the interventions used in these past studies are quite different from the current study. Whereas the present study sought to manipulate situational factors to reduce interview anxiety, much of the literature has focused on interventions aimed at the individual. A summary of the potential avenues to reduce interview anxiety can be found in a recent paper by Constantin et al. (2021). The authors identified three components of interview anxiety that could potentially be reduced: cognitive, behavioral and

physiological. The authors provided potential interventions that could be utilized to reduce each component of interview anxiety. Potential cognitive interventions generally center around challenging negative thoughts that lead to anxiety (Katzman et al., 2014). For example, some research suggests focusing attention externally rather than internally or fostering a positive self-image (Feiler & Powell, 2016), while others suggest practices of self-compassion or self-validation (Engel et al., 2021) as ways to reduce the cognitive component of interview anxiety. Potential behavioral interventions identified revolve around systematic desensitization, which could be done through mock interviews wherein the applicant attempts to mimic the behaviors of a strong interviewee such as, smiling, nodding, making appropriate eye contact and taking time to think about their answer before responding. Last, the authors identify mindfulness training as a potential avenue for reducing the physiological component of interview anxiety. Given that there is evidence of mindfulness training effectively improving interview performance (Mishra et al., 2019), it could be worth investigating the impact that this technique could have on interview anxiety. It is possible that while interview anxiety is not a static trait, it could be more appropriate to target specific components of the individual's anxiety to reduce it, rather than target situational factors external to the individual as we did in the present study.

It is possible that our question provision condition failed to impact interview anxiety because we did not choose the correct treatment to administer given then model of anxiety we were working under. The self-presentation approach to social anxiety proposed by Schlenker and Leary (1982) states that social anxiety occurs when one is inclined to make a certain impression on an audience but is uncertain about their ability to convey this impression. These feelings of anxiety could then be exacerbated by contextual factors such as the status of the person they are

interacting with (high status individuals being more anxiety provoking than low ones; Jackson and Latane, 1981), the degree to which they are motivated to achieve a certain impression and the degree to which they believe that they can achieve it (Schlenker & Leary, 1982) It is possible that a different kind of intervention could have been more effective in reducing applicants' self-presentation concerns and make them feel more confident in their ability to achieve a particular impression. For example, one of the potential interventions suggested by Constantin et al. (2021) for addressing the cognitive component of interview anxiety was cognitive restructuring. It is possible that giving applicants tips on identifying and replacing unhelpful thoughts and giving them several minutes to do so, could be effective at reducing the degree to which an applicant's uncertainty impacts their anxiety. By turning their focus away from thoughts about their inability to come across as competent in the interview, the applicants may feel less anxiety. Future research could attempt to reduce applicant anxiety by providing coping strategies to applicants and reducing their negative feelings about their ability to convey a positive impression to the interviewer.

Another potential explanation for the lack of support for our hypotheses, is that the manipulations provided were not constructed in such a way that would elicit the intended effects in applicants. This is evidenced by the fact that participants in the control ($M = 4.12, SD = 1.06$) and question provision conditions ($M = 4.28, SD = 0.85$) did not differ in terms of their uncertainty manipulation check scores. This lack of difference could indicate that the manipulation was not effective in reducing applicant uncertainty. However, this lack of significant result could also be attributed to the design of the interview process. In scheduling interviews with applicants, an email template (see Appendix A) was used which explained

roughly how long the interview would last, how many questions would be asked, and what kind of questions would be asked (i.e., structured behavioral). Because of the level of detail that each applicant received through the email, it is likely that all participants, regardless of condition felt that they knew what to expect when the interview began, even if the question provision condition had more time to familiarize themselves with the questions. It is possible that if we had been less transparent about the interview process during the pre-interview communication, then we could have observed a difference on this manipulation check.

It is also possible that applicants in the question provision condition felt as if they were not provided with the questions before the interview, but rather that they received them during the interview, because they received them after logging into the online platform. Indeed, many of the participants in the question provision condition reported that receiving questions before beginning the interview would give them time to prepare their answers, and that this would be beneficial to them. Although they did see the questions before the interview officially began, it does not necessarily mean that the applicants felt that this was enough time to sufficiently reduce their uncertainty about what would occur in the interview, and reduce their anxiety. It is possible that 5 minutes is not sufficient time to reduce applicant uncertainty regarding how they will perform in a job interview.

The rapport condition likely had a similar issue to the question provision condition, where the script was not correctly tailored to establish a sense of rapport with the interviewer. In the hopes of making the rapport treatment as standardized as possible, we created a script, which contained the component parts of rapport outlined by Granitz, et al. (2009). Although a script had the benefit of maintaining consistency across conditions, it was likely unsuccessful in creating a

sense of similarity and fondness that is characteristic of rapport (Granitz et al., 2009). Similar to the question provision condition, this lack of rapport was evidenced by the lack of a significant manipulation check when comparing the rapport condition ($M = 3.54, SD = 1.10$) to the control group ($M = 3.45, SD = 1.15$) on the degree to which they established a sense of “warmth” with the interviewer. Both groups exhibited a perceived level of warmth somewhat above the middle of the rating scale. This manipulation check question was pulled from previous research assessing the degree to which job applicants had built rapport with their interviewers (Nicely, 2012). It is possible that rapport questions assessing different aspects of the construct such as “the interviewer evoked feelings of trust” or “the interviewer put me at ease” could have been more effective at detecting a successful manipulation as feelings of trust could be more easily elicited by a script than a feeling like warmth, which may require a back and forth interaction. However, it is also possible that rapport cannot effectively be mimicked through a script at all, and instead should be built using a semi-structured conversation about non-job related information at the beginning of the interview. These less structured conversations can be utilized to assess the interviewee’s personality (Blackman & Funder, 2002) as well address potential cultural misunderstandings that may occur (Lim et al., 2006). Both the reading of interviewee personality and the ability to address cultural misunderstandings would require a back and forth interaction between interviewer and applicant and cannot be achieved through a script alone. Given that past research has indicated that rapport does appear to exhibit a negative correlation with interview anxiety (Nicely, 2012), this topic is worth investigating further. Because this work by Nicely (2012) was correlational in nature, we cannot know exactly how the interviewers established a sense of rapport with applicants, but we do know what items were utilized to detect

that rapport was established. Participants in this study were asked if the interviewer engaged in casual conversation, smiled frequently, nodded while listening, encouraged the applicant to ask questions, appeared interested in the applicant and “put [them] at ease.” Future research should attempt to provide interviewers with general non-job related conversation cues, as well as tips to establish rapport using non-verbal signals. The interviewers can then engage in a semi-structured rapport building period, which would likely be more effective in bringing about the perception of a positive interpersonal interaction characteristic of rapport (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000).

The lack of significant effects in both conditions could also be attributed to an unreliability of condition implementation, which occurs when treatment is not applied consistently from one person to another (Shadish, et al., 2002). Because the rapport building stage was excluded from video recordings (to not influence secondary raters) we cannot verify whether interviewers in the rapport group effectively implemented the treatment, or verify if those in the control or question condition remained neutral as instructed. It is also worth noting that the present study utilized a total of 16 different research assistants, 14 of whom conducted interviews. Although these interviewers were trained for the experimental condition to which they were randomly assigned, it is possible that individual differences between interviewers could impact the implementation of the experiment. For example, if an interviewer who was perceived as more approachable was assigned to the control or question condition, it is possible that, despite specific instructions to remain neutral in the interview, their natural approachable disposition could come across to the applicant and impact their reaction. The opposite could be true if a more reserved interviewer were assigned to the rapport condition. This difference in interviewer approachability appears to have occurred, as rapport varied across interviewers but

not conditions (see Table 5). This pattern of results appears to indicate that individual characteristics may have had a greater influence on applicant perceptions of interview warmth than did the provided rapport script. Each individual interviewer's approachability may have been displayed based on some of the non-verbal cues identified by Nicely (2012), such as; frequent smiling, nodding, eye contact, and a calm/relaxed manner on the part of the interviewer. Future research should seek to control for these individual characteristics as much as possible to avoid confounding variables.

4.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, and Future Directions

This study was conducted using a sample of students seeking to secure a position as an undergraduate research assistant in a psychology lab. This sample was strong in the sense that it was collected in an actual employee selection context, and participants were randomly assigned to experimental conditions. However, the sample was mostly young women studying psychology or biology. For this reason, one should not apply our findings to the population at large until more research is conducted on a sample that is more diverse in terms of age, gender and educational background.

A potential confound that we did not address is the potential for internet connectivity issues. Internet connectivity issues could vary across interviewers, as well as interviewees. It is possible that a lag in connection could lead to more awkward social interaction (Powers, et al., 2011), which in turn could bring about an increase in interview anxiety. The study likely also suffered from poorly designed manipulation check questions, which might not have accurately represented the effectiveness of the given manipulations. In addition to these weaknesses, there is also the issue of treatment implementation, which was previously discussed. It is possible that

individual differences across interviewers impacted their ability to implement the assigned treatment as anticipated, particularly in the rapport condition.

Future research could build upon the present study's findings in several ways. The present study was unable to utilize a pilot study to ensure the effectiveness of the given manipulations due to a lack of time. To ensure that an appropriate sample size was gathered in within the given time constraints, pilot testing was foregone in favor of extended data collection, which allowed for a larger sample size. Future researchers interested in testing the effects of situational factors on interview anxiety should utilize pilot testing to ensure that their planned manipulations are effective before commencing data collection.

This study's findings could also be extended using a different method of establishing rapport. The present study utilized a rapport script based on the component parts of rapport identified by past researchers, rather than allowing interviewers to build rapport with interviewees directly. This was ultimately not an effective way to elicit the feelings of rapport that we sought to elicit. Future research should instead utilize semi-structured rapport building to allow for a back-and-forth interaction between applicant and interviewer. The researchers can provide the interviewer with appropriate prompts regarding non-job-related topics and limit the conversation to a reasonable time without fully structuring the interaction. Such a study could also measure other relevant applicant reactions to gain a better understanding of the role of rapport in job interviews.

Future research could also utilize different manipulations to determine effective ways to reduce interview anxiety in applicants. While the present study sought to reduce applicant

interview anxiety by manipulating contextual factors within the interview, it could be the case that the best avenue to reduce anxiety is through interventions targeting the individual, rather than the interview context. Researchers could further investigate some of the suggestions put forth by Constantin et al. (2021), such as cognitive restructuring and positive self-imagery to gain a better understanding of how to reduce applicant interview anxiety.

4.2 Conclusion

This study sought to determine whether interventions aimed at two situational factors within the interview, question provision and rapport, could impact applicant interview anxiety. Overall, we did not find support for our hypotheses, as we did not find evidence that any of the groups differed in their experience of interview anxiety. However, it is possible that these results could be attributed to design flaws rather than a lack of influence of situational factors on interview anxiety. It is also possible that uncertainty was not the correct mechanism to reduce anxiety and an alternative approach would be more effective. Future research should also seek to reduce interview anxiety with unstructured or semi-structured rapport building, rather than the scripted method employed here. Given that interview anxiety has a negative impact on the predictive validity of the job interview, future research should seek to investigate interventions which could reduce anxiety and benefit both the interviewee and the organization.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, N., Salgado, J. F., and Hülsheger, U. R. (2010). Applicant reactions in selection: Comprehensive meta-analysis into reaction generalization versus situational specificity. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 18(3), 291–304. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2389.2010.00512>
- Barrick, M.R., Dustin, S.L., Giluk, T.L, Stewart, G.L., Shaffer, J.A. and Swider, B.W. (2012). Candidate characteristics driving initial impressions during rapport building: implications for employment interview validity. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 85(2), 330-352. DOI:10.1111/j.2044-8325.2011.02036.x.
- Barrick, M. R., Swider, B. W., and Stewart, G. L. (2010). Initial evaluations in the interview: Relationships with subsequent interviewer evaluations and employment offers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 95, 1163–1172. doi: 10.1037/a0019918
- Blackman, M., and Funder, D. (2002). Effective interview practices for accurately assessing counterproductive traits. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 10, 109-116.
- Blokland, A. and Anderson, A.H (1998). Effect of low frame-rate video on intelligibility of speech. *Speech Communication*, 26, 97-103
- Carleton, R.N., Norton, M.A., Asmundson, G.J. (2007). Fearing the unknown: a short version of the Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale. *J. Anxiety Disord*, 21(1), 105-117.

- Carleton, R.N. (2012). The intolerance of uncertainty construct in the context of anxiety disorders: theoretical and practical perspectives. *Expert Review of Neurotherapeutics*, 12(8), 937-947.
- Constantin, K. L., Powell, D. M., & McCarthy, J. M. (2021). Expanding conceptual understanding of interview anxiety and performance: Integrating cognitive, behavioral, and physiological features. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 29(2), 234–252. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12326>
- Chapman, D. S., and Zweig, D. I. (2005). Developing a nomological network for interview structure: Antecedents and consequences of the structured selection interview. *Personnel Psychology*, 58, 673–702. doi: 10.1111/j.1744-6570.2005.00516.x
- Chen, C., Lee, Y., Huang, T., & Ko, S. (2019). Effects of stress interviews on selection/recruitment function of employment interviews. *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 57(1), 40–56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1744-7941.12170>
- Churchill, E.F. and Erickson, T. (2003). Talking about things in mediated conversations. *Human-Computer Interaction*, 18, 1-18.
- Day, A.L. and Carroll, S.A. (2003). Situational and patterned behavior description interviews: a comparison of their validity, correlates, and perceived fairness. *Human Performance*, 16(1), 25-47.
- Feiler, A.R. (2014). A self-regulation perspective of applicant behaviour in the employment interview. (Publication No.) [Doctoral Dissertation, University of Guelph]. Database or archive name.

- Gremler, D., and Gwinner, K. (2000). Customer-employee rapport in service relationships. *Journal of Service Research*, 3, 82-104.
- Hausknecht, J.P., Day, D.V., & Thomas, S.C. (2004). Applicant Reactions to selection procedures: an updated model and meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 57, 639-683.
- Higham, T. (1971). Graduate selection – a new approach? *Occupational Psychology*, 45, 209-216.
- Horn, R. G., and Behrend, T. S. (2017). Video killed the interview star: Does picture-in-picture affect interview performance? *Personnel Assessment and Decisions*, 3, 5.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.25035/pad.2017.005>
- Jackson, J. M., and Latane, B. (1981). All alone in front of all those people: Stage fright as a function of number and type of co-performers and audience. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 40, 73-85.
- Kessler R.C., Chiu W.T., Demler O., Merikangas K.R., and Walters E.E. (2005). Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Arch. Gen. Psychiatry* 62(6), 617-627. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.62.6.617
- Kieckhafer, J.M., Vallano, J.P., and Compo, N.S. (2014). Examining the positive effects of rapport building: When and why does rapport building benefit adult eyewitness memory? *Memory*, 22(8), 1010-1023. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09658211.2013.864313>.
- Klehe U, König CJ, Richter GM, Kleinmann M, Melchers KG. (2008). Transparency in structured interviews: Consequences for construct and criterion-related validity. *Human Performance*, 21, 107–137.

- Levashina, J., Hartwell, C.J., Morgeson, F.P. and Campion, M.A. (2014). The structured employment interview: narrative and quantitative review of the research literature. *Personnel Psychology*, 67, 241-293
- Lievens, F., De Corte, W., and Brysse, K. (2003). Applicant perceptions of selection procedures: the role of selection information, belief in tests, and comparative anxiety. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 11(1), 67-77.
- Lim, C.-H., Winter, R., & Chan, C. C. A. (2006). Cross-Cultural Interviewing in the Hiring Process: Challenges and Strategies. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 54(3), 265–268. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2006.tb00157.x>
- Mahoney, A.E. and McEvoy, P.M. (2012). Changes in intolerance of uncertainty during cognitive behavior group therapy for social phobia. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 43(), 849-854. doi:10.1016/j.jbtep.2011.12.004
- Manning, T.R., Goetz, E.T, and Street, R.L. (2000). Signal delay effects on rapport building in telepsychiatry. *Cyber Psychology and Behavior*, 3, 119-127.
- Matarazzo, G. and Sellen, A. (2000). The value of video in work at a distance: Addition or distraction? *Behavior and Information Technology*, 19, 339-348
- Maurer, R. (2020, March 17). Job interviews go virtual in response to COVID-19. Society for Human Resource Management. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/talent-acquisition/pages/job-interviews-go-virtual-response-covid-19-coronavirus.aspx>

Maurer, T.J., Solamon, J.M., and Lippstreu, M. (2008). How does coaching interviewees affect the validity of a structured interview? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 29, 355–371.

McCarthy, J.M., Bauer, T.N., Truxillo, D.M., Anderson, N.R., Costa, A.C., and Ahmed, S.M. (2017). Applicant perspectives during selection: a review addressing “so what?”, “what’s new?”, and “where to next?” *Journal of Management*, 43(6), 1693-1725.

<https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0149206316681846>

McCarthy, J. M., and Cheng, B. H. (2014). Through the looking glass: Employment interviews from the lens of job candidates. In U. Klehe, and E. van Hooft (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of job loss and job search*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199764921.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199764921-e-015>

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199764921.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199764921-e-015>

McCarthy, J. and Goffin, R. (2004). Measuring job interview anxiety: beyond weak knees and sweaty palms. *Personnel Psychology*, 57(3), 607-637.

Miller, L. C., Barrett, C. L., Hampe, E., and Noble, H. Factor structure of childhood fears. *Journal of Clinical and Consulting Psychology*, 1972, 39, 264-268.

Nicely, D.R. (2012). An examination of rapport building in interviews (Publication No.) [Master’s thesis, University of Houston]. Database or Archive Name.

Nickels, W., Everett, R., and Klein, R. (1983). Rapport-building for salespeople: A neurolinguistic approach. *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, 1-7.

- Perugini, M., Gallucci, M., Presaghi, F., and Ercolani, A.P. (2003). The personal norm of reciprocity. *European Journal of Personality*, 17(4), 251-283. DOI: 10.1002/per.474
- Powell, D.M., Stanley, D.J., and Brown, K.N. (2018). Meta-analysis of the relation between interview anxiety and interview performance. *Canadian Journal of Behavioral Science*, 50(4), 195-207.
- Powers, S. R., Rauh, C., Henning, R. A., Buck, R. W., & West, T. V. (2011). The effect of video feedback delay on frustration and emotion communication accuracy. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 27(5), 1651-1657.
- Putwain, D., Connors, L., and Symes, W. (2010). Do cognitive distortions mediate the test anxiety-examination performance relationship? *Educational Psychology*, 30, 11-26.
- Rosen, N.O. and Knauper, B. (2009). A little uncertainty goes a long way: state and trait differences in uncertainty interact to increase information seeking but also increase worry. *Health Communication*, 24, 228-238. DOI: 10.1080/10410230902804125
- Schlenker, B.R. and Leary, M.R. (1982). Social anxiety and self-presentation: a conceptualization and model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 92(3), 641-669.
- Schneider, L., Powell, D.M., and Bonnacio, S. (2019). Does interview anxiety predict job performance and does it influence the predictive validity of interviews? *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 27(4), 328-336. DOI: 10.1111/ijsa.12263.

- Seipp, B. (1991). Anxiety and academic performance: A meta-analysis of findings. *Anxiety Research, 4*, 27-41.
- Shadish, W. R., Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. T. (2002). *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for generalized causal inference*. Houghton, Mifflin and Company
- Spielberger, C. D. (1985). Anxiety, cognition and affect: A state-trait perspective. In A. H. Tuma and J. D. Maser (Eds.), *Anxiety and the anxiety disorders*. Mahweh: NJ: Erlbaum.
- Stevens, C. K. (1998). Antecedents of interview interactions, interviewers' ratings, and applicants' reactions. *Personnel Psychology, 51*, 55-85. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.1998.tb00716.x>
- Sunstein, C. R. (1996). Social norms and social roles. *Columbia Law Review, 96*(4), 903-968.
- Swider, B.W., Barrick, M.R., and Harris, T.B. (2016). Initial impressions: what they are, what they are not and how they influence structured interview outcomes. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 101*(5), 625-638. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/apl0000077>
- Tedeschi, J. T., Schlenker, B. R., and Bonoma, T. V. (1973). *Conflict, power, and games: The experimental study of interpersonal relations*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Tickle-Degnen, L. (2006). Nonverbal behavior and its functions in the ecosystem of rapport. In V. Manusov and M. L. Patterson (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of nonverbal communication* (pp. 381-401). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Tross, S. A., and Maurer, T. J. (2008). The effect of coaching interviewees on subsequent interview performance in structured experience-based interviews. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81, 589–605. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1348/096317907X248653>
- Voyles, E. (2016). Do anxious applicants become lower performing employees? (Unpublished master's thesis). Northern Illinois University, De Kalb, IL

Table 1

Means, standard deviations, and correlations

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Interview Performance	3.87	0.48	(0.70)									
2. Communication Anx	2.92	0.60	-.24**	(0.74)								
3. Behavioural Anx	2.83	0.93	-.11	.40**	(0.75)							
4. Performance Anx	3.47	0.89	-.24**	.59**	.52**	(0.79)						
5. Appearance Anx	2.14	1.09	-.17**	.28**	.33**	.41**	(0.67)					
6. Social Anx	2.82	0.92	-.14*	.43**	.46**	.59**	.52**	(0.75)				
7. Overall Interview Anx	2.95	0.65	-.23**	.71**	.77**	.85**	.59**	.79**	(0.87)			
8. IUS Avoidance	2.43	0.91	-.17*	.33**	.38**	.51**	.33**	.41**	.53**	(0.86)		
9. IUS Anxiety	2.89	0.87	-.12	.27**	.23**	.42**	.12	.22**	.35**	.59**	(0.86)	
10. Total IUS	2.70	0.80	-.19**	.36**	.34**	.52**	.24**	.35**	.48**	.85**	.92**	(0.90)

Note. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. IUS refers to Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale

Table 2

Regression results using Interview Anxiety as the criterion

Predictor	<i>b</i>	95% CI [LL, UL]	<i>sr</i> ²	95% CI [LL, UL]	Fit
(Intercept)	1.67**	[1.14, 2.19]			
Question Condition	0.29	[-0.40, 0.97]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
Rapport Condition	0.23	[-0.49, 0.96]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
IUS	0.46**	[0.28, 0.65]	.09	[.02, .16]	
Question Condition*IUS Interaction	-0.08	[-0.32, 0.16]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
Rapport Condition* IUS Interaction	-0.08	[-0.34, 0.18]	.00	[-.01, .01]	
					$R^2 = .248^{**}$
					95% CI[.14,.33]

Note. A significant *b*-weight indicates the semi-partial correlation is also significant. *b* represents unstandardized regression weights. *sr*² represents the semi-partial correlation squared. *LL* and *UL* indicate the lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively. Question condition variable is dummy-coded such that 1 = question condition and 0 = not question condition. Rapport variable dummy coded such that 1 = rapport condition and 0 = not rapport condition. IUS is intolerance of uncertainty scale.

* indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

Table 3

Standardized mean differences between question provision and control condition on interview anxiety subscales

Interview Anxiety Subscale	Question Provision	Control	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Behavioral	2.84 (0.85)	2.80 (0.84)	0.05 [-0.28, 0.38]
Social	2.85 (0.98)	2.87(0.92)	0.02 [-0.31, 0.35]
Appearance	2.25 (1.14)	2.00 (1.05)	0.23 [-0.11, 0.56]
Communication	2.97 (0.63)	2.93 (0.58)	0.06 [-0.27, 0.39]
Performance	3.47 (0.88)	3.45 (0.81)	0.02 [-0.31, 0.35]

Table 4

Standardized mean differences between rapport and control condition on interview anxiety subscales

Interview anxiety subscale	Rapport	Control	Cohen's <i>d</i>
Behavioral	2.85 (1.05)	2.80 (0.84)	0.05**
Social	2.72 (0.86)	2.87 (0.92)	0.17 [-0.16, 0.50]
Appearance	2.17 (1.07)	2.00 (1.05)	0.16 [-0.17, 0.49]
Communication	2.91 (0.59)	2.93 (0.58)	0.04 [-0.29, 0.37]
Performance	3.53 (0.95)	3.45 (0.81)	0.09 [-0.23, 0.42]

Note: **The behavioural subscale did not have equal variances and should be interpreted with caution.

Table 5:

Rapport Differences Across Interviewers

Interviewer	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>
Control			
Interviewer 1	3.92	0.51	12
Interviewer 2	3.94	0.93	16
Interviewer 3	3.35	1.09	20
Interviewer 4	2.67	1.32	9
Interviewer 5	3.18	1.38	17
Question Provision			
Interviewer 1	4.25	0.62	12
Interviewer 2	2.38	1.19	8

Interviewer 3	4.19	1.16	21
Interviewer 4	3.5	1.19	20
Interviewer 5	4.00	0.71	5

Rapport Condition

Interviewer 1	3.88	1.02	16
Interviewer 2	3.5	1.09	14
Interviewer 3	3.57	0.97	21
Interviewer 4	3.24	1.30	17

Appendix A: Email to Applicants

Hi ,

Thank you for your interest in the Research Assistant position in Dr. Harjinder Gill's lab!

The job description is attached for more information about the position.

If you are interested in interviewing for this position please reply back to this email indicating all the times that you are available within the next two weeks. Please set aside at least 1 hour for the interview.

Interview Information: The interview will take place over Microsoft Teams. This interview is a structured behavioural interview and will take about 25 minutes. When interviewing we encourage you to answer each question using the STAR approach (meaning when answering you should talk about the situation, tasks, actions, and results) along with anything else you would like to speak to. We will record the interview so that two more interviewers can provide a rating later to improve reliability of interview scores.

Research Study: After your interview, you will be emailed an invitation to take part in a research study conducted by Jordan Moore (Master's student, department of Psychology) and Dr. Deborah Powell (Department of Psychology). Should you wish to participate, you will be asked to complete a 25-minute questionnaire about yourself and the interview (e.g., your reactions to the interview). Your participation, or lack of participation, in the study will have NO impact on the hiring decision for the position. **Neither the interviewer nor the person in charge of the hiring decision (Dr. Gill) will know whether or not you choose to participate.** If you choose to participate, your data from the study will NOT be used in any way to inform the hiring decision.

You can apply and interview for this position even if you do not want to participate in the study. Participation in the study (which will take place after the interview) is completely voluntary. You do not have to make any decisions about participating in the study at this point. We just want to make you aware that after your interview you will be invited to participate in a study and you can decide to participate or not at that point.

The letter of information for the study is attached for your reference.

Please email me if you have any questions about the job position or the study.

I am looking forward to hearing back from you!

Sincerely,

Jordan Moore

Appendix B: Cover Letter to Participants

Hello,

My name is Jordan Moore. I am a graduate student at the University of Guelph. I am working with Dr. Deborah Powell to study the impact of situational factors on interview anxiety. Because you have interviewed for a research assistant position at the University of Guelph, you have been invited to participate in this study by completing this survey.

This questionnaire should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. We do not provide any compensation for participation in this study and there are no risks to the participant. All data stored for the purposes of this study will be anonymous so as to not influence the selection process for the research assistant position. All questions that ask about your interview experience refer to the aforementioned research assistant position interview. Please answer all questions honestly. Participation is voluntary and you may choose to end your participation at any time during the survey.

Thank you in advance for being a part of this research project. Your participation will provide important information in determining the effects of situational factors on interview anxiety. If you have any questions about the study and how it was conducted, or wish to know the results of the study, please contact me at the email address below and I will be happy to discuss it with you.

Thank you again for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jordan Moore

jmoore27@uoguelph.ca

Appendix C: Rapport Script

BEFORE INTERVIEW

“Good morning/afternoon! My name is _____.”

(they will tell you their name)

“Nice to meet you. Can you hear me okay?”

[If no, try to address the sound issue; if yes continue to next line]

“Perfect, do you mind if we jump right into things?”

[if no, tell them that you will take questions at the end of the interview; if yes, continue to script below]

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me today. Before we begin, I want to provide you with some information about the interview that we provide to all of the candidates, as well as introduce myself. My name is [interviewer name], I am a third/fourth year undergraduate research assistant in Dr. Powell’s lab. I’ve been working with Dr. Powell since the start of January and I will be conducting today’s interview with you. If you have any questions about what it is like to work in a psychology lab, I would be happy to discuss that with you after the interview.

As for the interview itself, today we will be conducting a structured behavioural interview, and it will take about 15 to 20 minutes. I will ask you 5 interview questions, and might ask some follow-up questions, too. As a reminder, we encourage you to use the STAR (situation, task, action, result) approach (that’s situation, task, action then result), when answering questions, in addition to anything else you would like to say

During the interview, please do not be alarmed if I am not making eye contact- it is only because I am taking notes. Also, if I seem to have a poker face, it’s only because I am trying to remain neutral so that we are treating all applicants in the same, fair way. Please do not take my straight face as a response to your answers – I am simply trying to remain standard across applicants.

These five interview questions will require you to recall a specific past event or experience. When answering you may be tempted to talk about things generally, but we are actually looking for a description of a specific situation from your past and what you did specifically. Try to be as comprehensive as possible in your response. Sometimes it takes a while to remember a past event – and that is nothing to worry about – just take the time you need to pause and think at any point. Before moving onto the next question, I will always ask you if there is anything else you would like to add so that you have a chance to say anything that was not captured in your previous response.”

As a reminder, you will be videotaped for the duration of the interview only. I understand that this may seem a bit uncomfortable and out of the ordinary, but I just want to reassure you that this is just so that we can have multiple observers scoring the interview and to ensure a fair hiring process for you. I also understand that job interviews can be a bit uncomfortable in general. This is completely understandable and happens to most people. We have allotted ample time for today's interview, so you do not need to rush to answer anything. Feel free to take a few moments to collect your thoughts before answering. My hope is to use this time as an opportunity to learn more about you. I will also make sure to leave time at the end of the interview to allow you to ask any questions you may have about the job itself. I would be happy to share any insight I have or my experiences with you.

“Before we begin, I will share my screen and give you up to 5 minutes to review the job description. I will just step out for a moment and I will let you know when 5 minutes have passed and we will begin”

[share your screen and show the job description. Turn off your camera and mute yourself while you time the 5 minutes.]

[Once the 5 minutes are up, turn your camera back on and unmute yourself. End screen share.]

Are you okay to start now?

[if no, tell them that you will take questions at the end of the interview; if yes, continue to instructions below]

[Turn on the videotape. Interview the candidate. Always take notes for each BAR, check off BARS, and score a question before moving onto the next question.]

Appendix D: Control Script

Interviewer Script

BEFORE INTERVIEW

“Good morning/afternoon! My name is _____.”

(they will tell you their name)

“Nice to meet you. Can you hear me okay?”

[**If no**, try to address the sound issue; **if yes** continue to next line]

“Perfect, do you mind if we jump right into things?”

[**if no**, tell them that you will take questions at the end of the interview; **if yes**, continue to script below]

“Before we get started, I just want to give you some information that we provide to all of the candidates. First, anything you say during the interview will be kept confidential. As a reminder, this is a structured behavioural interview, and it will take about 15 to 20 minutes. I will ask you 5 interview questions, and might ask some follow-up questions, too. As a reminder, we encourage you to use the STAR (situation, task, action, result) approach when answering questions, in addition to anything else you would like to say. To increase accountability across interviewers, I will be taking notes during the process.

These five interview questions will require you to recall a specific past event or experience. When answering you may be tempted to talk about things generally, but we are actually looking for a description of a specific situation from your past and what you did specifically. Try to be as comprehensive as possible in your response. Sometimes it takes a while

to remember a past event – and that is nothing to worry about – just take the time you need to pause and think at any point. Before moving onto the next question, I will always ask you if there is anything else you would like to add so that you have a chance to say anything that was not captured in your previous response.”

“As a reminder, you will be videotaped for the duration of the interview only, and this is so that a second and third interviewer can provide ratings of the interview later. If you have any questions about the job or hiring process, you can ask at the end of the interview.”

“Before we begin, I will share my screen and give you up to 5 minutes to review the job description. I will just step out for a moment and I will let you know when 5 minutes have passed and we will begin”

[share your screen and show the job description. Turn off your camera and mute yourself while you time the 5 minutes.]

[Once the 5 minutes are up, turn your camera back on and unmute yourself. End screen share.]

“Are you okay to start the interview now?”

[if **no**, tell them that you will take questions at the end of the interview; if **yes**, continue to instructions below]

*[**Turn on the videotape.** Interview the candidate. Always take notes for each BAR, check off BARS, and score a question before moving onto the next question.]*

Appendix E: Question Script

Interviewer Script

BEFORE INTERVIEW

“Good morning/afternoon! My name is _____.”

(they will tell you their name)

“Nice to meet you. Can you hear me okay?”

[**If no**, try to address the sound issue; **if yes** continue to next line]

“Perfect, do you mind if we jump right into things?”

[**if no**, tell them that you will take questions at the end of the interview; **if yes**, continue to script below]

“Before we get started, I just want to give you some information that we provide to all of the candidates. First, anything you say during the interview will be kept confidential. As a reminder, this is a structured behavioural interview, and it will take about 15 to 20 minutes. I will ask you 5 interview questions, and might ask some follow-up questions, too. As a reminder, we encourage you to use the STAR (situation, task, action, result) approach when answering questions, in addition to anything else you would like to say. To increase accountability across interviewers, I will be taking notes during the process.

These five interview questions will require you to recall a specific past event or experience. When answering you may be tempted to talk about things generally, but we are actually looking for a description of a specific situation from your past and what you did specifically. Try to be as comprehensive as possible in your response. Sometimes it takes a while

to remember a past event – and that is nothing to worry about – just take the time you need to pause and think at any point. Before moving onto the next question, I will always ask you if there is anything else you would like to add so that you have a chance to say anything that was not captured in your previous response.”

“As a reminder, you will be videotaped for the duration of the interview only, and this is so that a second and third interviewer can provide ratings of the interview later. If you have any questions about the job or hiring process, you can ask at the end of the interview.”

“Before we begin, I will share my screen and give you up to 5 minutes to review the questions I will be asking you today. I will just step out for a moment and I will let you know when 5 minutes have passed and we will begin”

[share your screen and show the slide with the interview questions. Turn off your camera and mute yourself while you time the 5 minutes.]

[Once the 5 minutes are up, turn your camera back on and unmute yourself. End screen share.

“Are you okay to start the interview now?”

[**if no**, tell them that you will take questions at the end of the interview; **if yes**, continue with instructions below]

*[**Turn on the videotape.** Interview the candidate. Always take notes for each BAR, check off BARS, and score a question before moving onto the next question.]*

Appendix F: Interview Guide

		Talent: Communication		Competency: Listening and Attending to Others	
		<p>Describe a time when a colleague was explaining a particularly complicated concept, task, or procedure to you.</p> <p>Probes: <i>What was the situation? Why was the task complicated? What did you do? What did that conversation look like? What did you say? What did they say? What was the outcome?</i></p>			
	Ineffective (1)	Somewhat effective (2)	Effective (3)	Mostly Effective (4)	Highly Effective (5)
	Provides a situation in which the concept, task or procedure was not complex or did not require adapting. Or they were unsuccessful in understanding a complicated task		Provides a situation in which the concept or procedure explained was complex. They asked clarifying questions, listened carefully and used some non-verbal signals. They were partially successful in understanding the task or procedure explained by the colleague.		Provides a situation in which the concept or procedure explained was very complex. They asked clarifying questions, paraphrased and restated concepts to ensure understanding, took notes and used encouraging non-verbal signals such as nodding and eye contact. They were ultimately successful in grasping and applying the procedure explained by the colleague

	Talent: Execution		Competency: Taking Initiative		
	<p>Describe a time when you had sole responsibility for completing an important task or project.</p> <p>Probes: <i>What was the situation? What did you do? Why did you choose this course of action? What was the outcome?</i></p>				
	Somewhat Effective (2)	Effective (3)	Mostly Effective (4)	Highly Effective (5)	
<p>Describes a situation in which they did not have sole responsibility for completing an important task or did not complete the task successfully. Required explicit instructions on what steps to take.</p>		<p>Describes a situation in which they had sole responsibility for an important project, but was only partially successful in completing it. Took some prompting to take action but ultimately completed the task on time. Some effort was made to ensure that best practices were used.</p>		<p>Describes a situation in which they had sole responsibility for an important task and successfully completed it. The individual was proactive in determining how to best complete the project, and went to great lengths to ensure that they followed best practices.</p>	

Notes:

Talent: Teamwork			Competency: Collaborating with Others to Achieve Goals
<p>Describe the most recent team project you have worked on.</p> <p>Probes: <i>What was the situation? Can you tell me about the team's decision making process? What was your role on this project? What did you do? What was the outcome?</i></p>			
Ineffective (1)		Effective (3)	Highly Effective (5)
<p>Presents a situation that did not include any team work or did not engage with their team effectively (Ex. Took control and did not listen to their peers). The project was not successfully completed on time. Did not participate in team decisions or did not solicit input from other members.</p>		<p>Presents a situation in which the individual communicated with team members when necessary and made adjustments to accommodate the needs of others. The team was partially successful in completing their assigned task. Actively participates in team decision making process.</p>	<p>Presents a situation in which the individual regularly worked with team members and adjusted their work style to accommodate the needs of peers. Proactively provided peer support and successfully completed the task. Helps to organize and lead team decision making progress. Solicits input from other team members</p>

Notes:

Talent: Decision Making		Competency: Taking Responsibility for Outcomes		
<p>Describe a time you implemented a decision that did not work out.</p> <p>Probes: <i>What was the situation? What did you do? What was the outcome?</i></p>				
Ineffective (1)	Somewhat effective (2)	Effective (3)	Mostly effective (4)	Highly Effective (5)
Presents a situation in which they did not take responsibility for their error or identify ways to avoid making similar mistakes in the future. Did not accept criticism or feedback from others.		Shared responsibility with others for errors in decision making. Identified ways to avoid making future mistakes with some success. Accepted criticism and feedback		Took responsibility for their errors in decision-making. Identified and effectively implemented ways to avoid making similar mistakes in the future with great success. Accepted criticism and incorporated feedback into future behaviour.

Notes:

Appendix G: Manipulation Checks

1. Before beginning the interview, I was uncertain of what would occur during the interview
2. The interviewer created a sense of warmth during the interview
3. I felt prepared before the interview began

Appendix H: Modified Measure of Anxiety in Selection Interviews (MASI)

Social Subscale

1. While taking the job interview, I became concerned that the interviewer would perceive me as socially awkward
2. I became very uptight about having to socially interact with the job interviewer
3. I became afraid about what kind of personal impression I was making in the job interview
4. During the job interview, I worried that my actions would not be considered socially appropriate
5. I worried about whether the interviewer would like me as a person

Performance Subscale

1. In the job interview, I became very nervous about whether my performance was good enough
2. I was overwhelmed by thoughts of doing poorly during the interview
3. I worried that my job interview performance would be lower than other applicants
4. During the interview, I was so troubled by thoughts of failing that my performance was reduced
5. During the interview, I worried about what will happen if I don't get the job
6. While taking the interview, I worried about whether I am a good candidate for the job

Behavioural Subscale

1. During the job interview, my hands shook
2. My heartbeat was faster than usual during the job interview
3. It was hard for me to avoid fidgeting during the job interview
4. The job interview made me perspire (e.g., sweaty palms and underarms)
5. My mouth became very dry during the job interview
6. I felt sick to my stomach during the job interview

Communication Anxiety

1. I became so apprehensive in the job interview that I was unable to express my thoughts clearly
2. I got so anxious while taking the interview that I had trouble answering questions that I knew
3. During the job interview, I often couldn't think of a thing to say
4. I felt that my verbal communication skills were strong in the interview
5. During the interview, I found it hard to understand what the interviewer was asking me
6. I found it easy to communicate my personal accomplishments during the interview

Appendix I: Intolerance of Uncertainty – Short Form (IUS-12)

Prospective subscale

1. Unforeseen events upset me greatly
2. It frustrates me not having all the information I need
3. One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises
4. A small, unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning
5. I always want to know what the future has in store for me
6. I can't stand being taken by surprise
7. I should be able to organize everything in advance

Inhibitory Subscale

1. Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life
2. When it's time to act, uncertainty paralyses me
3. When I am uncertain I can't function very well
4. The smallest doubt can stop me from acting
5. I must get away from all uncertain situations

Appendix J: Demographic Questionnaire

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?

- Man
- Woman
- My gender is not above
- Choose not to respond

3. Which of the following BEST describes your ethnic background? Please CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

- Indigenous (Inuit/First Nations/Métis)
- White/European
- Black/African/Caribbean
- Southeast Asian (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Filipino.etc)
- Arab (Saudi Arabian, Palestinian, Iraqi, etc)
- South Asian (East Indian, Sri Lankan, etc)
- Latin American (Costa Rican, Guatemalan, Brazilian, Columbian, etc)
- West Asian (Iranian, Afghani, etc)
- Other (please specify)

4. What program are you in? (i.e. psychology, engineering etc.).

5. What year of your program are you in?

- First year
- Second year
- Third year
- Fourth year
- Fifth year or greater
- Other