

FEEDBACK REPORT FOR PARTICIPANTS

Interview Design Study

SMU REB # 20-040

Research Project conducted by:

Drs. Nicolas Roulin & Rene Arsenault

Department of Psychology

Saint Mary's University, 923 Robie Street, Halifax, NS B3H 3C3

Email: nicolas.roulin@smu.ca

This research Project included two empirical studies, which were at the core of Dr. Arsenault's PhD dissertation at the Sobey School of Business, under Dr. Roulin's supervision. We present below a summary of both studies and their main findings:

Study 1

Context and Goals: We investigated how applicants from different cultures use **impression management (IM)** tactics in an interview to receive favourable performance evaluations. We invited applicants from five culturally distinct countries (**Canada, Poland, Spain, India, and South Africa**) to participate in a simulated interview for a management position within a bank. Applicants participated in an **asynchronous video interview (AVI)** where eight questions were pre-recorded by the primary investigator who posed as the hiring manager for the position. After reviewing the job description and video-recording their answers to the eight questions, applicants were asked to report to what extent they engaged in various honest and deceptive IM tactics in their interview (HIIM-S and IFB-S - Bourdage et al., 2018). Research Assistant scored the performance of each applicant (n = 345) using Behaviorally Anchored Rating Scale (BARS). This study was the first attempt to examine differences in IM tactics used across cultures, and how IM tactics are related to interview performance, in an AVI context.

Main Findings: Applicants from all countries recognized the value of highlighting their true qualifications, and **used honest self-promotion more than any other IM tactic**. When comparing interviewees' behaviours across countries, those from India used self-promotion significantly more than interviewees from other countries. Interviewees seldom used ingratiation (e.g., praising the interviewer or organization) or deceptive IM tactics. Ingratiation may be difficult in an AVI, where dynamic interaction with the interviewer is not possible. Interviewees might use more self-promotion in AVIs vs. face-to-face interviews to compensate for the lack of opportunity to use ingratiation. Consistent with previous face-to-face interview research, **interviewees who used more honest self-promotion received higher performance ratings in AVIs.**

Study 2

Context and Goals: We examined **how cultural biases influenced the selection process in AVIs**. Professionals with HR experience from the U.K. (n = 100) were recruited and exposed to a series of pre-recorded culturally diverse applicant videos (one applicant from each country – selected from Study 1 to be objectively equivalent in qualifications/performance). They watched and evaluated video-recorded responses to four questions for each of the five applicants. Based on the cross-cultural literature (e.g., House et al., 2004; Manroop et al., 2013), we **predicted that the larger the cultural distance between the interviewer and the interviewee, the poorer the evaluation score**. We also explored if individual-level differences in prejudice (e.g., social dominance orientation, right-wing authoritarianism, ethnocentrism) could explain why higher evaluation scores may be attributed to certain cultural groups.

Main Findings: Results were generally inconsistent with our predictions. Interviewers from the U.K. **evaluated applicants from South Africa, Canada and India more positively than applicants from Poland and Spain**, thus demonstrating a strong preference for cultures that shared British (colonial) history. Surprisingly, we found no evidence that individual differences in prejudice impacted how interviewers evaluated applicants from different cultures, which is also inconsistent with previous face-to-face interview research. This suggests that using AVIs could reduce some biases, while encouraging others. This was the first study to investigate potential cultural bias in an AVI context. At a time when the COVID pandemic has forced many organizations to recruit virtually, our research is highly relevant in understanding its impact on central HR processes.