Abstract and Keywords

Job interviews are of crucial importance to the job search process. As a result, recent years have witnessed a considerable amount of research on job interviews from the perspective of candidates. While this research has provided valuable insight into candidate reactions, it has yet to have a strong impact on the actual behaviors of job candidates and organizations. Thus the goal of the current chapter is to bridge the gap between empirical knowledge and applied practice in job interviews. To accomplish this objective we first present a framework for understanding the interview process that is grounded in theoretical and empirical research. The focus of this framework is whether candidate characteristics (e.g., gender, age), behaviors (e.g., impression management, communication style), and reactions (e.g., anxiety, justice) have an effect on important interview-related outcomes, such as interview performance. This is followed by a comprehensive discussion of research relevant to each section of the framework, including impression management, the first handshake, interview anxiety, and other predictors of interview success. Implications for research and practice are discussed and a checklist for practice is provided. We conclude by highlighting how properly conducted interviews can simultaneously serve the best interest of both job applicants and organizations.

Keywords: job interview, job applicants, candidate reactions, impression management, anxiety, justice, interview performance

Introduction

Research on job interviews has predominantly been conducted through the lens of organizations — focusing almost exclusively on how to improve predictive validity (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). Findings across hundreds of studies are unequivocal and indicate that impressive levels of predictive validity can be obtained when structured job interview techniques are employed (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). In recent years, however, scholars have recognized the importance of considering the interview though the lens of the job candidate. As a result, a large body of research that examines candidate perceptions of and reactions to job interviews has emerged. Several comprehensive reviews of this literature have been conducted (see Chan & Schmitt, 2004; Harris, 1989; Macan, 2009; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Steiner & Gilliland, 2001), including a meta-analysis (Hausknecht, Day, & Thomas, 2004). Findings suggest that candidate characteristics, behaviors and reactions to job interviews are related to several key outcome variables, including (a) performance on selection tools; (b) perceptions of organizational attractiveness; (c) intentions to recommend the organization to other candidates; (d) intentions to litigate; and (e) intentions to accept a job offer (see Barrick et al., 2009; Bauer et al., 2001; Chapman, Uggerslev, Caroll, Plasentin, & Jones, 2005; Hausknecht et al., 2004).

This information has provided us with valuable insight into job interviews from the perspective of the candidate; however, it has been less successful in impacting what candidates and organizations can actually do to improve the interview process (Ryan & Huth, 2008). This may be in part because of the lack of a comprehensive overview that delineates the steps that candidates and organizations can take. To this end, the goal of this chapter is to
provide a bridge between empirical knowledge about job interviews with applied recommendations for job candidates.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework that forms the basis for this chapter. Our framework is grounded in theoretical and empirical research and holds that candidate characteristics, candidate behaviors, and candidate reactions have important implications for job interview outcomes. The key mechanisms underlying these relations are explicated—notably stereotypes, social influence, cognitive interference, and value perceptions. It also identifies the key boundary conditions that have an impact on these relations, notably the type of job, the amount of interview structure, and candidate sincerity. As illustrated in Figure 1, this framework is specifically focused on the interview process from the lens of job candidates. It is important to note that other researchers have adopted a broader framework by providing more general reviews of the vast array of studies on job interviews (see Anderson, 1992; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Harris, 1989; Huffcutt, 2011; Judge, Higgins, & Cable, 2000; Macan, 2009; McDaniel et al., 1994; Moscoso, 2000; Posthuma et al., 2002). Still others have provided general reviews of research on candidate reactions to a wide range of selection tools (see Chan & Schmitt, 2004; Hausknecht et al., 2004; Hülsheger & Anderson, 2009; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000; Steiner & Gilliland, 2001; Truxillo & Bauer, 2010; Truxillo, Bodner, Bertolino, Bauer, & Yonce, 2009). Our goal, based on the focus on candidates’ perspective on job interviews, is to provide insight on how scientific findings can lead to practical recommendations.

This chapter is organized into five main parts. In the first three sections, we conduct a comprehensive review of candidate characteristics, behaviors, and reactions that may be related to interview outcomes. In doing so, we identify relevant theoretical frameworks, key research findings, and ideas for future work. Section four outlines implications for job candidates and presents recommendations on how to succeed in the job interview. The concluding section examines best practices in job interview techniques from the perspective of both job candidates and organizations. In doing so, it highlights the overlap in best practices and demonstrates that properly conducted interviews can serve the best interest of candidates and organizations.

**Candidate Characteristics**

A number of studies have considered the extent to which candidate characteristics may have an impact on the job interview process. These studies can be broadly organized into those that examine demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, age), and those that examine the physical appearance (e.g., attractiveness, style of dress) of job candidates.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the focus of these studies is on the extent to which candidate characteristics influence job interview performance. Huffcutt, Van Iddekinge, and Roth (2011) have advanced a comprehensive model of interview performance and state that it “reflects how applicants behave during the interview, including what they say and what they do” (p. 354). Further, they note that interview performance includes the content of the message that the interviewee is sending, how the interviewee delivers that content, and the interviewee’s nonverbal behaviors. The construct of interview performance is operationalized via interview ratings, which are typically in the form of an overall “interview” score (Barrick et al., 2009). However, it has also been assessed by obtaining ratings of candidate suitability, interview rank, intentions to hire, or intentions to recommend the candidate for a second interview (Barrick et al., 2009). Further, there is considerable variability in the actual constructs that are
used to assess interview performance, as a wide variety of interview questions and scoring techniques are used (Harris, 1989). Examples of such constructs include social skills, personality traits, cognitive ability, and past experiences (Huffcutt, 2011; Posthuma et al., 2002). Of these, personality traits and social skills have been found to be the most common constructs assessed, accounting for over 60% of all rated interview characteristics (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001). It is important to keep this variability in the operationalization of interview performance in mind in evaluating research findings and comparing results across studies.

**Demographic Characteristics**

Research on demographic characteristics has primarily focused on the extent to which candidate gender, race, and age influence interviewer perceptions and outcomes. This research includes studies that examine main effects, such that the performance of job candidates is directly influenced by the candidate’s demographics. This research also includes studies that examine interaction effects, such that the performance of job candidates is influenced by the match (or mismatch) between the candidate’s and the interviewer(s)’s demographics.

Studies examining the main effects of candidate demographic characteristics are, for the most part, founded on stereotype theory. Gender-related stereotypes reflect prejudiced attitudes toward women (Eagly & Steffen, 1984), race-related stereotypes reflect prejudiced attitudes toward minority-group members (Steele, 1997), and age-related stereotypes typically reflect prejudiced attitudes toward older workers (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976 a,b). Research findings support a main effect of gender-related stereotypes on interview performance (e.g., Adkins, Russell, & Werbel, 1994; Cable & Judge, 1997; Levashina & Campion, 2007); however, the magnitude is modest and actually suggest a slight tendency for females to receive higher overall ratings (average d = .13) (Huffcutt, 2011). Findings with respect to race and age are more robust and suggest discrimination against minorities (average d = .36) (Huffcutt, 2011; see also Derous & Ryan, this volume) and older applicants (Morgeson, Reider, Campion, & Bull, 2008; see also Klehe, Koen, & De Pater, this volume).

Given that job interviews are a dynamic process that involves communication between the candidate and the interviewer(s), more recent research has considered the match (or mismatch) between the demographic characteristics of the interviewer and the interviewee (e.g., Buckley, Jackson, Bolino, Veres, & Feild, 2007; Goldberg, 2005; Sacco, Scheu, Ryan, & Schmitt, 2003). These studies draw from the similarity attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971; Newcomb, 1956). Consistent with the adage, “birds of a feather flock together,” this paradigm holds that individuals with similar characteristics will be attracted to one another. Relatedly, demographic similarity theory is concerned with the extent to which people use demographic variables, such as gender and race, to determine how similar they are to others (Tsui, Egan, & O’Reilly, 1992; Tsui & O’Reilly, 1989). The key aspect of this theory is that demographic variables do not influence work outcomes on their own. Instead, an individual’s demographic characteristics relative to others is what is important. Applied to job interviews, these theories suggest that candidates will be judged more favorably to the extent that they have similar characteristics and belong to similar groups as the interviewer. Findings of these studies are mixed. Specifically, some report no effects (e.g., Graves & Powell, 1995, 1996; Sacco et al., 2003), while others report small to moderate effects (e.g., Buckley et al., 2007; Lin, Dobbins, & Farh, 1992; McFarland, Ryan, Sacco, & Kriska, 2004). As discussed below, these mixed findings are likely due to differences across studies with respect to the amount of interview structure and the types of jobs examined.

In the context of job interviews, these theories predict that candidate characteristics will trigger interviewer stereotypes, which will influence interviewer ratings of candidate performance. In other words, stereotypes serve as a mechanism underlying the relation between candidate characteristics and interview performance (see Figure 1).

**Physical Appearance**

Physical appearance reflects the physical characteristics of an individual, and includes variables such as attractiveness, weight, and style of dress. A number of studies have examined the effects of physical appearance on interview outcomes by considering the extent to which, for example, more attractive candidates are deemed more suitable for a job, more likely to be hired, more likely to receive higher interview scores, and more likely to perform better on the job subsequent to being hired. Implicit personality theory (Ashmore, 1981) serves as a foundation for these studies and holds that when we are presented with information about individuals’ central traits;
we draw inferences and make assumptions that are not necessarily correct. In particular, we suffer from a widely
shared stereotype that “what is beautiful is good” (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991).

A considerable amount of research has examined this general stereotype, and meta-analytic findings indicate that
individuals with a more positive physical appearance are indeed perceived as more socially skilled, intellectually
is also evidence that we make these attributions instantaneously—as fast as 100 milliseconds after exposure to an
individual (Willis & Todorov, 2006)! However, while we may believe that “what is beautiful is good,” research
indicates that attractiveness, in actuality, is trivially related to actual measures of cognitive ability and personality,
suggesting that “good-looking people are not necessarily good” (Feingold, 1992). Below, we provide a more
detailed perspective on the key components of physical appearance: physical attractiveness, weight, and style of
dress.

Physical Attractiveness
Consistent with the “what is beautiful is good” stereotype, more attractive candidates are likely to receive more
favorable hiring recommendations (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Gilmore, Beehr, & Love, 1986; Tews; Stafford, & Zhu,
2009), while less attractive candidates are deemed less suitable for hiring (Marlowe, Schneider, & Nelson, 1996).
Barrick and colleagues (2009) conducted a meta-analytic review of research on candidate attractiveness and job
interviews and found that physical appearance exhibited a strong relation with interviewer ratings of performance.
In fact, physical attractiveness was found to have a stronger effect on interviewer ratings of performance than
impression management behaviors, verbal communication and nonverbal communication exhibited by the
candidate. The strength of this stereotype is further evidenced in a study by Rynes and Gerhart (1990), who found
that physical attractiveness predicted interviewer ratings of employability over and above objective qualifications,
such as past experience.

Experimental research has also been conducted to examine the specifics of the effect of physical attractiveness
on hiring considerations. The bulk of this research uses the “paper people paradigm,” whereby verbal descriptions
and/or pictures of job candidates are rated by subjects. Overall, these studies are consistent with meta-analytic
evidence and indicate that attractiveness has a significant impact on interviewer perceptions (e.g., Dipboye,
Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Marlowe et al., 1996; Shannon & Stark, 2003). For example, Dipboye and colleagues
(1975) presented students and professional interviewers with the resumes and pictures of fictitious candidates that
varied on level of attractiveness. They found that both groups preferred attractive to unattractive candidates.

Weight
Researchers have also started to examine the effects of candidate weight on interviewer perceptions. Drawing
from implicit personality theory (Ashmore, 1981), negative stereotypes are applied to individuals who are
perceived as overweight. That is, overweight individuals are typically viewed as sloppy, unattractive, dishonest,
and less productive (Judge & Cable, 2011). The aversion to overweight individuals is so pervasive that even
overweight people hold negative attitudes towards other overweight people (Finkelstein, DeMuth, & Sweeney,
2007).

Not surprisingly, these stereotypes exist in the workplace, such that overweight candidates and employees are
rated as less desirable, less agreeable, and less stable than their non-overweight counterparts (Kutcher & Bragger,
2004; Roehling, 1999). Even experienced human resource personnel and recruitment consultants have been
found to be biased against overweight candidates (Ding & Stillman, 2005). Indeed, a recent meta-analysis found
that, compared with nonoverweight employees in the workplace, overweight employees were disadvantaged in
terms of hiring and performance outcomes (Rudolph, Wells, Weller, & Baltes, 2009). There is even evidence that
weight has profound negative effects on income levels (Judge & Cable, 2011). Perhaps unsurprisingly, these
effects are more pronounced for women (Judge & Cable, 2011).

Given that these stereotypes are inaccurate (Roehling, Roehling, & Odland, 2008), it is shocking that weight can
explain as much as 35% of the variance in hiring decisions (Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale, & Spring, 1994). In fact, the
stigma of obesity is so prevalent that negative perceptions are even ascribed to candidates who are seen with
obese individuals. Hebl and Mannix (2003) demonstrated this proximity effect and found that male candidates were
rated more negatively when seen with an overweight compared to a non-overweight female.
Negative biases also affect candidates who are extremely underweight. For example, Swami and colleagues have conducted research demonstrating that candidates who are emaciated (Body Mass Index less than 15), as well as candidates who are obese (Body Mass Index greater than 30), are more likely to be discriminated against in terms of hiring ratings (Swami, Chan, Wong, Furnham, & Tovée, 2008; Swami, Pietschnig, Steiger, Tovée, & Voracek, 2010). This holds true for pregnant candidates, who are viewed as less competent than their nonpregnant counterparts (e.g., Bragger, Kutcher, Morgan, & Firth, 2002; Cunningham & Macan, 2007; Masser, Grass, & Nesic, 2007). Although pregnancy is a different issue than weight, this research suggests that pregnant candidates may be viewed in the same biased manner as candidates with weight issues.

**Style of Dress**

The general workplace literature suggests that when employees select clothing appropriate for their work role, they feel more competent and are better able to interact with others (Rafaeli, Dutton, Harquail, & Mackie-Lewis, 1997). Not surprisingly, style of dress may also have an effect in job interview contexts (Posthuma et al., 2002). Specifically, meta-analytic research suggests that the extent to which a candidate’s clothing conveys a professional appearance has a significant impact on interview scores (Barrick et al., 2009). Further, experimental research manipulating grooming and attractiveness by altering clothing, hair, makeup, and jewelry of a female candidate has found that undergraduate students are more likely to hire a well-groomed candidate than a poorly groomed candidate with identical qualifications (Mack & Rainey, 1990). In terms of specific clothing styles, Forsythe (1990; Forsythe, Drake, & Cox, 1985) examined the impact of type of clothing on managerial evaluations of female candidates. Findings indicated that females wearing more masculine clothing (e.g., dark suit) were judged to be more forceful, self-reliant, dynamic, aggressive, and decisive than those wearing feminine clothing (e.g., skirt). They were also more likely to be recommended for hire. Ultimately, conservative dress is considered to be most appropriate for both genders but is particularly preferred for female candidates (Jenkins & Atkins, 1990).

**Boundary Conditions**

As described above, findings are mixed with respect to whether the demographic characteristics of job candidates influence interview scores. However, findings with respect to physical appearance are more conclusive, with studies consistently indicating that physical attractiveness, weight, and style of dress are significantly related to interview outcomes. It is important to note that two boundary conditions have been found to influence the magnitude of observed relations between candidate characteristics and interview outcomes: the amount of interview structure and type of job. These conditions serve as moderators of the relation between candidate characteristics and interview performance (see Figure 1).

**Interview Structure**

The inconsistent findings with respect to demographic characteristics are partially due to inconsistencies in interview structure across past studies. Specifically, when interviews are highly structured, there is evidence that demographic similarity effects can be reduced and potentially eliminated (McCarthy, Van Iddekinge, & Campion, 2010; Sacco et al., 2003). This makes intuitive sense, as structured interviews, by their very nature, are aimed at obtaining relevant information about job candidates. At its core, structured interviews are based on a job analysis, ask the same job-relevant questions of all candidates, and are scored using anchored rating scales (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997). As such, structured interviews increase the amount of individuating information about the candidate (e.g., job-relevant knowledge and skills) that is available to and used by interviewers (McCarthy et al., 2010). Further, they greatly reduce and/or eliminate irrelevant questions that may trigger biases. Thus, the effects of demographic characteristics will be stronger to the extent that unstructured interview formats are used. Unfortunately, the majority of organizations continue to use unstructured interviews, rendering the potential prevalence of demographic biases high (Parsons, Liden, & Bauer, 2001).

Relations between physical appearance and interview outcomes are also significantly reduced when structured, as opposed to unstructured, interview formats are used (Barrick et al., 2009). This holds true for overweight and pregnant candidates (Hebl, King, Glick, Singletery, & Kazama, 2007; Kutcher & Bragger, 2004). Again, this can be attributed to the fact that highly structured interviews focus attention on the relevant characteristics of candidates, reducing the effect of characteristics like attractiveness and weight.
Type of Job

The mixed findings of past research on demographic effects are also partially due to differences across job type. Specifically, certain jobs are sex-typed, in that they are deemed more appropriate for females or males (Arvey, 1979; Heilman, 1983). Interviewers tend to see female candidates as more suitable for feminine-linked jobs, whereas male candidates are seen as more appropriate for masculine-linked jobs (e.g., Buttner & McEnally, 1996; Kalin & Hodgins, 1984). Similarly, older candidates are rated more favorably for jobs that are considered more suitable for older employees (Cleveland, Festa, & Montgomery, 1988; Shore & Goldberg, 2005). Thus interview scores are likely to be stronger to the extent that the job is perceived to match the demographic characteristics of the candidate.

Type of job is also a moderator of the relation between physical attractiveness and interview performance. Indeed, evidence indicates that physical attractiveness plays a pivotal role when positions entail a high level of customer contact (Tews et al., 2009; Tsai, Huang, & Yu, 2011). In fact, there is evidence that attractiveness is actually detrimental for female candidates when applying to masculine sex-typed jobs where physical appearance is considered unimportant (Johnson, Podratz, Dipboye, & Gibbons, 2010).

Directions for Future Research

Existing research on candidate characteristics has been conducted relatively independently, resulting in separate research streams that focus on distinct characteristics such as race, attractiveness, and weight. Although this work has contributed greatly to our general understanding of how various characteristics impact interview outcomes, it would be particularly advantageous for research to consider the relative weight of various characteristics on interview outcomes. Tews and colleagues (2009) have provided a first glimpse of this issue by examining the relative weight that manager’s place on physical attractiveness, cognitive ability, and personality during hiring decisions. They found that although physical attractiveness played a significant role, it explained only 1% of the variance in managerial ratings and was valued less than cognitive ability and conscientiousness, which explained 8% and 12% in managerial ratings respectively. To this end, additional research is needed to consider how candidate characteristics stack up to one another, as well as to assess their combined impact on various interview outcomes. Moreover, additional research is needed to determine to what extent the relative weights are influenced by job type and characteristics of the interviewer.

Candidate Behaviors

A number of studies have considered the extent to which the behaviors that candidates engage in (or fail to engage in) may impact the job interview process. These self-presentation tactics can be organized into those that examine impression management behaviors and those that examine verbal and nonverbal communication processes.

Impression Management Behaviors

Job interviews inherently reflect a process that is centered on a social exchange between individuals. As a result, candidates are motivated to use impression management behaviors in order to be perceived in a positive light (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995; Wayne & Liden, 1995). By definition, impression management reflects “a conscious or unconscious attempt to influence images that are projected in real or imagined social interactions” (Schlenker, 1980, p. 6). A wide range of impression management behaviors have been examined, including the use of smiling, handshakes, ingratiation behaviors, self-endorsement, favors, pressure and coalition. Research indicates that these types of impression management behaviors are common, even during highly structured interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Research also suggests that impression formation occurs in two steps: first impressions and general impressions (Dipboye, 2004; Kahneman, 2003). Below we discuss the theoretical frameworks underlying impression management tactics, and then discuss each in turn.

Two theoretical frameworks provide a foundation for understanding impression management tactics—interdependence theory and social influence theory. Interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003) asserts that social contexts can have powerful effects on behaviors. In particular, this theory proposes that when individuals are interacting with someone whose interests differ from their own or with someone on whom they are
dependent, they will be more likely to engage in self-presentation tactics in order to maximize their outcomes. Job candidates fit this description, as their interest in obtaining the job is distinct from the interviewers’ interest in obtaining accurate information and hiring the strongest candidate (Barrick et al., 2009). Further, candidates are dependent on the interviewer for job success (Barrick et al., 2009). Thus, the interdependence among key players in job interview contexts promotes the use of self-presentation tactics. Social influence theory is founded on the notion that all interpersonal relationships involve social influence; as a result, individuals are motivated to use tactics to influence one another in order to get others to perceive oneself in a positive light (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Levy, Collins, & Nail, 1998). In the context of job interviews, these theories predict that candidate impression management behaviors will yield a social influence effect, and be related to interviewer ratings of candidate performance. In other words, social influence serves as a mechanism underlying the relation between impression management behaviors and interview performance (see Figure 1).

First Impressions
The first stage of impression formation represents our initial judgments of others and is referred to as “first impressions” (Dipboye, 2004; Kahneman, 2003). These impressions are based on a thin slice of observational data and occur almost instantaneously, that is, within the first 39 milliseconds (Ambady & Rosenthal, 1992; Bar, Neta, & Linz, 2006; Willis & Todorov, 2006). Moreover, these first impressions are typically formed through nonverbal exchanges. That is, we form impressions of others as soon as we see them, prior to meeting or exchanging words with them (Hiemstra, 1999). In the context of job interviews, findings indicate that information communicated through the initial interaction between the candidate and interviewer, both nonverbal and verbal, can have a significant effect on interviewer impressions. For example, a study by Stewart, Dustin, Barrick, and Darnold (2008) found that a high-quality handshake (consisting of high vigor, direct eye contact, and a grip that is full, strong, and long) can result in a more favorable impression of the candidate and is more likely to be related to a positive hiring decision. Extending that research, Barrick, Swider, and Stewart (2010) found that interviewers generate impressions of candidate competence during the initial rapport-building stage of the interview, in which innocuous “small-talk” unrelated to the job is exchanged between the candidate and the interviewer. Further, they found evidence that these initial impressions predict interview outcomes beyond the potentially biasing effects of candidate–interviewer similarity and liking. This suggests that interviewers’ initial evaluations are based on more than just job-relevant characteristics and incorporate liking and similarity effects.

General Impressions
The second stage of impression formation is characterized by more rational processing of information throughout the interview (Dipboye, 2004; Kahneman, 2003). The bulk of research has focused on this second stage, measuring impression management behaviors either during or after the interview. As illustrated by Levashina and Campion (2007), impression management behaviors can have strong effects on interview outcomes, increasing the probability of a successful job interview outcome by as much as 46%.

Two main types of impression management behaviors have been studied: self-focused and other-focused tactics. Self-focused tactics occur when candidates describe themselves, their experiences and accomplishments in a positive light. This strategy focuses attention on the candidate, and includes behaviors such as self-endorsement (describing one’s positive qualities) and entitlements (taking responsibility for positive events). Other-focused tactics reflect strategies that focus attention on the interviewer, and include ingratiating (flattery toward the interviewer) and favors (going out of one’s way to do something for the interviewer). In 2009, Barrick and colleagues conducted a meta-analytic review of studies examining the impact of impression management on the job interview process. When the two types of impression management behaviors were considered independently, self-focused tactics demonstrated stronger effects on interviewer ratings than other-focused tactics.

Similar findings were reported in a recent empirical review of this literature conducted by Huffcutt (2011). Proost, Schreurs, De Witte, and Derous (2010) extended this research by considering the combined effect of these tactics. Results indicated that the combined use of self- and other-promotion tactics resulted in higher ratings than either tactic alone.

Another way in which researchers have distinguished impression management tactics is by differentiating between “soft” and “hard” tactics (Lamude, 1994). Soft tactics reflect the use of personal power and power sharing (e.g.,
ingratiation, rational persuasion). In contrast, hard tactics involve manipulation and reflect the use of position and authority (e.g., pressure, coalition tactics). McFarland, Ryan, and Kriska (2002) conducted a field study examining firefighters’ use of influence tactics in job interview contexts. While soft tactics were positively associated with job interview ratings, hard tactics yielded nonsignificant relationships. Similarly, a study by Tsai, Huang, Wu, and Lo (2010) examined three soft tactics—apologies, justifications, and excuses. These particular strategies were also defensive in nature, as they involved responding to negative information. Findings indicated that when negative concerns surfaced during the interview, candidates using these soft tactics received higher ratings.

Although impression management can highlight the positive qualities of candidates and lead to higher interview ratings, candidates need to be cautious of the extent to which these tactics are used. Indeed, research demonstrates that overuse of impression management tactics can actually have a negative impact on interview outcomes (Baron, 1989; Bolino & Turnley, 2003). Further, there is evidence that self-promotion tactics become detrimental when the interviewer can tell that candidates are using them. Specifically, candidates who are perceived by interviewers to be using self-promotion tactics are rated lower on interview performance than candidates who are not perceived to be using self-promotion tactics (Howard & Ferris, 1996). Thus candidates are advised to use these tactics in a very cautious manner, ensuring that they are viewed as sincere. Finally, in spite of the potential power of impression management tactics, their influence is relative, as interviewers have been found to rely more heavily on job-related competencies in evaluating candidates (Lievens & Peeters, 2008).

**Nonverbal and Verbal Communication**

A great deal of research has also examined the effects of both verbal (e.g., speech rate and pitch) and nonverbal (e.g., eye contact) communication styles on interview outcomes. A number of theoretical paradigms have been used as the foundation for this stream of research, ranging from Brunswick’s lens model (1956) to person perception and social cognition frameworks (Parsons et al., 2001), to various attribution theories (e.g., Heider, 1958). At the core, these theoretical frameworks have in common the notion that, since individuals are constantly attempting to explain others’ behavior in order to make sense of what is going on around them, messages conveyed implicitly or explicitly can be misperceived. Social influence theory provides further insight into the influence of verbal and nonverbal communication styles on interview performance. Social influence theory holds that individuals are motivated to use tactics that will get others to perceive them positively (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Levy et al., 1998). Consistent with impression management behaviors, verbal and nonverbal communication styles are expected to yield a social influence effect and, in turn, be related to interview performance. Thus, social influence also serves as a mechanism underlying the relation between candidate communication styles and interview performance (see Figure 1).

With regard to nonverbal communication, several studies have found that behaviors such as smiling, eye contact, and gestures are positively related to the ratings that candidates receive in the job interview (e.g., DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999; Gifford, Nq, & Wilkinson, 1985; Imada & Hakel, 1977; Levine & Feldman, 2002; McGovern, Jones, & Morris, 1979; McGovern & Tinsley, 1978; Rasmussen, 1984; Riggo & Throckmorton, 1988). For example, a firm handshake has been demonstrated to have a positive effect on interview outcomes (Chaplin, Phillips, Brown, Clanton, & Stein, 2000; Stewart et al., 2008). Further, eye contact has been found to determine perceptions of competence and strength of character (Anderson, 1991). There is also evidence that interviewers infer social skills from nonverbal behaviors, such as the speed of candidate gestures and the amount of time candidates spend talking (Gifford et al., 1985). With regard to verbal communication, evidence suggests that factors such as speech rate, pitch, fluency, the use of hedges ("um" and "ah"), and use of sophisticated language, are all related to interview outcomes (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999). The content of responses that candidates provide to interviewers can also have an effect on interview outcomes. For example, unfavorable information provided by the candidate has been found to have a greater impact on interview ratings than favorable information (Bolster & Springbett, 1961; Constantin, 1976). This is consistent with evidence that negative life events carry more weight than positive life events (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). Finally, many of the impression management tactics described in the previous section involve the use of verbal communication (e.g., self-endorsements, entitlements, ingratiations) and have been found to have significant effects on interviewer perceptions of candidates (e.g., Barrick et al., 2009).

Research has also provided substantial support for the joint effects of nonverbal and verbal communication on job
interview performance. A combination of nonverbal and verbal communication may signal trustworthiness, likability, and credibility of candidates (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999; Nighswonger & Martin, 1981). Burnett and Motowidlo (1998) found that individuals asked to play the role of a recruiter who received both verbal and nonverbal information about the target candidate had improved predictions of performance compared to those who received nonverbal information only and those who received verbal information only. Similarly, DeGroot and Motowidlo (1999) found that candidate vocal cues (e.g., pitch variability, pauses) and visual cues (e.g., smiling, gaze) had a significant impact on evaluations of candidate performance during the interview and on the job. Rasmussen (1984) also found a significant interaction between nonverbal and verbal communication in simulated lab interviews. When interviews that contained high quantities of verbal content (i.e., where the candidate presented much job-relevant information), high amounts of nonverbal behavior produced higher overall interview ratings than low amounts of nonverbal behavior. In contrast, when interviews contained low quantities of verbal content (i.e., where the candidate presented little job-relevant information), high amounts of nonverbal behavior produced lower overall ratings.

In terms of the relative effectiveness of nonverbal and verbal communication, findings are mixed. Some research suggests that nonverbal communication is more strongly associated with interview outcomes. This is consistent with the old adage “actions speak louder than words.” Indeed, it is often easier to make judgments of others by relying on peripheral factors, such as nonverbal cues, than by carefully and deliberately processing the verbal content conveyed by others (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Empirically, this is supported by the meta-analytic review conducted by Barrick and colleagues (2009), who found that nonverbal communication demonstrated stronger relations with interview ratings than verbal information. On the other hand, there is some evidence to suggest that information conveyed verbally is more important than nonverbal cues. For example, Peeters and Liefens (2006) examined verbal communication (i.e., self-promoting utterances, entitlements, and enhancements) and nonverbal communication (i.e., smiling, hand gestures, nodding, and eye contact). Findings indicated that both tactics demonstrated significant correlations with interview ratings, but verbal self-promotion tactics were most strongly related to positive interview scores. Overall, research evidence suggests that both verbal and nonverbal communications ultimately impact interviewer perceptions and ratings and that neither should be underestimated.

**Boundary Conditions**

As described above, research indicates that impression management behaviors can have significant effects on job interview outcomes. In particular, the use of self-focused and soft impression management tactics is related to higher interview scores. Both nonverbal and verbal communication has also been found to influence interview scores, with their combined influence proving to have the strongest effects. However, the relation between these candidate behaviors and interview performance is dependent on three key boundary conditions: the amount of interview structure, the type of job, and candidate sincerity. These conditions serve as moderators of the relation between candidate behaviors and interview performance (see Figure 1).

**Interview Structure**

Consistent with the effects of demographic characteristics on interview outcomes, the influence of impression management tactics on interview performance is reduced when structured as opposed to unstructured interview formats are used (Barrick et al., 2009). Structured interviews focus attention on the relevant knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAOs) of the candidate, rendering additional behaviors, such as impression management tactics, less powerful. Thus, although impression management tactics are related to job interview performance, they are less likely to bias evaluations during structured interview sessions.

Research has also demonstrated that the effect of nonverbal communication is attenuated when structured interview formats are used. Specifically, Tsai, Chen, and Chiu (2005) examined the extent to which job candidates used friendly nonverbal cues such as smiling and nodding. They found that the influence of these nonverbal cues on interview performance was reduced when structured interviews were employed. Again, this can be attributed to the fact that structured interviews focus on a wide range of KSAO that extend beyond communication skills. Additional research that explores this question with verbal communication would be valuable.

**Type of Job**
Type of job may also moderate relations between candidate behaviors and interview performance (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Tsai and colleagues (2005) found evidence that impression management tactics were significantly related to interview scores for jobs that required high levels of customer contact. In contrast, impression management tactics were not related to interview scores for jobs that did not require high levels of customer contact. Surely industries requiring a high level of customer contact would benefit from hiring employees who were able to manage their impressions in a positive manner. Although not yet examined empirically, similar findings are expected when verbal and nonverbal communication are considered. Specifically, candidates who are verbally expressive may be rated more favorably when applying for jobs that require high levels of interaction (i.e., in service industries), whereas candidates who are verbally reserved may be rated more favorably for jobs that require minimal interpersonal contact (i.e., in high tech industries).

Candidate Sincerity

As previously indicated, a caveat in using impression management tactics concerns the authenticity with which these strategies are displayed. Specifically, interviewers have negative impressions of candidates whom they perceive to be engaged in high levels of insincere impression management (Howard & Ferris, 1996). For example, there is evidence that “false smiling” during job interviews results in less favorable impressions than does “genuine smiling” (Ekman, Friesen, & Ancoli, 1980; Woodzicka, 2008; Woodzicka & LaFrance, 2005). Thus, candidates should use impression management tactics carefully, ensuring that they are not perceived as insincere (Dipboye, 1992). One way that this can be accomplished is to make sure that what candidates portray outwardly to interviewers, whether it be the impression management strategies they engage in, what they say verbally, or how they act nonverbally, matches how candidates really feel inside, so as not to come across as insincere. Indeed, a disconnect between the two signals insincerity, whereas alignment signals sincerity and results in higher evaluations (Weisbuch, Ambady, Clarke, Achor, & Weele, 2010). Combined, these findings suggest that the relation between impression management tactics and interview scores will be moderated by perceived candidate sincerity, such that higher scores will be obtained when candidates are viewed as genuine.

Directions for Future Research

There are a number of valuable avenues for future research in this area. The majority of past work has focused on examining isolated candidate behaviors and failed to consider whether combinations of behavioral tactics are related to interview outcomes. This is surprising, given that, from a practical point of view these tactics are unlikely to be used in isolation. Falbe and Yukl (1992) were the first to examine the effectiveness of combined influence tactics. They found that using a combination of tactics was typically better than using a single tactic, as long as the combination did not involve hard tactics. More recently, Peeters and Lievens (2006) examined self-focused impression management tactics (i.e., self-promotion, entitlements) along with nonverbal communication behaviors (i.e., smiling, eye contact). While both tactics demonstrated significant relations with interview ratings, impression management tactics were more strongly related to positive interview scores. Additional research that examines the combined effects of various tactics is likely to prove invaluable.

It would also be useful to consider whether interviewers can be trained to recognize what types of impression management tactics candidates are using. Levashina and Campion (2006, 2007) have suggested that there may be important differences between “honest impression management behaviors,” whereby candidates portray a positive image without being deceptive, and “dishonest impression management behaviors” wherein deceit is used. These concepts are closely aligned with “surface acting” and “deep acting” strategies from the emotion regulation literature (Grantham, 2003). Applied to job interviews, surface acting represents an attempt to be portrayed in a positive light by modifying one’s facial features and/or behaviors without changing one’s inner feelings in line with what is displayed (e.g., dishonest impression management), while deep acting represents an attempt to seem genuine or authentic by modifying one’s feelings to match what is displayed (e.g., honest impression management). The literature on emotion regulation may serve as a valuable theoretical framework for future research in this area.

Finally, as noted by Huffcutt (2011), additional research examining social skills in job interview contexts would be valuable. In particular, the core components of emotional intelligence (perceiving emotions, using emotions, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions) (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) may have notable implications for job interview performance. Candidates who are able to use their emotions effectively—for example, by accurately
perceiving an interviewer’s mood, having a good grasp of the dynamics of the interaction, and using their emotions to guide thinking and facilitate performance—are likely to be better positioned to convey a positive impression. Unfortunately, few studies have examined these possibilities. An exception is Fox and Spector (2000), who conducted an empirical study and found that emotional intelligence, general intelligence, and practical intelligence are all related to interview outcomes. Additional work on emotional intelligence and job interviews is needed.

Candidate Reactions

There has also been a considerable amount of research examining candidate reactions to job interviews. This research can be divided into that which considers candidate preferences for different types of selection tools and that which focuses on candidate responses (i.e., anxiety, justice) to job interviews.

Candidate Preference for Types of Job Interviews

Job interviews are not only the most widely used selection tool in the corporate world but also the most preferred by job candidates. Hausknecht and colleagues (2004) conducted a meta-analytic review of the literature and found that interviews were rated as the most preferred selection tool, ranked higher than work samples, resumes, and psychometric tests. This finding holds across cultures, with interviews receiving high levels of favorability not only in the United States, but also in France, Germany, Belgium, Greece, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Vietnam (Anderson, Salgado, & Hüssegger, 2010; Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Hausknecht et al., 2004; Hoang, Erdogan, Truxillo, & Bauer, 2010; Moscoso & Salgado, 2004; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996).

There is also evidence indicating that job candidates prefer face-to-face interviews over videoconferencing or telephone-based interviews (Chapman & Rowe, 2002; Chapman, Uggerslev, & Webster, 2003; Silvester, Anderson, Haddleton, Cunningham-Snell, & Gibb, 2000). For example, Chapman and colleagues (2003) studied university students who were applying for jobs in 346 different organizations and found that face-to-face interviews were perceived as higher on procedural justice and led to higher job acceptance intentions. Bauer, Truxillo, Paronto, Weekley, and Campion (2004) also examined candidate reactions to interview formats and found that face-to-face interviewers were rated higher on several interpersonal justice dimensions, such as interpersonal treatment and two-way communication. Candidates also reported significantly higher organizational attractiveness and lower intentions to litigate in the face-to-face condition. These findings are not surprising, as interviews that are conducted in person promote a more natural flow of conversation and are a better medium for conveying and understanding feelings and emotions (Chapman & Rowe, 2001).

Research also indicates that candidates prefer unstructured interviews over structured interviews (Chapman & Rowe, 2002; Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Kohn & Dipboye, 1998; Latham & Finnegan, 1993). This may be because of a number of factors, including the fact that the formal nature of structured interviews makes it more difficult for candidates to manage impressions (Chapman & Rowe, 2002; Posthuma et al., 2002). Further, candidate perceptions of control and opportunity to voice their opinions are restricted in structured interviews (Madigan & Macan, 2005). Relatedly, structured interviews have been found to be significantly related to candidate feelings of anxiety (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004).

Candidate Responses to Job Interviews

Candidate reactions to the job interview process can be quite variable, ranging from highly positive to highly negative. Negative reactions (i.e., low justice, high anxiety, low motivation) have been found to have detrimental effects on the selection process, including reduced job acceptance intentions, lower perceptions of organizational attractiveness, and fewer intentions to recommend the organization to other candidates (Hausknecht et al., 2004). This is highly problematic, as top candidates are likely to be interviewing at multiple organizations and often receive multiple job offers (Blau, 1992). Thus even small changes in the attractiveness of the organization may have a substantial effect on their intentions and behaviors (Chapman et al., 2003). Moreover, there are substantial financial costs associated with having candidates drop out of the employment pool (Boudreau & Rynes, 1985). To date, two key reactions have dominated job interview research: anxiety and justice.

Job Interview Anxiety
The interview process is a daunting experience for many candidates (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). Most candidates consider the employment interview as their only chance of making a solid first impression. To compound matters, the outcome of an interview can be a life-changing event, such as a major career shift or a move to a new city. Thus, many have experienced feelings of nervous tension and trepidation when walking into a job interview, with shaking hands, fast heartbeats, and cold, sweaty palms. Moreover, these behavioral and physiological effects have been found to persist for the duration of the interview (Young, Behnke, & Mann, 2004).

However, interview anxiety has been found to extend beyond physiological manifestations to include dimensions such as interpersonal anxiety and performance anxiety (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). This makes intuitive sense, as interviews represent a strong situation with highly evaluative interpersonal processes that are typically conducted by a stranger and are not under the candidates’ control. Specifically, McCarthy and Goffin (2004) developed a model of job interview anxiety which contains five dimensions: appearance anxiety, communication anxiety, social anxiety, behavioral anxiety, and performance anxiety (see Table 1 for descriptions). This model was supported by data from 276 job candidates undergoing selection interviews for a wide range of managerial and professional positions. Findings indicated that candidates experience varying levels of the five interview anxiety types.

Cognitive interference theories provide the foundation for understanding the relation between interview anxiety and performance in the interview. A number of theories are subsumed under the rubric of cognitive interference, including processing efficiency theory (Eysenck & Calvo, 1992); attentional control theory (Eysenck, Derakshan, Santos, & Calvo, 2007); interference theory (Wine, 1980), the elaboration likelihood model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), and integrative resource theory (Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). Common to each of these theories is the proposition that anxiety interferes with people’s ability to focus on and process events, resulting in lower levels of interview performance. For example, the cognitive load model states that people have finite amounts of processing power, and that anxiety impairs this processing power by interfering with their ability to attend to and process performance-relevant information (Barlow, 2002; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989). Indeed, anxiety has been shown to impair task performance by interfering with reasoning abilities, semantic memory retrieval processes (Zeidner, 1998), information acquisition (Barber, Hollenbeck, Tower, & Phillips, 1994) and working memory performance (Shackman et al., 2006).

Consistent with cognitive interference models, empirical evidence indicates that anxiety is negatively linked to job interview performance (Arvey, Strickland, Drauden, & Martin, 1990; Ayres & Crosby, 1995; Cook, Vance, & Spector, 2000; McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). For example, McCarthy and Goffin (2004) found that the five interview anxiety dimensions, as a set, were negatively related to job interview performance. Further, when specific dimensions of interview anxiety were considered, the communication and appearance anxiety dimensions revealed the strongest relations with interviewer ratings of performance. This is consistent with a series of studies conducted by Ayres and colleagues (Ayres, Ayres, & Sharp, 1993; Ayres & Crosby, 1995; Ayres, Keereetaweep, Chen, & Edwards, 1998), who found that candidates high on communication anxiety were rated as less suitable, less effective communicators, and were less likely to be offered a job. This is also consistent with the fact that candidates with high levels of interpersonal anxiety are perceived as less attractive (Hawkins & Stewart, 1990) and less intelligent (Richmond, Beatty, & Dyba, 1985).

There is also evidence that interviewers may have difficulty perceiving candidate levels of anxiety (Barrick, Patton, & Haughland, 2000; Feiler & Powell, 2013; McCarthy & Goffin, 2004), suggesting that anxiety is not a readily observable feeling. This finding is important for at least two reasons. First, this finding suggests that candidates may be hiding or suppressing their true levels of anxiety. In 2009, Sieverding examined emotional suppression and interview anxiety in a simulated job interview paradigm. Findings indicated that candidates, particularly males, feel compelled to suppress their feelings of anxiety. Results also revealed that suppressors were viewed as more confident by interviewers than nonsuppressors. In other words, “playing it cool” may help to increase job interview performance. Given that interviewers may have difficulty recognizing feelings of anxiety in candidates, job interview preparation programs would benefit from training candidates to develop more confidence or self-efficacy (e.g., chapter by da Motta Veiga and Turban, this volume). Second, this finding provides further support for cognitive interference as the mechanism underlying the anxiety-performance link. Specifically, the observed low levels of interview performance for anxious candidates are not simply due to interviewers perceiving candidates to be anxious and hence rating them low. Instead, they are more likely due to the fact that anxiety directly impacts candidates’ cognitive processing capabilities, which interferes with their interview performance. Hence, cognitive interference serves as a mechanism underlying the relation between candidate anxiety and interview performance.
Through the Looking Glass

(see Figure 1).

Job Interview Justice
In spite of the fact that the interview is an anxiety-evoking process, it is consistently perceived to be one of the most “fair” selection procedures. This perception is generalizable to other countries (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Hausknecht et al., 2004). Perceptions of fairness, or justice, with respect to job interviews can be classified into concerns regarding whether the procedure is fair (procedural justice) (Greenberg, 1993) and concerns regarding whether the outcome of the interview was fair (distributive justice) (Greenberg, 1993). A meta-analytic review of justice reactions across seventeen countries was recently conducted by Anderson and colleagues (2010). Findings indicated that interviews were consistently perceived to be high on procedural justice across all countries. Indeed, when compared with other selection techniques, job interviews are ranked at or near the top with respect to procedural justice across a host of countries, including the United States, France, Singapore, Greece, Italy, Turkey, Romania, and the Netherlands (Anderson & Witvliet, 2008; Bertolino & Steiner, 2007; Bilgic & Acarlar, 2010; Ispas, Ile, Iliescu, Johnson, & Harris, 2010; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Phillips & Gully, 2002; Steiner & Gilliland, 1996).

Research has also considered candidate perceptions of justice with respect to interview structure. Chapman and Zweig (2005) obtained detailed information about how candidates perceive the various components of interview structure as outlined by Campion and colleagues (1997). Findings indicated that low levels of procedural justice were obtained when interviews were conducted by a panel, and candidates were discouraged from asking questions. Given that the use of a panel is an important component of interview structure (Campion et al., 1997); techniques to increase the perceived justice of panels are needed. Extending this research to other cultures would also be advantageous. Dipboye, Macan, and Shahani-Denning (2012) propose that highly structured interview formats may be more accepted in cultures that are high on power distance (i.e., that accept and expect unequal distributions of power) and uncertainty avoidance. Panel interviews may be better received in collectivistic cultures.

There is also evidence that interviews will be perceived as unfair if they include discriminatory questions, such as age, gender, marital status, handicaps and ethnicity. Although such questions are illegal, they are not uncommon (Bennington, 2001; Keyton & Springston, 1992; McShulskis, 1997; Saunders, 1992). Woodzicka and LaFrance (2005) examined the effects of sexually discriminatory questions (e.g., “Do you have a boyfriend?”) in simulated job interviews. Female participants who were presented with these discriminatory questions spoke less fluently, gave lower-quality answers, and asked fewer job relevant questions. Saks and McCarthy (2006) examined a wider range of discriminatory questions (age, marital and child status, handicaps, and arrest record). These questions had a significant negative effect on participant’s reactions to the interview and interviewer, as well as intentions to pursue employment, accept a job offer, and recommend the organization to others. Thus organizations that request discriminatory information are creating negative candidate perceptions and placing themselves at a recruiting disadvantage.

Justice perceptions may also have an impact on interview outcomes. Gilliland’s (1993) seminal model of candidate reactions predicts that justice perceptions can influence candidate attitudes (e.g., organizational attractiveness), intentions (e.g., to recommend the selection process to others), and behaviors (e.g., interview performance). Fairness heuristic theory (Lind, 2001) provides a foundation for understanding these effects, as it asserts that people seek out fairness information in order to determine the extent to which they are valued by the organization (Lind & Tyler, 1988). In an interview context, the theory predicts that employees will feel valued when they perceive the job interview process to be fair. It further predicts that the manner in which interviewers treat candidates will influence perceptions of justice. Whereas fair treatment communicates respect and value toward candidates, unfair treatment communicates disrespect (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Therefore fairness heuristics, in the form of value perceptions, serve as a mechanism underlying the relation between candidate perceptions of justice and interview outcomes (see Figure 1).

Several studies have examined perceived justice in selection contexts and meta-analytic findings indicate that perceptions of procedural justice are related to organizational attractiveness, intentions to recommend the selection process to others, and job acceptance intentions (Chapman et al., 2005; Hausknecht et al., 2004). In terms of applying Gilliland’s (1993) predictions in interview situations, Bauer and colleagues (2001) found that
candidates who reported higher levels of social justice (i.e., treatment of candidates) and structural justice (i.e., procedural justice) with respect to job interviews were more likely to view the organization as attractive and recommend the organization to others.

Directions for Future Research

Although existing research has provided important insights into candidate reactions to the interview process, we suggest three areas for future research. First, future research should expand the focus of candidate reactions by considering additional reactions, such as motivation and anger. Considerable research on motivation with respect to selection tests has been conducted (Hausknecht et al., 2004; McCarthy, Hrablik, & Jelley, 2009); however, studies have yet to explore candidate motivation in job interview contexts. Candidate levels of motivation are deemed important by recruiters (Atkins & Kent, 1988) and are likely to have important implications for key interview outcomes, such as interview performance and recommendation intentions. It would also be valuable to examine motivation in the context of racial and gender differences with an emphasis on stereotype threat (Ployhart, Ziegert, & McFarland, 2003). Further, this research could examine how different motivational theories applied to candidate reactions would impact the interview process. For example, McClelland (1985) suggests that individuals are primarily motivated by the needs for power, affiliation, or achievement. Future research can examine whether candidates who are driven by varying levels of each of these motivation types perform better on interviews.

Sanchez, Truxillo, and Bauer (2000) have developed an expectancy-based model of test-taking motivation (VIEMS) that would be useful to apply to interview contexts. Also, motivational theories such as goal-setting theory (Latham, Bardes, & Locke, this volume; Locke & Latham, 2002) could be applied to train candidates to perform better in interviews, for example, by encouraging candidates to set specific goals for the interview. This could also potentially contribute toward lowering interview anxiety.

Candidate anger is another valuable avenue for future studies, particularly as it relates to feelings of anxiety, perceptions of justice, and the use of discriminatory questions. Some initial work with respect to candidate anger has been conducted by Segers-Noij, Proost, van Dijike, and von Grumbkow (2010), who examined candidates for a penitentiary job in Belgium. Results indicated that candidate anger was strongly and negatively related to perceptions of procedural and distributive justice. Further, the negative relation between anger and procedural justice was particularly strong among candidates who reported high levels of self-referenced anxiety (i.e., the desire to meet personal performance standards) as opposed to candidates who reported high levels of other-referenced anxiety (i.e., desire to meet others performance standards). Thus, fair procedures are particularly important for individuals who are high on self-referenced anxiety.

There is also a need for research that examines how candidate emotions more generally affect the interview process and more specifically the extent to which they are related to job interview performance. Initial research suggests that positive affect is related to whether candidates receive follow-up interviews (Burger & Caldwell, 2000). Further, evidence suggests that individuals who suppress emotions during a simulated interview are considered more competent than those who do not suppress emotions (Sieverding, 2009). However, more research needs to be conducted on candidate affectivity and mood during actual job interviews as well as research examining how candidate emotions may interact with interviewer emotions in the prediction of interview outcomes.

An additional consideration for future work is the examination of candidate reactions to interviews over time. Most individuals experience several employment interviews over the span of their careers. As a result, they are likely to become more adept at interviewing, and levels of interview anxiety, motivation, and perceptions of justice may fluctuate over time. Thus, candidate reactions may actually serve as precursors to the interview, such that candidates arrive at the interview with predetermined levels of anxiety, motivation, and perceptions of justice. However, research to date has either failed to consider changes over time or has positioned factors such as interview experience as a control variable (i.e., McCarthy et al., 2009). As highlighted by Ryan and Ployhart (2000), there reason to believe that examining the stability of candidate reactions over time will yield valuable findings. In fact, recent work by Schleicher, Van Iddekinge, Morgeson, and Campion (2010) supports this proposition in a test-taking context. Their study examined test-taking reactions and test score improvements over time and found that test-taking motivation was partially responsible for higher test score improvements among White as opposed to Black and Hispanic candidates. Conducting similar research in job interview contexts would be worthwhile. For
example, longitudinal research can consider conditions under which candidate reactions play a role with respect to changes to interview scores over time.

Finally, in line with the recommendations of Macan (2009), additional research examining the specific dimensions of interview anxiety would be extremely useful. Relatedly, training programs tailored to reduce each type of anxiety may prove valuable. Programs that focus on emotional intelligence are likely to be particularly useful with respect to the management of candidate anxiety.

**Candidate Recommendations**

As illustrated, we have made great strides in our understanding of the variables that can influence interviewer ratings of performance. More specifically, we now know that a wide range of candidate characteristics, candidate behaviors, and candidate reactions can have significant effects on interview scores. From the lens of job candidates, these findings underscore the importance of making a strong and lasting impression during the interview. This requires a number of steps, such as conducting research on the organization, planning one’s appearance, and practicing job interview behaviors. In line with our goal to bridge research and practice, we present a practical checklist that details specific steps that candidates can take to achieve their objectives. This checklist is based on theoretical and empirical research findings described in this chapter, and is presented in the Appendix.

Existing research also indicates that the level of interview structure, type of job, and candidate sincerity can reduce the potential biasing effects of candidate characteristics and behaviors. Thus when a candidate is attending an unstructured interview or applying for jobs that are not closely aligned with his or her personal characteristics (e.g., a female candidate applying for a masculine-linked job such as a police officer), they must be cognizant of the potentially biasing effects of demographics and behaviors on interview performance and work to counteract these effects. The best way this can be accomplished is by ensuring that the interview remains focused on the job candidates’ individuating information (e.g., Glick, Zion, & Nelson, 1988; McCarthy et al., 2010) or the KSAOs that are required of the job. In doing so, the interviewer is less likely to focus on or be distracted by personal characteristics and/or behaviors. Certainly the use of structured interviews is the best way to ensure that the interview will be centered on the relevant KSAOs for the job. However, candidates can also facilitate this process by conducting a comprehensive self-assessment in order to become familiar with their qualifications and personal interviewing style. The checklist provided in the Appendix details steps that can help keep the interview focused on individuating information.

Finally, our review of past work emphasized the importance of increasing candidate interviewing skills, reducing candidate anxiety, and increasing candidate perceptions of justice. Below, we outline specific techniques that can be used to accomplish each of these objectives.

**Improving Interview Skills**

The first strategy is to focus on improving candidates’ interview skills. In line with the research on impression management, the focus of skills training is to make candidates aware of their self-presentation tactics. This is typically accomplished through practice, tutoring, and coaching (Maurer & Solamon, 2006). Research on the effectiveness of these techniques is promising, with several studies demonstrating positive relations between interview skill training and interview performance (Latham & Budworth, 2006; Maurer, Solamon, Andrews, & Troxtel, 2001; Maurer, Solamon, & Troxtel, 1998; Tross & Maurer, 1999; see also Latham, Bardes & Locke, and Price & Vinokur, both from this volume).

In an interesting series of studies, Maurer and colleagues examined the effectiveness of an interview training program that was designed for police and firefighter candidates. The program contained several components, including the provision of information about types of job interviews, participation in role plays, and tips on how to prepare for job interviews. Findings across two separate studies indicated that individuals who voluntarily joined this coaching program demonstrated higher levels of interview performance than those who did not participate in the program (Maurer et al., 1998, 2001). Results also demonstrated that the organizationally based interview preparation strategies (e.g., participating in role plays) were more strongly related to subsequent interview performance than internally based interview preparation strategies (e.g., reading an interview training book).
(Maurer et al., 2001). Finally, candidates who were well organized and thoughtful (e.g., who had organized their answers in a chronological and logical manner) were more likely to exhibit high levels of interview performance. More recently, this program has been found to enhance the validity of the selection process (Maurer, Solamon, & Lippstreu, 2008).

The studies by Maurer and colleagues (Maurer et al., 1998, 2001, 2008) suggest that having practice vocalizing responses and practicing communication styles in simulated, or mock, interviews is more beneficial than simply reading about interviewing. This is in line with research by Caldwell and Burger (1998), who found that interviewees who used social sources to prepare for the interview (i.e., talking to people at the target company, talking to people in related jobs) were more likely to receive follow-up interviews and job offers. This probably happens because interviewees who experience interpersonal coaching are more likely to stay on target and offer relevant information to interviewers. Directing attention to relevant job knowledge and skills, in turn, provides a more accurate picture of candidate abilities and may increase the validity of the interview process.

There is also evidence that interview skills can be improved through training programs that teach candidates how to successfully manage impressions. Kristof-Brown, Barrick, and Franke (2002) found evidence that trained candidates were better at self-promotion during the interview and displayed stronger levels of nonverbal communication (e.g., eye contact, smiling). These behaviors, in turn, were positively related to interview outcomes. A note of caution is in order, however, in that it is important to be perceived as sincere as in managing impressions (Howard & Ferris, 1996). This can be accomplished by ensuring a match between action and words. Making a list of qualifications and abilities ahead of time is also advantageous, as it reduces the need to exaggerate qualifications.

Reducing Anxiety

The second strategy is to reduce the candidate’s level of anxiety. Self-efficacy training is likely to be particularly effective in this regard, as research supports the role of self-efficacy in the relationship between interview anxiety and subsequent interview performance (Leary & Atherton, 1986; Moynihan, Roehling, LePine, & Boswell, 2003; Stumpf, Brief, & Hartman, 1987). Moreover, research has found that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy are better able to cope with stressful situations at work, while individuals with low levels of self-efficacy are more likely to experience stress, leading to lower productivity (Maciejewski, Prigerson, & Mazure, 2000; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Drawing from clinical psychology, there are at least two interventions that may be particularly useful for reducing anxiety and increasing self-efficacy: verbal self-guidance (Meichenbaum, 1977), which emphasizes the use of functional self-talk as a means of increasing self-efficacy for subsequent tasks; and attributional retraining (Perry & Penner, 1990), which emphasizes the replacement of maladaptive attributions with adaptive ones in order to improve performance.

Verbal self-guidance (VSG) involves verbalizing one’s thought processes during the identification, problem-solving, and solution stages in dealing with a particular problem (Brown, 2003). Part of this is functional self-talk, or talking oneself through any challenge to effective performance (Meichenbaum, 1971, 1975, 1977). That is, negative or dysfunctional self-statements (e.g., “I am so anxious during an interview that I can’t think of what to say”) are modified to positive or functional self-statements (e.g., “I already know what I want to convey during the interview. I can focus on communicating this to the interviewer rather than focusing on my anxiety”). The training program contains three steps. First, trainees observe a trainer modeling effective self-statements that guide an individual towards completing the task causing the anxiety. Second, trainees are taught to overtly self-instruct. Third, trainees self-instruct covertly. Although the effectiveness of VSG training on interview anxiety has not been examined, VSG has been effectively used as a training tool in other areas (Brown, 2003; Latham, Bardes, & Locke, this volume; Latham & Budworth, 2006; Manning, White, & Daugherty, 1994; Martini & Polatajko, 1998).

Attributional retraining (AR) may also prove to be an effective strategy for helping candidates cope with interview anxiety. The foundation for AR is attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), which holds that the attributions people make for their successes or failures vary along three dimensions: internal/external, stable/unstable, controllable/uncontrollable. Attributing past failures to internal, stable and uncontrollable causes is maladaptive because these factors are viewed as unchangeable. AR teaches candidates how to adopt adaptive attributions for past failures. The focus is on helping candidates feel a sense of control over their environment and generating a
sense that future success is possible (Försterling, 1985). Given that anxious individuals often feel a lack of control over their environment (Chorpita & Barlow, 1998; Watson, 1967), this treatment may prove particularly advantageous. The beneficial effects of AR on a host of organizational outcomes have been demonstrated (Jackson, Hall, Rowe, & Daniels, 2009; Struthers, Colwill, & Perry, 2006).

There is also some evidence that AR is useful in job interview contexts. Jackson et al. (2009) examined the effectiveness of AR on a sample of cooperative education students completing job interviews. Participants in the AR training condition watched a videotape depicting two students discussing the importance of adopting positive and controllable attributions, and how this strategy actually helped them improve their interview performance. In the next section of the video, a female professor described attribution theory and how job interview success is related to the types of attributions people hold. Finally, participants in the training condition completed a writing assignment that required them to summarize and apply what they had learned to their upcoming interview. Participants in the control condition watched a videotape outlining the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication in interviews. Findings indicated that participants in the AR condition received higher levels of interview performance than participants in the control condition, particularly those who exhibited maladaptive baseline attributions. Future research should examine the mechanisms by which this treatment operates, such as lowering feelings of interview anxiety.

Increasing Justice Perceptions

Unlike interview skills training and anxiety reduction techniques, methods to increase justice perceptions lie solely in the hands of the organization. Gilliland’s (1993) procedural justice framework provide clear recommendations for how organizations can ensure the interview process is viewed as fair by candidates. Paramount among Gilliland’s recommendations are the following: (1) ensure the system is job-related; (2) give candidates the opportunity to perform; (3) give candidates the opportunity to challenge or modify the selection process; (4) ensure the content and procedure of the process is consistent across all candidates; (5) provide candidates with informative and timely feedback; (6) provide explanations and justification for the use of a procedure or a decision; (7) ensure that administrators are honest when communicating with candidates; (8) ensure that administrators treat candidates with warmth and respect; (9) support a two-way communication process; and (10) ensure that questions are legal and not discriminatory in nature. Bauer and colleagues (2001) have developed a comprehensive measure to assess Gilliland’s rules. Their instrument is extremely useful as a foundation for future research, and as an applied organizational instrument for assessing the relative fairness of selection practices.

A number of studies have examined whether the procedural rules outlined by Gilliland (1993) are related to perceptions of justice. In 2004, Hausknecht and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis and found strong evidence in support of Gilliland’s propositions. In particular, two recommendations that have consistently been found to be advantageous are the use of job-related, or face-valid, techniques, and the provision of explanations to candidates. The use of structured interviews is particularly useful in accomplishing these objectives, as items are derived from job-relevant KSAOs. This ensures that questions are specific to the job in question and reduces the potential for interviewers to touch on discriminatory issues. In turn, candidates are more motivated to take the interview seriously (Latham, Saari, Pursell, & Campion, 1980). Meta-analytic evidence also reveals that providing explanations about the job-relatedness of the selection process is positively related to candidates’ justice perceptions, perceived attractiveness of the hiring organization, test-taking motivation, and test performance (Truxillo et al., 2009). More recently, evidence has been found to suggest that tailoring explanations to candidates increase perceptions of justice (Krauss, Truxillo, Bauer, & Mack, 2010). Additional research examining justice interventions (Truxillo, Bauer, & Campion, 2009), and applying Gilliland’s framework to interview contexts is greatly needed.

Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of interview research from the perspective of job candidates. We examined how candidate characteristics, behaviors and reactions in particular have significant implications for a number of interview outcomes, most notably job interview performance. We used this research as a basis for putting forth a number of recommendations for practice, as described in the previous section, and detailed in the Appendix.
Notably, our “best practice” recommendations for candidates share considerable overlap with “best practice” recommendations for organizations. Specifically, Campion and Campion (1987) outlined a number of key recommendations for conducting properly structured interviews. As highlighted in Table 2, several of these recommendations parallel our best practices for candidates. This consistency is encouraging for candidates and organizations alike, as it suggests that properly conducted interviews can serve the best interest of both parties. Indeed, the ultimate goal of the job candidate is aligned with the ultimate goal of interviewers: to identify and discuss job-relevant knowledge and skills. To accomplish this, both candidate and interviewer must be well prepared. When the candidate is prepared, they will focus more on individuating information and provide more job-relevant information, making the interview more valid. By engaging in the “recommendations for practice” identified in the Appendix, the candidate will be able to show their “true self.” The interviewer must also be prepared. When the interviewer is more prepared, they will use structured techniques, making the interview more valid. Interviewers must ensure that the KSAOs for the job are clearly identified through the process of a job analysis. They should use properly structured questions with anchored rating scales. They must also be trained in job interview skills. Ultimately, this dual process of preparation from both the candidate and interviewer will result in job interviews that are beneficial for all parties involved.

In conclusion, job interviews serve both a recruiting and selection function (Rynes, 1989). From a recruiting perspective, they are designed to increase the candidate’s interest in the organization as a place to work. From a selection perspective, they are designed to predict which employee(s) will demonstrate successful performance on the job. As a result, considering interviews from the lens of both candidates and organizations is critical. This chapter adopted the candidates’ perspective and provided comprehensive coverage of the theory, research, and practical applications of job interviews. It is our hope that it stimulates future work in this important area and serves as a practical benchmark for both candidates and organizations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appearance anxiety</td>
<td>Feelings of nervousness or apprehension about one’s physical appearance in job interview situations. This includes both the unchangeable (e.g., height) and changeable (e.g., hairstyle) aspects of one’s appearance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication anxiety</td>
<td>Feelings of nervousness or apprehension about one’s verbal communication skills, nonverbal communication skills, and listening skills in job interview contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social anxiety</td>
<td>Feelings of nervousness or apprehension about one’s social behavior in job interview situations (e.g., correct handshake) resulting from a desire to be liked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral anxiety</td>
<td>Activation of the autonomic nervous system (e.g., fast heartbeat, shaky hands, perspiration) due to nervousness in job interview situations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance anxiety</td>
<td>Feelings of nervousness or apprehension about one’s level of performance in job interview situations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2 Structured Interview Recommendations for Interviewers and Job Candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations for Interviewers</th>
<th>Recommendations for Candidates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop interview based on job analysis to identify the knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAOs) that are relevant for the job. Use this to develop interview questions.</td>
<td>Conduct a personal assessment to identify the KSAOs that are relevant for the job. Use this to think about responses to interview questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use structured questions (situational, past behavioral).</td>
<td>Become familiar with structured interview questions and think of relevant examples that illustrate your KSAOs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anchor rating scales for scoring answers with examples and illustrations.</td>
<td>Practice answering interview questions using mock interviews. Make sure to include specific examples and provide vivid details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take detailed notes that can be examined after the interviews.</td>
<td>Take detailed mental notes about the job—the interview is a two-way process, you are also interviewing them!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use a panel interview to record and rate answers.</td>
<td>Focus attention on the entire panel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give special attention to job-relatedness and fairness.</td>
<td>Help make sure the interview stays on track and is job-relevant by ensuring that your answers don’t include irrelevant personal stories and information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide extensive interviewer training.</td>
<td>Take a training program that focuses on interviewing skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Job Candidate Checklist for Practice

Interviewing well is a skill and is not something that occurs automatically. To do well in an interview it is essential to be well prepared. Your goal is to separate yourself from others who have applied for the job by highlighting your individuating information—your skills, knowledge, and abilities. In turn, your individuating information should be targeted to the job for which you are applying.

Based on extant research, we have put together some guidelines to help with interview preparation. This process includes four key steps. It is essential to make sure that the interviewer has access to your individuating information. That is, ensure that you communicate the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you possess that are related to the job and differentiate you from other candidates. This can be accomplished by first conducting a self-assessment in order to familiarize yourself with your qualifications and your personal style. Second, target your individuating information to the specific job for which you are applying. A resource that is particularly useful in this regard is an online tool called the O*Net (http://www.onetonline.org/). O*Net is a free online database containing thousands of job descriptions. This step will enable you to think about times when you have used specific competencies related to the position in past experiences, and to prepare relevant stories that can be shared in the interview. Third, it is important to convey a positive impression. This involves planning your appearance, practicing your response strategy and preparing a list of questions to ask the job interviewer. Fourth, it is essential to practice job interview behaviors by engaging in mock interviews. The details of these steps are discussed below.

1. **Conduct a Self-Assessment**
Research indicates that biases will be reduced to the extent that interviewers have access to job-relevant information. It is essential that you convey this information to interviewers. In order to promote your attributes, you must first have a solid understanding of your strengths. The process of self-evaluation is very important, as you must make yourself stand out from other candidates. To take on the competition, you need to know how you measure up against other candidates. We recommend that you prepare lists of the following.

**Your Skills:** Write down the knowledge, skills, and abilities that will set you apart from other candidates. Try to look for those areas where you have obtained specialized knowledge that will meet the requirements of the position. Your knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAOs) may be evident within specific projects you may have completed from various jobs. Thus, it is important to identify these skills prior to the interview. Your preparation will come across, and you can be more confident in responding, minimizing the need for fumbling, mumbling, and hedging responses.

**Your Strengths and Weaknesses:** Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Be specific and list past experiences that demonstrate each point. For example, instead of identifying yourself as a team player, list specific examples where you demonstrated team skills (e.g., “When I was working for Alpha Corporation, my team was faced with the following challenge ... I was instrumental in solving this problem, as I ... ”). With respect to your weaknesses, ask yourself how you have learned from these setbacks along the way. This is critical, as your weaknesses may be uncovered during the course of the interview and the interviewer will want to see how you have learned from them.

2. **Conduct a Job Assessment**

Research indicates that one of the best ways to reduce biases among job interviewers and recruiters is to ensure that the interview remains focused on KSAOs that are required of the job. This can be accomplished by making sure that your unique characteristics, or your individuating information, is targeted to the job for which you are applying. By understanding the specific job requirements, you can match your KSAOs directly to the position in question. This will allow you to prepare stories that describe how you have used these competencies in the past.

Again, you may well find the O*Net useful here. It not only details the knowledge, skills, and abilities required of a wide variety of jobs but also provides comprehensive information about the specific tasks associated with the job, the tools and technology required for the job, and the work context for the job. It even provides the interests, work styles, and work values of the “typical” worker. By conducting a thorough job assessment, you can ensure that the information you provide in the job interview will be targeted to the requirements of the job.

3. **Manage Impressions**

Research indicates that impression management behaviors can have an influence on the outcome of job interviews. Keep the following considerations in mind:

**Be Punctual:** Arrive 10 to 15 minutes early for your interview—tardiness creates an impression that is difficult to erase. Giving yourself at least an extra 15 minutes will also allow you to compose yourself in the waiting room and go into the interview relaxed.

**Dress Conservatively:** Job interviews still follow a conservative standard. Regardless of whether you are male or female, a suit is the recommended choice of attire. In terms of color, conservative shades (e.g., navy blue, gray, or tan) are best, as they convey a professional appearance. Make sure your clothes are clean and unwrinkled or risk inferences of sloppiness. Also, remove irrelevant accessories such as hats, coats, boots, sunglasses, etc. before you go into the interview. Finally, keep jewelry and scents to a minimum.

**Be Polite to Everyone:** This includes the administrative assistant and receptionist out front—you would be surprised how much influence they may have in terms of the selection process!

**Use Formal Titles:** Address the interviewer by his or her formal title and make sure that you pronounce it correctly.

**Respect the Interviewers’ Space:** Recognize the boundaries of your personal space and that of others. North
Americans usually prefer a comfort zone of approximately 3 feet in interpersonal relationships. Be prepared not to move closer to someone who has a personal space limit smaller than your own.

**Use a Proper Handshake:** Use a firm handshake and make eye contact while shaking hands.

**Don’t Forget to Smile!** Smiling is an easy way to break the ice, convey a favorable impression, and have others empathize and warm up to you. Research has shown that interviewers give higher ratings to candidates who smiled and who were positive during the course of the interview.

**Maintain Eye Contact:** Lack of eye contact is often perceived negatively by job interviewers. Lack of eye contact is often associated with insincerity, a trait you do not want ascribed to you during the interview. Therefore practice maintaining eye contact while speaking and listening to others. Ask your friends to practice with you and give you feedback on how well you hold eye contact with them.

**Ensure Good Posture:** Height is not what is important; posture is. When you are standing, stand up straight. When you are seated, make sure you sit at the front edge of the chair. Don’t slouch—the interviewer may interpret this as disinterest rather than an attempt to appear relaxed.

**Watch your Gestures:** When you use gestures, make sure that they are natural and meaningful rather than stiff and planned. Your gestures should match the verbal content of your message so that you are perceived as sincere.

**Be Organized:** Be organized and thoughtful. Before answering questions, try to organize your responses in a chronological, logical, and easy to follow manner. This is likely to enhance the comprehensiveness of your responses and make it more likely that the interviewer accurately understands the message that you are trying to convey. It is acceptable to take a minute to gather your thoughts before you respond. A coherent response will go a long way.

**Remember to Listen:** Although it is important to convey your suitability for the job, it is also important to hear what the interviewers have to say. Remember, you are also collecting information about the position and are interviewing the organization, in a sense. Knowing when to speak and when to listen is also a skill and demonstrates your consideration for other people and shows respect.

### 4. Identify and Practice Behaviors

**Identify your Bad Habits:** As described, interviewers are strongly influenced by a candidate’s behaviors. It is therefore important to understand your verbal and nonverbal behavior patterns (or habits). Get to know your body language (e.g., eye contact, facial expressions, posture, gestures) by asking people who know you well to advise you on your nonverbal communication. For example, some individuals have a tendency to sit with their arms crossed over the chest. This behavior conveys disinterest, nervousness, and/or dislike and should be avoided in job interview situations. Other “bad habits” include playing with your hair, fidgeting with eyeglasses, and staring at the ceiling or floor.

**Conduct Mock Interviews:** Ask a friend or relative to give you a “mock” interview and give you feedback on your personal style. A practice, or mock, interview is an opportunity to try out your interviewing techniques and answers out loud. The benefits of using a mock interview as practice should not be overlooked. This will increase your awareness of any bad habits that you may have so that you can control them during the job interview. It also enables you to receive constructive feedback from someone who can help improve your interviewing style and presentation. Practice questions can be obtained from lists of frequently asked questions in self-help books. In preparing answers to these questions, include specific examples from your work experience and try to tailor answers for the specific position you are applying for. Try to paint a vivid picture for the interviewer so that she or he gets a strong sense of what you are trying to convey. During your mock interview, visualize yourself as confident and self-assured. Go over common questions until you can respond effortlessly. Relax, be clear, and be yourself. The practice will be well worth it—it will not only improve your interviewing skills but also help to increase your self-confidence.
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