DISPOSITIONAL AND SITUATIONAL PREDICTORS OF CONFIRMATORY BEHAVIOR IN THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on antecedents of individuals’ tendency to engage in less-than-rational decision-making that is based on the use of biases, heuristics, and other judgmental shortcuts. The context of this study is the interpersonal interaction between an interviewer and an interviewee that occurs during the employment interview. The study analyzes the interviewers’ propensity to use one specific type of heuristics – primacy effect – and to subsequently engage in higher or lower levels of confirmatory behaviors toward their interviewees. Confirmatory behaviors include interviewers’ behaviors, during the interpersonal interaction with the interviewees, intended to lead those interviewers to confirm their first impressions formed about the interviewees at the beginning of the interaction (i.e., employment interview). This study also explores the tendency of the interviewees to engage in behavioral confirmation toward their interviewers, by taking cues from their interviewers and matching or imitating the behaviors of their interviewers.

Results provide moderate support for the hypotheses: confirmatory behavior was found to be related to one specific motivational trait – need for cognition – and to the extremity of first impressions formed about interviewees. In addition, the analysis of the research question indicated that interviewees tend to engage in behavioral confirmation toward their interviewers. This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it opens a new direction in the employment interview research, which searches to identify links between individual characteristics and their decision-making strategies and outcomes. Practically, it helps improve interview training and design.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Interpersonal interaction is ubiquitous in organizational environments. Most of the time, the interacting organizational members formally or informally evaluate each other. Whether the evaluations are used for organizational purposes (i.e., the evaluation of a subordinate that is part of a performance appraisal) or for individual purposes (i.e., the management of interpersonal relationships within the organization), they have important consequences for individual and organizational outcomes, such as perceived justice, satisfaction, and performance.

Formal evaluations that are carried out for organizational purposes may be concluded in decisions regarding other people. As with most interpersonal decisions, these decisions tend to be complex and difficult. They may involve collections and analyses of large volumes of information, which can be perceived differently by various people. These decisions may also involve time pressure or other contextual characteristics that make decisions even more difficult. Finally, the individuals who are evaluated may filter information about themselves so as to increase the likelihood of favorable decisions.
Given this complexity and difficulty, some decisions for the purpose of formal evaluation that follow interpersonal interactions may be made by using less than rational decision-making approaches. One such approach consists of engaging in confirmatory behaviors. Confirmatory behaviors or “expectancy confirmation” behaviors (Dougherty, Turban, & Callender, 1994) consist of evaluators’ behaviors that are intended to confirm evaluators’ first impressions, such that final decisions are positively correlated with first impressions. In contrast, some evaluators may engage in low level of confirmatory behavior with the objective of challenging, verifying, and possibly falsifying first impressions, leading to final decisions that are negatively correlated with first impressions. When final decisions are uncorrelated with first impressions, it is likely that evaluators engage in confirmatory behaviors; instead, their behaviors toward the other individual may be considered as unbiased or, at least, not influenced by first impressions.

Assuming that not all decision-makers are equally predisposed toward using less-than-rational decision-making approaches, this research identified how likely employment interview decision-makers are to use confirmatory behavior, and what personal traits and situational factors predisposed them to use these behaviors. Currently, there is not much evidence that personal traits influence confirmatory behavior. Accordingly, this research examined two personality traits (conscientiousness and openness to experience), two motivational traits (need for cognition and need for cognitive closure), and two situational factors (time and first impressions) that were hypothesized to predispose decision-makers to engage in this behavior. More specifically, I focused on the direct and interactional effects of these dispositional and
situational variables on confirmatory behavior. During interpersonal interactions, behaviors of the individual who is evaluated may also confirm (i.e., engage in behavioral confirmation) first impressions of the evaluator. This study also sought to extend Dougherty et al.’s (1994) findings, which had suggested that first impressions formed by evaluators are correlated with behaviors of those being evaluated, as measured by these individuals’ communication style and rapport with (i.e., behavior toward) evaluators.

In this first chapter I review literature relevant to confirmatory behavior in interpersonal interactions and evaluations. First, in order to delineate its boundaries, I place this research in the larger context of the study of self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects. Next, I provide some theoretical background on rationality in interpersonal interactions, specifically evaluation and decision-making, emphasizing the limits of rationality and alternatives to rational decision-making. Then, I examine research that supports the usefulness of personality and motivational traits as predictors of confirmatory behavior. Finally, I review literature relevant to confirmatory behavior, as well as low level of confirmatory behavior, of evaluators and behavioral confirmation of individuals being evaluated during interpersonal interactions, such as the employment interview.

This study searched to assess the relationships between first impressions and behaviors during interpersonal interactions. The study focused on the degree to which evaluators engage in confirmatory behavior, and dispositional and contextual factors that stimulate them to engage in this behavior. From a practical perspective, this study was intended to shed additional light on the effectiveness and potential limitations of the
recruitment and selection processes. Despite apparent confidence that evaluators are generally able to identify individual strengths and weaknesses and accurately characterize other individuals, it seems that the post-hiring evaluations of these individuals are, in some cases, less favorable. For instance, in the 2004 Federal Human Capital Survey only 44% of the 150,000 respondents indicated that their work unit is able to “recruit people with the right skills.” According to the same report, only 31% of the respondents believed that personnel decisions in their work unit are based on merit, whereas the same percentage of the respondents believed that these decisions are not based on merit.

Context of the Study

*Self-fulfilling and Self-disconfirming Effects*

The analysis of confirmatory behavior can be placed in the larger context of the study of self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects during interpersonal interactions in organizations.

The original research in this area, carried out by Merton (1948), revealed a process that links the expectations of an evaluator, defined as strong beliefs that particular outcomes will occur, to the responses of the individual being evaluated. In this research, Merton (1948) introduced the term *self-fulfilling prophecies*, defined as prophecies that shift people’s behaviors in the predicted directions, and as a result, fulfill themselves. Merton (1948) also introduced the contrasting idea of *self-disconfirming prophecies* (for which he used the term “suicidal prophecies”), defined as prophecies that shift people’s
behaviors in directions contrary to the predicted directions, and as a result, do not fulfill themselves. Self-disconfirming prophecies have also been called “self-defeating prophecies” and “self-denying prophecies” (Hurley, 1997) and usually involve a negative prophecy to achieve a positive outcome. Since Merton’s (1948) original work, other researchers have substituted the word “effect” for “prophecy;” this is the terminology that I have used throughout this study.

The concept of self-fulfilling effects originally required that the initial expectations must be inaccurate. Recently, however, the concept has been expanded to include fulfillments of initial expectations, regardless of their truth – that is, fulfillments of both accurate and inaccurate expectations, or of both right and wrong perceptions (Ferraro, Pfeffer, & Sutton, 2005).

Self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects occur between the evaluator and the individual being evaluated. It is generally accepted that self-fulfilling effects arise when evaluators behave in accordance with their expectations, whereas self-disconfirming effects emerge when evaluators behave in a manner inconsistent with their expectations. Miller and Turnbull (1986) illustrated the distinction between self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects with a hypothetical case of dual interpersonal interaction in which one participant expects the other to be nervous. When this expectation leads one participant to act in an uncomfortable and nervous manner, the evaluated individual may be induced to act more anxiously than she/he might have otherwise, fulfilling the initial expectations. In contrast, when the initial expectation leads one participant to act in a solicitous and reassuring manner, the evaluated individual might be induced to act more
calmly than she/he might have otherwise, disconfirming the initial expectation. Hurley (1997) suggested that the difference between the two effects is that, unlike in self-fulfilling effects, in self-disconfirming effects the expectations are that the initial belief or prediction will not come true. In contrast, the self-fulfilling effects involve the expectation that predictions will fulfill.

This study focused mostly on the evaluator-related variables in self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects. However, these effects also involve the individual being evaluated, whom I referred to as the “evaluated individual.” The behavior of the evaluated individual plays an important role in carrying out a self-fulfilling or a self-disconfirming effect. The cycle of such an effect is completed when the evaluated individual acts in response to the evaluator’s behavior. According to Merton’s (1948) model, the behavior of the evaluated individual can fulfill the evaluator’s expectations in a process of behavioral confirmation; that is, the evaluator’s behaviors can elicit a behavioral confirmation (i.e., the expected behavior) from the evaluated individual. Therefore, evaluator’s expectations may lead to behaviors that can be confirmatory, which may further elicit behavioral confirmation from the evaluated individual, completing the cycle of self-fulfilling effects.

This comprehensive process of self-fulfilling effect has been documented in a number of studies. In a conceptual study, Merton (1948) described how the expectancy of war can lead to interactions that actually provoke war. He also argued that the self-fulfilling effect can explain social problems, ranging from discrimination to bank failures.
This effect has also been studied empirically. Kelley and Stahelski (1970) documented in a laboratory study of the prisoner’s dilemma game that the expectation that the evaluated individual is competitive leads most individuals to act competitively, which in turn increases competitiveness. Snyder, Tanke, and Berscheid (1977) studied get-acquainted conversations, in which self-fulfilling effects led to the confirmation of the expectation that physically attractive people have socially appealing characteristics, including friendliness, likeability, and sociability. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) identified self-fulfilling effects in a classroom context, where they found that teachers may be influenced by a Pygmalion effect, in which teacher expectations influence student achievement. Finally, Ferraro et al. (2005) suggested that the social science theories that are applied in organizations are likely to become self-fulfilling by shaping the management practices, norms, and expectations about behavior in those organizations.

Whereas the studies described in the previous paragraph mostly documented the self-fulfilling effects in non-organizational settings, several field studies identified these effects in organizations. For instance, in an employment interview study, Dipboye (1982) proposed that interviewers form impressions and expectations about their applicants, which subsequently shape the evaluations of those applicants. Building on this finding, Dougherty et al. (1994) found empirical support for the hypothesis that some interviewers rely on first impressions they formed regarding the applicants they interview and use confirmatory behavior toward those applicants, which is the central component of a self-fulfilling effect. In a laboratory study, Liden, Martin and Parsons (1993) found that the applicant’s behavior during the interview is influenced by the interviewer’s
nonverbal behavior. In particular, Liden et al.’s study (1993) sheds light on the damaging effect that an interviewer’s cold behavior has on the behavior of low self-esteem applicants, suggesting that self-fulfilling effects may be powerful and pervasive phenomena. Nevertheless, despite the previous empirical findings, a meta-analysis study conducted by Madon, Jussim, and Eccles (1997) failed to support this conclusion. This meta-analysis study found that expectations have small effects under non-laboratory conditions. However, Madon et al. (1997) further suggested that, under specific circumstances, the expectations may be more powerful than these small effect sizes. The identification of some of the conditions under which the individuals’ expectations are powerful, that represented the objective of this study, can be useful in advancing research in the area.

Researchers in the area of self-fulfilling effects (e.g., Miller & Turnbull, 1986) seem to agree that there is no empirical or logical justification for the assumption that an expectation is more likely to lead to self-fulfilling effects than to self-disconfirming effects. Despite this suggestion, my literature review has identified relatively few studies of self-disconfirming effects. One reason might be that the act of disconfirming expectations not only reduces the probability that the expected event will occur, but may be considered by evaluators as manipulative and ethically problematic (Hurley, 1997). Another motive may be that consistency rather than inconsistency is preferred by most people and, accordingly, most evaluators are more likely to behave in manners that are consistent with their expectations and impressions (i.e., exhibit confirmatory behaviors) than otherwise.
Despite the apparent scarcity of empirical findings in the area of self-disconfirming effects, the usefulness of understanding and managing these effects in organizational life has been implied by several researchers. For instance, Brockner (1988) found that individuals who received negative feedback often improved their performance, and Steele (1975) suggested that individuals tend to change their behavior in response to negative social evaluations so as to overcome a negative social label. Assuming that the negative feedback and evaluations in these studies were not expected and had disconfirmatory effects, these findings might be interpreted as arguments in support of evaluated individuals’ positive behavioral changes that emerge as a result of evaluators’ low level of confirmatory behaviors. Another empirical study of self-disconfirming effects (Diekmann, Tenbrunsel, & Galinsky, 2003) found, contrary to its hypotheses, that negotiators who expected to face a very competitive opponent became less competitive. More specifically, negotiators set lower reservation prices, made fewer demands, and agreed to lower negotiated outcomes. It may be argued that negotiators who expect to face a competitive opponent shift their behaviors in the direction opposite to their initial expectations and become more cooperative. An alternative explanation that is unrelated to the self-disconfirming effect might involve the balance of power between the negotiators or the negotiation strategies used.

As suggested by Brockner’s (1988) findings about the potential positive outcomes of negative feedback and low level of confirmatory behavior, the identification and understanding of self-disconfirming effects can be important in many managerial contexts. In a study of interpersonal relations among coworkers, Farina and Ring (1965)
found that individuals who believed that a coworker was mentally ill induced better performance from that coworker than did perceivers who believed that the coworker was normal. This intriguing finding suggests that those who believed that the coworker was not healthy may have acted according to a self-disconfirming effect. Despite their expectations, they might have behaved as if the coworker was healthy and treated him or her as an equal, disconfirming their initial expectations and, at the same time, showing more consideration and concern for the coworker. The implication for interpersonal relations in organizations is that managers may be able to positively influence the work behaviors of their subordinates through self-disconfirming effects. In the context of performance appraisal, Hurley (1997) suggested that the understanding of self-disconfirming effects may guide evaluators toward framing a negative performance review in a way that could lead to improved performance of the employee being evaluated.

It is likely that both self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects can be influenced by contextual factors and by the dispositions of the evaluators. The dispositions of the evaluated individuals may also influence the attainment of these effects. These ideas are supported by Hurley (1997), who found that the evaluated individual’s self-esteem influences the realization of self-disconfirming effects by moderating their reactions to an evaluator’s negative expectations. Her findings, which are consistent with the literature on threats to self-esteem, were inspired by Merton’s (1948) supposition that people who repeatedly hear that they are inferior are likely to try to disconfirm this evaluation. It might be that the evaluators’ dispositions and factors that characterize the interpersonal
interaction also influence the attainment and intensity of self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects. The identification of conditions under which the individuals’ expectations are powerful determinants of their subsequent behavior can be useful in advancing research in the area of self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects, as well as in related areas of interpersonal interaction research, such as selection, performance appraisal, and communication. This study aimed at identifying such conditions, specifically conditions related to the context of the evaluation and characteristics of the person who forms expectations (i.e., evaluator).

**Focus of the Study**

The results of this study suggest that some evaluators are more likely than others to engage in confirmatory behavior, depending on their dispositions and the context of the evaluation. The objective of this study was to identify dispositional and contextual factors that may account for the evaluators’ tendency to engage in confirmatory information-seeking behavior.

This study is placed in the larger context of self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects represented on the next page in the model pictured in Figure 1. According to this model, some evaluators are likely to form first impressions and initial expectations about the individuals they evaluate early in their interpersonal interactions. The more enduring and well-articulated the first impressions and expectations, the more likely they are to influence the evaluators’ behaviors. Thus, both the first impressions and initial expectations lead to certain behaviors. In addition, evaluators’ dispositions and
Intensity of first impression

Dispositions (openness, conscientiousness, need for cognition, need for cognitive closure)

Situational factors (time pressure, impressions)

Confirmatory behavior

Low level of confirmatory behavior

Behavioral confirmation

Behavioral disconfirmation

Behavioral disconfirmation

Behavioral confirmation

Other behaviors (e.g. diagnostic, rejection)

Perceptual interpretation

Evaluation consistent with first impressions: Self-fulfilling effect

Evaluation independent of first impressions: Neither self-fulfilling nor self-disconfirming effects

Evaluation inconsistent with first impressions: Self-disconfirming effect

EVALUATOR

EVALUATED INDIVIDUAL

OUTCOME
evaluation context are likely to influence evaluators’ behaviors toward the evaluated individual (link 1). It is likely that contextual factors, evaluators’ dispositions, and first impressions all contribute not only to the evaluators’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior, but also to their tendency to engage in other behaviors (link 2). These behaviors may include low level of confirmatory behavior (that is defined, in opposition to confirmatory behavior, as behavior that is aimed at disconfirming first impressions), as well as the perceptual interpretation of the received information. However, the low level of confirmatory behavior and perceptual interpretation, which may include selective recall and interpretation of the evaluated individual’s behavior, were only acknowledged in the model; they were not the topic of this study. In sum, the context and evaluators’ dispositions, as well as the perceptual interpretation of the received information, may influence evaluators’ behaviors.

The model from Figure 1 further suggests that the evaluators’ behaviors are likely to influence the behaviors of the individuals they evaluate. During an interpersonal interaction, the evaluated individual may behave in accord with his/her perception of the cues in the evaluator’s behavior, a response referred to by Drigotas, Rusbult, Wieselquist, and Whitton (1999) as behavioral confirmation (the upper and lower links labeled 3). Alternatively, the evaluated individual may behave in disagreement with the perceived cues in the evaluator’s behavior, in an attempt to disconfirm them, a response referred to as behavioral disconfirmation (the middle two links labeled 3). Behavioral disconfirmation, which leads to behaviors that disconfirm the evaluator’s first impressions, may disrupt the manifestation of self-fulfilling effects.

Therefore, the evaluated individual may, consequently, engage in either behavioral confirmation or behavioral disconfirmation. When experiencing behavioral confirmation from their evaluated individuals, the evaluators may produce evaluation outcomes that are similar to
their first impressions, completing the cycle of the self-fulfilling effect (link 4) from Figure 1. Meanwhile, evaluators’ low levels of confirmatory behavior may lead to evaluation outcomes that are inconsistent with the evaluators’ first impressions, completing the cycle of a self-disconfirming effect (link 5).

This study focused on four dispositional and two contextual characteristics that may predispose evaluators to engage in the confirmation of their first impressions during the interactions with evaluated individuals (links 1 and 2). In addition, this study attempted to extend Dougherty et al.’s (1994) findings that linked first impressions and evaluated individuals’ behavioral confirmation (link 3).

Rationality in Interpersonal Evaluation and Decision-Making

**Rational decision-making**

Most people likely make formal and work-related decisions regarding other individuals in their organization on a regular basis. For example, formal performance appraisal and systematic selection processes are a reality in almost all work organizations today. At least some of these decisions are based on interpersonal evaluations that take into account outcome criteria such as work performance and behaviors. Some of these criteria are objective and verifiable; examples include results-oriented performance measures such as dollars of sales and reduction in customer complaints. These criteria have strong intuitive appeal as objective measures of work activities.

However, it is difficult if not impossible to quantify all the outcomes of an individual’s work activities. For instance, it is unlikely that a manager can quantify, over long periods of time, counterproductive work behaviors such as delinquency (Hough, 1992), or consistently and
accurately predict job related attitudes of his/her employees. Accurate prediction is difficult because of the concurrent influence of the characteristics of evaluated individual (e.g., the use of deceptive impression management tactics), evaluator (e.g., subjective perceptions and rationalizations, the use of inaccurate lay theories), and the context of the evaluation (e.g., time concerns, cognitive load). Therefore, in addition to objective and verifiable criteria, subjective criteria may be used in interpersonal evaluation. The use of subjective criteria may suggest that some interpersonal evaluations are not necessarily the result of rational decision-making.

It is likely that evaluators use subjective evaluation criteria and less rational decision-making under conditions of uncertainty, when the outcomes of a significant number of an evaluated individual’s activities cannot be assessed with high accuracy. As a result, evaluators may disregard assumptions about rationality. According to the rationality literature (e.g., Shafir & LeBoeuf, 2002), the term rational has a more technical meaning than its general dictionary definition of agreeable to reason and of sound mind. Specifically, this term refers to consistency and conformity with normative criteria. Most of the research in the rationality area suggests that some failures of rationality are attributable to the specific ways in which people process information and make decisions, rather than to the computational, time, memory, and attention limitations of the human mind (Shafir & LeBoeuf, 2002). Often, failures of rationality may happen in the context of interpersonal interaction and evaluation, where the evaluators’ perceptions may affect their rationality, defined as conformity with some type of normative criteria (Shafir & LeBoeuf, 2002) pre-established by evaluators and, consequently, influence the decision. Moreover, the evaluators may use less rational decision-making during interpersonal evaluations of non-acquaintances and when they process large amounts and less quantifiable information, as is likely to happen in the employment interview.
Failures of rationality like those just described may be attributed to the use of inadequate information-processing and decision-making strategies. However, the identification of an absolute way of assessing the adequacy of a strategy across time, persons, situations, or cultures is unlikely. Therefore, the estimation of the decision’s rationality in these contexts tends to be subjective, context-dependent, and influenced by the impressions and expectations of people involved. Thus, what is considered as rational by one evaluator may be considered as less rational by another evaluator who uses a different criterion. For example, estimation of the rationality of decisions regarding placement of machinery on a plant floor is likely to be based on well-defined norms. In an interpersonal context, however, the rationality of a decision tends to be estimated in accord with the norms and expectations of the different evaluators. In sum, an estimation of rationality may be idiosyncratic. It might be that alternatives to rationality can better serve the objective of assessing, predicting, and evaluating.

Moreover, the rationality of decision-making is not necessarily an objective in itself. Within a pragmatic approach dictated by efficiency and utility concerns, rationality might be better considered as a means toward the final objective of making an accurate decision, rather than as an end in itself. Whether a decision is regarded as rational or not might be considered of secondary importance, as long as the methods, norms, and motivations guiding the decision-making prove optimal. Likewise, in the context of interpersonal evaluation, the decisions made using less than rational decision-making are not necessarily inaccurate and might have some merits.

Indeed, some researchers (e.g., Rynes, Gerhart, & Parks, 2005) have identified a number of potential advantages of less rational decision-making models in the context of interpersonal evaluation. Rynes et al. (2005) observed that evaluations that are based on subjective and less-
verifiable criteria may be more adequate than evaluations made using objective criteria, as indicators of the full range of expected performance. Rynes et al. (2005) defended their opinion that subjective and less-verifiable criteria may be more adequate for evaluation under certain conditions than objective criteria, by arguing that the former carry less risk of measurement deficiency. In this case, measurement deficiency is defined as an exclusive focus on a limited set of criteria, usually explicitly measured and objective criteria. Unlike objective criteria, the subjective and less-verifiable criteria are more holistic and, accordingly, less affected by the possibility that an evaluator would not see the forest because of the trees; that is, an evaluator who uses subjective criteria is less likely to focus too much on narrow objective criteria at the expense of a comprehensive evaluation.

*Limitations and Alternatives to Rationality*

The decision-making literature shows clearly that those decisions that are based on objective and verifiable criteria and rational models have uncontestable advantages: such decisions are controllable, can be objectively explained and defended, and usually allow for the selection of the best alternative in decision-making. Nevertheless, rationality requires complete knowledge, extensive analytical and processing capabilities, and anticipation of the consequences that will follow each choice (Simon, 1997). The breadth of these requirements makes the use of rational decision models less convenient (e.g., most decision-makers have limited, rather than unlimited, analytical resources). Derived from the assumption that decision-makers have limited analytical resources, Simon introduced the concept of *bounded rationality*, as an alternative to the concept of rationality. According to the *bounded rationality* idea, certain
characteristics of decision-makers, including their knowledge and habits, may limit rational decision-making, especially with regard to the analysis of alternatives to a decision.

Consistent with the bounded rationality view, the theorists of the Carnegie School have argued that complex decisions are largely the outcome of behavioral factors rather than the outcomes of rational decision models (Cyert & March, 1992). In a similar vein, Simon (1957) used the term satisficing to refer to the sub-optimal behaviors of decision-makers, characterized by a tendency to identify a course of action (e.g., make a decision) that is satisfactory or good enough, but not necessarily optimal. People who are satisficing tend to simplify decision-making by reducing the amount of information that is regarded as relevant for the decision and by considering a limited number of criteria.

Daft and Weick (1984) have further exposed the limited applicability of the rational models of decision-making and revealed alternatives to these models. They observed that most organizational decisions may be influenced by programmed responses to routine problems. Similarly, the image theory (Beach, 1998) suggests that, in an evaluation context, people use intuition and affect to determine whether the object of their evaluation is compatible with a prototype or an image. According to the image theory, judgments regarding compatibility are based on how many and how important are the violations that occur when the object of the evaluation is evaluated with regard to a limited set of relevant standards. Furthermore, Hitt and Barr (1989) found that managers, when making decisions, tend to combine both relevant cues (e.g., experience, education) and less relevant cues in complex and nonlinear ways. In addition, consistent with the concepts of satisficing and bounded rationality, Langston and Sykes (1997) questioned the idea that individuals fully attend to all the information available and rigorously evaluate each situation.
Finally, flaws in the rationality assumption have been documented by the research on *judgmental heuristics* and *biases* initiated by Kahneman and Tversky (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) and *behavioral decision theory*. The findings of the judgmental heuristics and biases research, which is based on experimental studies (e.g., asking decision-makers to describe their thoughts as they decide, or simply observing them during decision-making) support the idea that most problem solving revolves around the use of heuristics. Heuristics (e.g., first impressions, repetitive or more accessible information, mood, priming) are iterative, “rule-of-thumb,” informal, or experience-based methods of solving those problems for which no formula exists. Clore, Wyer, Dienes, Gasper, Gohm, and Isbell (2001) suggested that, as opposed to systematic information processing, information processing based on heuristics is most likely to be used when evaluators do not have detailed knowledge about a domain of judgment (i.e., evaluated individual) and evaluated individuals are simple or highly typical. Consistent with these findings of the judgmental heuristics and biases research, behavioral decision theory suggests that people use shortcuts when processing information and rely on inherent preferences that can be different from those assumed in rational decision-making models (Gowda, 1999). Nevertheless, despite their potentially harmful effect on the accuracy of decisions, both heuristics and intuition can occasionally be effective.

The reviewed theoretical perspectives and empirical findings on alternatives to rational decision-making seem to suggest that some decision-makers follow less-than-rational approaches. These decision-makers may use decision rules that are designed to simplify the selection of an alternative and can serve as judgmental shortcuts. It might be that these decision-makers rely on their perceptions and interpretations of those cues that are the most available (e.g., demographic and physical data) or considered to be helpful (e.g., a positive association
between the work ethic and the pace of speaking) in reaching accurate decisions. Arguably, the tendency to use cues and judgmental shortcuts is likely to occur whenever the data required for making a decision is not directly observable or indicators of these data are imperfect. It is likely that the tendency to limit one’s search for alternatives and use judgmental shortcuts is even more apparent in situations of subjectivity and uncertainty, such as the interpersonal evaluation and decision-making.

In conclusion, the reviewed theoretical approaches seem to support the idea that decision-makers, under certain circumstances, are sympathetic toward using heuristics, biases, and other judgmental shortcuts, with the objective of reducing the cognitive load or length of the decision-making. The identification of circumstances under which some decision-makers may use heuristics and biases can shed additional light on the decision-making process, including decision-making in the employment interview, and is the topic of this study. In the rest of this study, I used the term *heuristics*, which may have either a positive or a negative connotation, instead of the term *bias*, which usually has a negative connotation. By making this convention, I imply that the use of the heuristics does not necessarily lead to inaccurate decisions and should, therefore, not be disregarded without further analysis.

*Impressional Primacy in Interpersonal Evaluation*

As suggested by judgmental heuristics research, the heuristic paradigm implies that some decision-makers may deviate from the standards of rational reasoning. Accordingly, they may use heuristics, including the availability, representativeness, and anchoring and adjustment heuristics. The first heuristic, the *availability heuristic*, specifies that the repetition or accessibility of information can generate persuasion effects (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). In an
interpersonal evaluation, the evaluator who relies on availability heuristics may use information that is readily available from memory to make judgments regarding an evaluated individual, even when that information is incomplete or inaccurate. According to the second heuristic, the *representativeness heuristic*, people may make faulty generalizations from a small sample or single event (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). For instance, an evaluator may characterize the evaluated individual based on experiences with, or characteristics of, another person who is perceived to be similar, or based on the archetype of an ideal person. Finally, the *anchoring and adjustment heuristics* include the tendency to make the final decision based on an initial decision that has been less elaborated or analyzed and is potentially wrong, without adequate consideration of the information received after the initial decision was made.

Most relevant for this study is a heuristic that is similar to those just described. This heuristic, the *impressional primacy effect*, was identified by researchers in the area of social cognition (e.g., Asch, 1946; Farr & York, 1975; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). Asch (1946) observed that it is hard to forget our view (i.e., impression) of a person once it has formed, and that impressions grow with great ease and rapidity. Evaluators who use this heuristic tend to reduce the lengthy process of gathering and analyzing information by relying on their first impressions about the evaluated individual. Asch (1946) stated that first impressions may be imperfect but still reasonably accurate, and suggested that people who hold strong opinions tend to fall prey to their first impressions to a higher degree than people who do not. During the gathering and processing of information about the evaluated individual, these people tend to examine relevant empirical evidence in a biased manner. According to Lord, Ross, and Lepper (1979), people who are influenced by the impressional primacy effect tend to gather undue support for their first impressions by accepting the confirming evidence at face value, while
subjecting the disconfirming evidence to a critical evaluation. Evaluators who fall prey to the impressional primacy heuristic may consider information contained in their first impression as more important than the additional information that is gathered subsequently and, accordingly, give it more weight during decision-making. Moreover, additional information that is consistent with first impressions may be considered more important than inconsistent additional information.

The impressional primacy heuristic is particularly relevant to this study. With regard to this heuristic, Lord et al. (1979) suggested that some individuals may form an early impression and opt for an initial decision based on their assumptions, impressions, or preconceptions. Subsequently, the selection of an alternative and the final decision are influenced by this initial choice. Individuals who use the impressional primacy heuristic tend to accept without further review the arguments that are compatible with their initial choice, but to carefully scrutinize the incompatible arguments. Interestingly, Edwards and Smith (1996) suggested that the use of the impressional primacy effect is independent of the level of knowledge about the decision topic.

Two literature streams that are related to the processes described above are the experimental psychology literature on the salience bias (e.g., Tversky & Kahneman, 1974) and the management and psychology literature on the confirmatory bias. These literatures suggest that individuals who fall prey to the impressional primacy effect tend to interpret observed evidence about a person in accord with their beliefs and the information accumulated early in the interpersonal interaction. This research seems to indicate that, during interpersonal evaluations, the initial information may shape the ways in which the evaluators purposefully seek information and make decisions about their evaluated individuals. The initial information has been shown to guide the use of the behavioral information during the rest of the decision-making (Lingle &
Ostrom, 1979; Wyer, Srull, & Gordon., 1984). In this regard, Lingle and Ostrom (1979) suggested that the initial judgments made about a person at the beginning of an interpersonal interaction are more likely than concrete information actually gathered during the interaction, to be used in the subsequent judgment and evaluation of that person. In the same vein, Higgins and McCann (1984) suggested that most individuals making memory-based judgments, who most likely fit the profile of evaluators, tend to recall and use their initial decision, rather than the specific behaviors of the person they observed.

To summarize, evaluators who fall prey to subjective criteria and less rational decision-making models may use cues that signal the likely past and future behaviors of the individuals they evaluate. Some of the most used cues are: prior beliefs with which evaluators began their interpersonal interactions; first impressions formed early during interactions; and initial expectations, based on first impressions, about the actions of the interaction partner. Both conceptual work and empirical research (e.g., Snyder & Stukas, 1999) suggests that these initial indicators regarding the evaluated individual can channel the evaluators’ thoughts and behaviors during interpersonal interactions. Moreover, these cues may influence the evaluators’ behaviors even before the evaluators have a chance to provide a reason for their choice of cues. Consistent with this view, the categorization theory (Rosch, 1978) posits that people tend to use symbolic knowledge structures in order to make sense of the environment. Conceptually, it might be that the expectations play the role of the symbolic knowledge structures. As with other knowledge structures, expectations may assist perceivers in making sense of their surroundings (Weick, 1995) and generate adaptive behavioral responses (Newell, Rosenbloom, & Laird, 1989).

As the previous studies suggest, an evaluator who relies on first impressions may exhibit confirmatory behavior during an interpersonal interaction. It might be that such an evaluator
adjusts her/his behavior during the interaction so as to be more likely to reach a final decision that coincides with first impressions. It is likely that such an evaluator seeks information that confirms, and overlooks information that disconfirms, his/her first impressions, and shows more consideration to those evaluated individuals who were initially perceived favorably.

In conclusion, some evaluators may use heuristics with the objective of simplifying the analysis of information about evaluated individuals during interpersonal interactions. One way of simplifying decision-making consists of relying on the information gathered early in the interaction. Also, evaluators may adhere to an initial decision that is consistent with the first impressions they formed. Later on, during the actual evaluation, the initial decision may remain unaffected by additional information and analysis. In the end, this approach may potentially lead to a final decision that is similar to the initial one.

Personality and Behavior in Interpersonal Interactions

*Personality Traits as Predictors of Behavior*

The importance of personality traits in describing and predicting individual behavior has been a debated controversy in the psychology and management literatures. This controversy has focused on whether individual traits that are relatively invariant across situations and over time exist or not, and on the role of these traits as antecedents of behavior. One side in this controversy minimizes the role of personality; it is represented by the *situationism* perspective and is exemplified by the work on social information processing (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1977). This research suggests that people adapt their current behaviors to the social context and use their perception of the effects of past behaviors as a guideline for current behaviors.
Situationism research suggests that cross-situational variability, rather than consistency, is the norm in individual behavior. In support of this view, Davis-Blake and Pfeffer (1989) argued that the truly important determinants of individual behavior in organizations are situational in nature.

The other side of the controversy is represented by the dispositionism perspective, which has supported the view that behavior is controlled in significant ways by traits (McCrae & Costa, 1999). Unlike situationists, dispositionists have provided considerable evidence in support of the cross-situational consistency of behavior (e.g., Langston & Sykes (1997). In line with the evidence supporting the cross-situational consistency of behavior, Mischel and Shoda (1999) suggested that each individual has a stable pattern of disposition-related behaviors across different situations. During the past several years, the dispositionist view has been sustained by a number of meta-analyses that found support for the importance of personality in understanding and predicting organizational behavior (e.g., Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001; Dormann & Zapf, 2001; Kanfer, Wanberg, & Kantrowitz, 2001; Stewart & Roth, 2001). For example, Barrick and his collaborators (1991, 2001) found that conscientiousness is the most consistent predictor of job performance, predicting across different types of performance criteria and occupational groups, while extraversion and openness to experience predict training proficiency. A meta-analysis by Kanfer et al. (2001) examined the relationship between personality and self-regulation in job search, finding that self-regulation is more strongly related to positive than to negative affective variables.

A third stream of research apparently reconciles the two opposing sides in the controversy regarding the importance of the personality traits, suggesting that both personality and situational constructs are important for understanding behavior (e.g., Miner, 2002). In support of the importance of personality constructs, George (1992) emphasized that an
individual’s enduring predisposition to behave in a certain manner is unlikely to be consistently neutralized by organizational membership, behaviors of others toward that individual, or other contextual factors. Nevertheless, George (1992) suggested that important situational influences on behavior cannot be ignored. Her point is consistent with the interactionist perspective on the effect of personality traits. The interactionist perspective takes a dual, person x context approach, suggesting that factors related to both the individual (e.g., personality traits) and the context combine to influence behavior (Magnusson, 1990).

According to the interactionist view, individual behavior is conceptualized as a continuous and multi-directional interaction between individuals who possess distinct traits and situations they encounter (Endler & Magnuson, 1976). The effect on behavior is conceptualized as an interaction between the two distinct sources of variability – personality and situation – each with its own underlying principle. Using a comparison from engineering, Higgins (2000) matched up this effect to the interactive effect of the nature of a material and situational stress on its elasticity. Consistent with the interactionist research, Bandura’s (1999) social-cognitive model explains behavior in terms of a three-component reciprocal causation. According to this model, individual factors, behavioral patterns, and contextual characteristics all interact to explain human behavior. Interactionism tends to be the prevailing research view today.

A consequence of the dispositionism-situationism-interactionism controversy and an assumption made in this study is that personality can predict individual behavior. As implied by the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), personality can influence behavior either directly or indirectly, by affecting attitudes or moderating the relationship between attitudes and behaviors. According to the theory of reasoned action, individual attitudes and social norms determine behavioral intentions, which influence overt behaviors. Similarly, in the context of
interpersonal interactions, evaluators’ attitudes toward evaluated individuals and overt behaviors during interactions are likely to be influenced by their first impressions. Using the template of the theory of reasoned action, Miller and Grush (1986) demonstrated that the attitude-behavior relationship is stronger for individuals high in private self-consciousness and low in self-monitoring. Their findings suggest that the individuals characterized by high attitude-behavior correspondence are those who are both aware of their own first impressions and attitudes, and innocent with regard to the image they portray in the eyes of others. It might be that these individuals are more likely to engage in confirmatory than in low level of confirmatory behavior.

In the next section, I identify arguments in support of the view that personality is related to the tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior. Recognizing its limited predictive power, personality traits were measured and described in this study along a more-versus-less continuum, rather than as comprehensive descriptors of people. In addition, personality, behavior, and personality-behavior relationships were analyzed with reference to a specific setting – the employment interview. In this setting, personality traits can be linked to interviewers’ first impressions of applicants and the use of confirmatory behavior during the interaction with applicants.

Link between Personality and Confirmatory Behavior

With very few exceptions (e.g., Dipboye, 1982; Kilduff & Day, 1994), the effect of personality and personality-related variables on evaluators’ behaviors during interpersonal interactions has not been studied. Despite this apparent scarcity of research, there is some evidence that an evaluator’s personality may be related to the probability of engaging in confirmatory behavior toward other individuals. Personality may lead directly to the tendency to
engage in confirmatory behavior, and may also interact with situational factors to influence behavior.

Based on the literature reviewed, very few personality-related variables have been studied in relation to evaluation and decision-making during interpersonal interactions. One trait, self-monitoring, refers to the degree to which people observe, regulate, and control how well they fulfill their role’s social expectations (Snyder, 1987). An implication of self-monitoring research is that self-monitoring is likely to be positively correlated with the tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior toward the evaluated individuals. Studying the impact of the evaluators’ personality, Jawahar (2001) found that self-monitoring influenced evaluations and decision accuracy, such that accuracy declined with increasing levels of self-monitoring. Low self-monitoring evaluators may persist in being themselves (i.e., behave toward the evaluated individuals as they usually behave in most interpersonal interactions) despite social expectations (Kilduff & Day, 1994) and, accordingly, engage in more confirmatory behavior.

The second variable that has been studied in the context of the evaluator’s behavior during an interaction is social competence, a construct that includes personality traits. Dipboye (1992) suggested that social competence affects evaluators’ behaviors during interpersonal interactions. In the context of the employment interview, Dipboye (1992) also proposed that other personal characteristics, such as flexibility, as opposed to rigidity, may influence the manner in which the interaction is conducted. Finally, self-efficacy may be indirectly related to an evaluator’s behavior during an interpersonal interaction. In a study of information-seeking effectiveness, Brown, Ganesan, and Challagalla (2001) found that self-efficacy is associated with the effective seeking, integration, and use of information, leading to increased performance as measured by the extent to which the subjects met their work objectives.
In addition to drawing a link between evaluators’ personality and their behavior during interpersonal interactions, the previous research findings seem to suggest that evaluators’ personality traits, as well as situational factors, influence the impressions they form early during interpersonal interactions. It might be that the impressions formed about an evaluated individual, together with personality and situational factors, contribute to promoting confirmatory behavior. This view is supported by Higgins and King (1981), who concluded that most evaluators tend to develop habitual expectations. Other research findings suggest that self-certainty about an individual’s traits may encourage that individual to identify those same traits in other people (Sedikides & Skowronski, 1993). Thus, self-certainty may encourage evaluators to preferentially evaluate the individuals they evaluate with regard to those traits.

Not only may some evaluators have a tendency toward evaluating and forming expectations with regard to certain traits, but, as suggested by Higgins (1989), individual and contextual features may automatically activate expectations and make them more accessible to those evaluators. One implication of these findings is that for each evaluator, some expectations and impressions about the evaluated individual are more likely to be formed than others. Moreover, these expectations and impressions, most probably formed early during interpersonal interactions, are often maintained throughout the course of the interaction (Snyder 1992). They can have a lasting influence during the interpersonal interaction and contribute, independently or in interdependence with other situational and personality factors, to the promotion of the evaluators’ confirmatory behavior.

Whether they are strong or weak, positive or negative, preconceived-and-rigid or easy-to-change, automatic or overt, first impressions formed early in an interaction may influence the evaluators’ subsequent behaviors. Given the previous literature, it appears that the evaluators’
behaviors may be influenced both effortlessly, by the activation of automatic expectations, and consciously, by the activation of overt expectations. Skowronski, Carlston, and Isham (1993) made a distinction between these two types of influences that may be relevant for the evaluators’ behaviors during interpersonal interactions. They found that automatically activated expectations, rather than overt expectations, lead to greater attention to expectation-congruent information, and that overt expectations lead to greater attention to expectation-incongruent information. It is possible that preferential attention to expectation-congruent information may lead to confirmatory behavior, whereas preferential attention to expectation-incongruent information may encourage low level of confirmatory behavior. Therefore, evaluators who become aware of their expectations early in interpersonal interactions may engage in low level of confirmatory behavior. In conclusion, research has indicated that the evaluators’ personality traits can influence the likelihood that they will engage in confirmatory behavior during interpersonal interactions.

Five Factor Model of Personality

The five factor model (Goldberg, 1993) has been widely accepted as a comprehensive taxonomy of personality variables. Despite concerns expressed by some researchers (e.g., Block, 1995), who claimed that this model was developed based on dictionary-based trait identification and, as such, is atheoretical, the big five has been in the last decade the most commonly used framework for organizing personality traits in management research (Ryan & Sackett, 1998). Based on this research, it appears that broad personality measures using the big five traits provide the best framework for personality measurement. Indeed, some researchers attributed to the five factor model the resurrection of the study of personality after a period of unpopularity
Numerous meta-analyses (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991) confirmed the assessment that the big five model is adequate for personality assessment.

The big five model (McCrae & Costa, 1999) organizes the entire spectrum of personality traits into five comprehensive categories: extraversion, agreeableness, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and openness to experience. *Extraversion* or *surgency* includes qualities such as talkativeness, assertiveness, energy, enthusiasm, sociability, positive emotionality, and confident self-expression. *Agreeableness* refers to being good-natured, cooperative, trustful, social adaptable, altruistic, modest, tender-minded, and likeable. *Neuroticism*, which is sometime labeled by its opposite pole, *emotional stability*, includes restlessness (versus calmness), depression, and proneness to negative emotions, such as hostility, anxiety (versus ego strength), sadness, and tension.

The last two of the big five factors, conscientiousness and openness to experience, are further discussed in Chapter 2 of this study. *Conscientiousness* includes orderliness, responsibility, dependability, will to achieve, constraint, and “socially prescribed impulse control facilitating task- and goal-directed behavior (such as thinking before acting, delaying gratification, following norms and rules, planning, organizing, and prioritizing tasks)” (John & Srivastava, 1999, p.121). Finally, *openness to experience* describes the breadth, depth, originality, and complexity of an individual’s mental and experiential life; it includes sub-factors such as intellectuality, imagination, originality, and intelligence (versus closed-mindedness).

Traits from the five-factor model have been studied in the context of the influence that evaluators may have over evaluation outcomes. For example, Lazar, Kravetz, and Zinger (2004) found that extraverted evaluators tend to give positive ratings to high self-monitoring candidates, whereas introverted evaluators tend to give those same candidates negative ratings. Moreover,
Bernardin, Cooke, and Villanova (2000) suggested that the more agreeable and less conscientious evaluators tend to provide elevated ratings of their evaluated individuals. This study searched to expand the body of work on the five factor model by developing a process model that relates two of these factors – conscientiousness and openness to experience – to confirmatory behavior. Conscientiousness and openness to experience have been consistently related to work behavior in previous research and appear to have the most direct applications to the context of decision-making in interpersonal interactions.

Motivation and Link to Confirmatory Behavior

Importance of Motives during the Interpersonal Evaluation

With reference to the work environment, motivation has been defined as the process that accounts for an individual’s intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining goals (Pinder, 1998). The three key components of motivation are intensity, persistence or duration, and direction. While the effect of the first two components is more obvious, in that they are simply concerned with how hard and how long people try to accomplish a certain objective, the direction of motivation can be quite varied. Indeed, there are as many potential directions for an individual’s motivationally-driven action and behavior as there are needs, wants, desires, and motives. In this study, I examined one direction in which evaluators may channel their efforts when they evaluate other individuals, which is the evaluators’ confirmation of first impressions, by searching and processing information that is consistent with these impressions and overlooking inconsistent information (i.e., evaluators’ confirmatory behaviors).
Motivation and its work outcomes are influenced by the direction component, in addition to intensity and persistence. When its direction is known and controlled for, motivation is likely one of the most important predictors of behavior in most human encounters. In support of such a suggestion, Snyder (1993) showed that the nature of the individuals’ motives for volunteerism is closely related to the type of volunteer role they pursue. Specifically, Snyder (1993) found that providing direct help and supporting others is the most attractive volunteer role for individuals who are motivated by social motives. This study also found that individuals who strive for self-recognition tend to take on a supervisory role to meet their needs, while still helping others in a volunteer context.

Interpersonal evaluation can be influenced by the motivation of the individuals involved. Evaluated individuals are likely to have one main motive: to present themselves in the best possible light in order to increase the chances to be favorably evaluated. In contrast, evaluators may be driven by multiple motivations. We can assume that every evaluator is motivated by the desire to make accurate evaluations. For some evaluators, this may be the only motive. However, other evaluators, in different circumstances, may have additional motives, each of which stimulates a different interaction behavior. For instance, it might be that evaluators are also motivated to exhibit supportive behavior toward the individuals who are believed to have desirable characteristics. Supportive behavior, in this context, might be interpreted as a form of confirmatory behavior in which the evaluators search for arguments to defend their positive first impressions. Secondly, while still struggling for accuracy other evaluators who formed a similar first impression might be less supportive or even critical with regard to the individual they evaluate. When first impressions are positive, critical behavior might suggest that the evaluator is engaged in low level of confirmatory behavior. Thirdly, the evaluator may be neither
supportive nor obstructive, engaging in neither confirmatory nor low level of confirmatory behaviors.

The significance of studying the factors that motivate evaluators has been emphasized in several areas of work and organization research. In reference to the employment interview research, Rynes, Barber, and Varma (2000, p.270) remarked that “developing a better understanding of the interviewer’s perspective is one of the highest research priorities for improving interview practice.” The current research addressed this research priority.

**Link between Motivations and Confirmatory Behavior during Evaluation**

Evaluators’ motivation, as well as their personality traits and situational factors can influence their behavior during interpersonal interactions. An interesting observation with regard to the motivation-behavior link was made by James and Rentsch (2004) who noted that both affective mechanisms (e.g., anticipation, sense of challenge) and cognitive mechanisms (e.g., expectancies, goals, expectations) can intervene between motivation and the behaviors it stimulates. It is likely that the evaluators’ motivation may influence their behavior during the evaluation process, including their tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior. In support of this assessment, Babad, Inbar, and Rosenthal (1982) found that biased individuals (who tend to endorse stereotypes), but not unbiased subjects (who do not use stereotypes) were influenced by their expectancies when given the opportunity to assist a student whom they expected to perform either well or poorly. The interpretation of this finding is that the unbiased perceivers were motivated to be rational and did not act on their expectations (e.g., did not engage in confirmatory behavior). Meanwhile, the biased perceivers may act on their expectations; these expectations may influence their behaviors, setting up the motivational stand during
interpersonal interactions. Consistent with these interpretations, research on interaction goals (Hilton & Darley, 1991) suggests that evaluators may be in either an assessment set, seeking accuracy, or an action set, with the latter being more likely to elicit confirmatory behavior. Neuberg (1989) suggested that the evaluators who are mainly motivated to gain an accurate understanding of the individuals they evaluate (i.e., in an assessment set) are more likely to elicit disconfirmation than confirmation from their partners.

Epistemic and Information-Processing Motivation during Evaluation

The term epistemic motivation (Kruglanski, 1989) was used to refer to all the knowledge acquired by an individual in the process of accomplishing an objective or a work assignment. In the context of interpersonal evaluation, epistemic motivation encompasses (1) direct knowledge about the interacting partner, (2) idiosyncratic knowledge of causal relations that is applied in judgments made about the evaluated individual, (3) heuristics and categorizations that may facilitate the evaluation of the other individual. Kruglanski (1989) considered epistemic motivation as a knowledge-generating motivation that might guide the evaluation process. It is possible that this construct can differentiate between evaluators who rely heavily on their first impressions when making decisions and those who do not.

In order to categorize different epistemic motivations, Kruglanski (1989) used the criterion of specificity versus non-specificity of the final decision. According to Kruglanski (1989), this criterion can differentiate between an evaluator’s motivation to search for a specific decision (e.g., a final decision that is similar with the initial decision) and motivation to search for any definite decision, not necessarily similar to the initial decision. In other words, the evaluators may be either directionally motivated, that is, searching for confirmation of their
initial decisions, or non-directionally motivated, that is, actively gathering and processing information about the evaluated individual with no agenda in mind and no specific final decision to be reached.

*Directional motivation* was defined as the degree to which judgmental conclusions are motivationally desirable (Kruglanski, Chun, Erb, Pierro, Mannetti, & Spiegel, 2003) and can be considered as oriented toward the confirmation of first impressions. Kruglanski (1989) put forward that directional motivation may originate from either *esteem concerns* that might stimulate the evaluators’ ego-enhancing attributions or *control concerns* related to boosting predictability and avoiding uncertainties and ambiguities. It is likely that directionally-motivated evaluators can generate first impressions and subsequently use these impressions to evaluate the other individual. It might be that the evaluators’ intuition, previous experiences, beliefs, lay theories, or simply the tendency to imitate behaviors of third parties act as stimuli for the generation of such impressions. The other alternative, *non-directional motivation* is defined as the desire for any answer, not necessarily a specific one, which affords predictability and a base for action (Kruglanski, 1989). Unlike evaluators who are directionally motivated, non-directionally motivated evaluators are likely to be less biased in the gathering and processing of information.

A construct that would seem to represent non-directional motivation is *need for cognition*, defined as the motivation to rely on effortful and elaborate processing of information (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). It might be that a high need for cognition characterizes evaluators who take a rational approach to decision-making and act in conformity with normative, rather than subjective (i.e., first impressions), criteria. Similarly, another construct that can represent directional motivation would be the *need for cognitive closure*, which was defined as a desire for
a definitive answer as opposed to ambiguity and uncertainty (Kruglanski, 1989; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996). Evaluators who tend to simplify the processing of information by using heuristics may be characterized by a high need for cognitive closure. One objective of this study was to analyze the role of these two constructs – need for cognition and need for cognitive closure – as predictors of the evaluators’ use of confirmatory behavior. Consistent with the literatures on need for cognition and need for cognitive closure (e.g., Cacioppo & Petty, 1982; Kruglanski & Webster, 1996), the term *need* was used throughout this study in a statistical (i.e., likelihood or tendency) rather than biological sense.

**Interpersonal Interaction, Confirmatory Behavior, and the Employment Interview**

*Evaluator’s Behavior*

As previously suggested some people form impressions and adjust their behavior during interpersonal interactions so as to reach final decisions that confirm their first impressions. Several studies support the impact of first impressions. Rowe (1984) suggested that, in a hiring context, some people tend to categorize the individuals they evaluate as qualified or unqualified with regard to the objective of the interaction, on the basis of limited information, at the beginning of the interaction. Similarly, in the communication literature, the *predicted outcome value theory* (Sennafrank & Ramirez, 2004) states that people make predictions about a relationship’s potential when they initially begin communicating with the other person and, then, act accordingly. Studies of information integration in assessing employee competencies support the view that evaluators’ behaviors, as well as their judgments, are affected by their first impressions (Ryan & Sackett, 1998), suggesting that first impressions serve as a basis for the
expectations that further drive behaviors. Similarly, attitude change studies (e.g., Miller & Turnbull, 1986) suggest that first impressions tend to be pervasive and resistant to change and, accordingly, their effect on subsequent behaviors might be significant.

In an employment interview study, Stevens (1998) supported the view that the evaluators’ orientation toward applicants (whether the evaluators were recruiting or screening the applicants) influenced the evaluators’ behavior during the interaction. In this study, the author found that the recruitment-oriented evaluators talked 50% more, asked fewer questions, and volunteered more information than screening-oriented interviewers. Finally, in a review of the evidence for an evaluator’s behavior during the interpersonal interaction, Dipboye (1992) observed that employment interviewers’ first impressions may influence the evaluators’ behaviors, so that different impressions stimulate different information gathering behaviors.

In addition to the above-mentioned studies, studies in the area of social cognition seem to support the idea that evaluators tend to rely on first impressions. For example, Adolphs (2001) emphasized the influence of first impression or “emotional hunches.” This study suggested that the influence of first impressions occurs prior to overt knowledge regarding exactly why individuals want to make particular choices. Given the previous literature, it seems likely that first impressions and expectations influence the behavior and outcomes of interpersonal interactions in many contexts, including work contexts. Moreover, in this literature, the individual tendency to rely on first impressions is considered to be not only possible, but also natural and socially acceptable.

In addition to first impressions formed before or in early stages of interpersonal interactions, the evaluated individual’s behavior during interactions may influence an evaluator’s behavior. For instance, Salancik and Pfeffer (1977) suggested that the behavior of evaluated
individuals can serve as information out of which the evaluator can construct attitudes toward them. These attitudes can be contaminated with subjective inferences and not necessarily supported by the objective reality (Fiedler, Armbruster, Nickel, Walther, & Asbeck, 1996), which suggests that the evaluators’ perceptions of the evaluated individual’s behavior, rather than her/his actual behavior, serve as a basis for the evaluators’ impressions and behaviors. In addition to the behavior of the evaluated individual, interaction-related situational factors (e.g., time pressure) and evaluator-related dispositional factors are likely to influence the evaluators’ behaviors. Just as the behavior of evaluated individuals can subjectively influence the behavior of evaluators, the evaluators’ dispositions and perceptions of contextual factors can stimulate the drawing of subjective inferences regarding evaluated individuals. In sum, subjective information, which was generated by evaluators as a result of contextual and dispositional factors, can influence their behaviors.

The information generated by evaluators early in interpersonal interactions, which is encompassed in first impressions formed about evaluated individuals, can have two kinds of consequences: (1) perceptual interpretation, in the evaluators’ minds and (2) confirmatory (or less confirmatory) behavior of first impressions during interpersonal interactions. The evaluator’s behavior, which was the only dependent variable of interest in this study, is assumed to include all observable activities, but exclude thoughts, perceptions, or beliefs. Therefore, as suggested in Figure 1, the evaluators’ perceptual use and interpretation of information is a distinct topic that was not reviewed in this study. However, this study acknowledges that the perceptual interpretation of information may constitute a link in the process of self-fulfilling and self-disconfirming effects. As an illustration, Dipboye (1982), Dougherty et al. (1994), and Phillips and Dipboye (1989) suggested that the interviewers’ initial decisions, determined by
their first impressions of applicants, can unduly influence the final decision through the mediation paths of both behavioral and perceptual processes. First, the interviewers’ initial decisions may influence their behavior and the manner in which they conduct the subsequent interaction. Second, interviewers may engage in perceptual interpretation by recalling, interpreting, combining, and integrating information about applicants in a manner that is influenced by their initial decision.

**Relationship of Initial Decision to Final Decision in Interpersonal Evaluation**

**Confirmatory behavior.** In this study, confirmatory behavior was defined as the behavior that encourages the selective treatment of information gathered during interpersonal interactions. This treatment of information consists of the preferential processing of information that confirms first impressions and discounting of information that disconfirms these impressions. The selective treatment of information can be assimilated to seeking out hypothesis-congruent information or to the hypothesis-maintenance strategy (Skov & Sherman, 1986). In the context of the interpersonal interaction, the evaluators’ confirmatory behaviors are likely to lead to the confirmation of information consistent with first impressions. Meanwhile, confirmatory behavior may lead to the invalidation or simply forestalling of information that is inconsistent with first impressions.

**Research on confirmatory behavior in interpersonal evaluation.** Many studies carried out in organizational and laboratory settings (e.g., Lord et al., 1979; Snyder & Swann, 1978; Zuckerman, Knee, Hodgins, & Miyake, 1995) provide evidence for the tendency of people to engage in confirmatory behavior and confirm, rather than disconfirm, first impressions. For
example, Snyder and Swann (1978) found that the participants in a laboratory experiment who were asked to test whether the individuals they evaluate are extraverted or introverted selected one-sided questioning strategies that were more likely to confirm the initial expectation (i.e., either extraversion or introversion). All participants in this study were female undergraduates that were sampled for convenience, and were given no reasons to anticipate that the hypothesis tested during the experiment (i.e., initial expectation) would prove accurate. According to the design of this experiment (Snyder & Swann, 1978), each participant had to choose to ask the evaluated individual only 12 from a list of 26 questions that were previously classified as extraverted (e.g., “What kind of situations do you seek out if you want to meet new people?”), introverted (e.g., “What factors make it hard for you to really open up to people?”), or neutral (e.g., “What do you think the good and bad points of acting friendly and open are?”). Each participant selected the 12 questions that she estimated would provide her the most desirable information for testing the initial expectation regarding the evaluated individual.

Snyder and Swann (1978) found that participants had a tendency to search for information that was more likely to confirm, rather than to disconfirm their initial expectations. This tendency was observed by Snyder and Swann (1978) regardless of the likelihood that initial expectations were accurate and of how much incentive was provided for accurate decisions. Moreover, Snyder and Swann (1978) suggested that the direction of the initial question (i.e., whether the evaluated individual is extraverted or introverted) determines the outcome of the interpersonal decision-making. That is, when testing the expectation that evaluated individuals are introverted, participants preferred to ask, at least at the beginning of the interaction, more introverted questions. A similar tendency was identified with regard to the extraverted evaluated individuals, who were asked more extraverted questions. During the interaction, evaluated
individuals also appeared to behave in ways that confirm the specific attributes of the initial expectation (i.e., either extraversion or introversion) that was tested by participants. It is likely that participants in this study engaged in confirmatory behavior, whereas the individuals they evaluate engaged in behavioral confirmation. In a subsequent study, Snyder and Stukas (1999) suggested that low levels of confirmatory behavior can be observed when the evaluators talk about themselves compared to when they get the individuals they evaluate to talk about themselves. These findings support the possibility that evaluators’ first impressions tend to be revealed, during the interpersonal interaction, in the questions asked by evaluators, as well as in the tendency to emphasize either the screening of the evaluated individual (i.e., asking questions) or talking about themselves and their organization.

Klayman and Ha (1987) interpreted the findings of Snyder and Swann’s (1978) study as an example of positive hypothesis test, which specifies evaluators’ tendency to test hypotheses by examining instances in which the expected event is likely to take place, at the expense of complementary information. Meanwhile, Zuckerman et al. (1995) observed that people who are interviewed or answered surveys tend to respond yes more often than no, and labeled this tendency the acquiescence bias. Central to the concept of positive testing is the evaluators’ confirmatory behavior, which searches for information consistent with the tentatively preferred decision. Central to the concept of acquiescence bias is the behavioral confirmation of evaluated individuals, who are more likely to answer yes than no, and, therefore, confirm the evaluators’ first impressions. Together, positive hypothesis testing and acquiescence bias can explain the process through which first impressions are confirmed. It is likely that the relationships between first impressions and final decisions are mediated by (1) biased evaluators’ questions (i.e.,
confirmatory behavior) and (2) biased evaluated individuals’ behaviors that are elicited by the evaluator’s questions (i.e., behavioral confirmation).

A different stream of research that is relevant to the study of confirmatory behavior consists of studies of confirmatory bias. Davies (2003) mentioned that the confirmatory bias concerns the tendency to seek out information that is consistent with initial information (e.g., beliefs, impressions) and overlook information that is potentially inconsistent with that information. It is likely that an important aspect of the confirmatory bias is the use of positive test strategies (Klayman & Ha, 1987). In addition to the confirmatory bias, evaluators who engage in confirmatory behavior may be influenced by the disconfirmation bias effects (Edwards & Smith, 1996), according to which evaluators confronted with incompatible arguments seek out information that can be used in proving that the argument is false. Because most of the information collected by such evaluators is likely to be refutational in nature, as it is preferentially searched for, evaluators’ judgments tend to be biased toward judging the potentially incompatible arguments as weak.

Finally, the findings of Fiedler, Walther, and Nickel (1999) seem to give further support to the suggestion that evaluators may engage in confirmatory behavior. Starting from the observation that most hypotheses have a built-in tendency to verify themselves, they coined the term auto-verification to refer to this tendency. Fiedler et al. (1999) suggested that the consideration of a hypothesis in the form of imagining, explaining, discussing, or repeating it, tends to increase the belief in its subjective truth. Moreover, Fiedler et al.’s (1999) study demonstrated that, when positive observations are more diagnostic than negative observations, and when the sample of observations is large, even a low confirmation rate may be sufficient for auto-confirmation.
Low level of confirmatory behavior. In this study, low level of confirmatory behavior was considered to be the behavior that encourages gathering and selective processing of information that does not confirm and can disconfirm first impressions. Disconfirmation involves seeking out hypothesis-incongruent information and focusing on the hypothesis-disconfirming evidence (Snyder & Swann, 1978). Klayman and Ha (1987) referred to these behaviors using the term negative hypothesis testing and emphasized their importance for effective learning, reasoning, and inquiry. They suggested that this behavior can be revealed through falsification and verification of the evaluated individual’s assertions. In the context of interpersonal interaction, the evaluators’ low level of confirmatory behavior can lead to challenging and disconfirming information that is consistent with first impressions. The expectancy violations theory (Burgoon & Le Poire, 1993) posits that the violation of initial expectations formed based on first impressions may trigger a cognitive and evaluative process that results in valencing that violation as either positive (e.g., the evaluated individual turn out to be better than expected) or negative. These violations may be easier to identify in the presence of low level of confirmatory behavior than in the presence of confirmatory behavior. The identification of positive violations as a result of low level of confirmatory behavior is likely to generate more positive interaction outcomes than generated by the simple confirmation of positive first impressions as a result of confirmatory behavior. By the same token, the identification of negative violations as a result of low level of confirmatory behavior may lead to more accurate interaction outcomes than does the conformity to expectations.
Research on low level of confirmatory behavior in interpersonal evaluation. Despite the fact that memory for expectancy-disconfirming (i.e., surprising) information is often enhanced (Fiedler et al., 1999) and thus, low level of confirmatory behavior should be easier to identify than confirmatory behavior, there is less empirical support for the tendency to engage in the former type of behavior. The identification of low level of confirmatory behavior is more difficult than identification of confirmatory behavior, especially when the former type of behavior is oriented toward disconfirming positive first impressions. Consistent with this observation, Skowronski et al. (1993) suggested that evaluators are likely to engage in confirmatory behaviors. This is one of the most important challenges of this study: the potential low base rate as a result of evaluators’ reluctance to engage in low level of confirmatory behavior, as opposed to confirmatory behavior. However, the simple identification of a limited number of participants who engage in this type of behavior and characterizing the contexts and dispositions under which this behavior is identified would benefit the research on confirmatory behavior.

There are several factors that can explain the small incidence of low level of confirmatory behavior studies. First, most expectations, even those expectations with no basis in reality, tend to be difficult to disconfirm, once they are formed (Darley & Fazio, 1980). Therefore, it may be difficult and risky for evaluators to engage in low level of confirmatory behavior in order to disconfirm their first impressions because this behavior may lead to no definite conclusion regarding evaluated individuals, when evaluators fail to disconfirm their first impressions. This type of behavior tends to be effortful, presumes that evaluators form explicit expectations, and that they are able to identify expectation-incongruent information (Skowronski et al., 1993).
contrast, confirmatory behavior may be initiated with relatively little effort, either automatically or by focusing on the expectation-congruent information.

Secondly, the identification of low level of confirmatory behavior that is aimed at disconfirming first impressions in the self-fulfilling effects research would ordinarily constitute a null effect (i.e., the absence of confirmatory behavior) and thus, would be less likely to be publicized. Had this type of behavior not been identified, self-disconfirmatory effects would be more difficult to document. In support of the argument that disconfirmation is more difficult than confirmation, Traut-Mattausch, Schulz-Hardt, Greitemeyer, and Frey (2004) suggested that confirmatory behaviors of inaccurate first impressions are more frequently accepted than low level of confirmatory behaviors that are focused on the disconfirmation of inaccurate first impressions. Moreover, as suggested by Snyder and Stukas (1999), evaluated individuals may be reluctant to disconfirm expectations of their evaluators because they are usually in low-power roles.

Finally, in organizational settings such as the employment interview, evaluators are likely to prefer to interact with individuals about whom they formed positive first impressions (Snyder & Stukas, 1999). It might be that time pressure and other constraints may encourage evaluators to reduce the cognitive burden and effort by engaging in more automatic and routine activities. If evaluators engage in confirmatory behavior rather than in low level of confirmatory behavior, their evaluations would be more habitual, standard, automatic, and thus accomplished faster and easier. In addition, for social and legal reasons including impression management concerns, most evaluators might veil signs of low level of confirmatory behavior that are aimed at the disconfirmation of first impressions.
Similarities and Distinctions between Confirmatory and Low Level of Confirmatory Behaviors

Confirmatory behavior, as well as low level of confirmatory behavior, is a motivated behavior. Accordingly, confirmatory behavior may be influenced by motivational and personality factors, in addition to cognitive factors related to the evaluator’s memory, and social factors related to interpersonal interactions. It might be that the evaluators who engage in this behavior can make faster or more accurate decisions. However, beyond this similarity, there are significant differences between confirmatory behavior and low level of confirmatory behavior. Some of these differences have been suggested by the studies carried out by Davies (1997) and Snyder and Stukas (1999) who found arguments in support of the effectiveness of confirmatory behavior, and Klayman and Ha (1987) and Ross and Nisbett (1991) who seem to favor low level of confirmatory behavior as the best path to accurate decisions.

Unlike low level of confirmatory behavior, confirmatory behavior seems to have social value, increasing the comfort, smoothness, and pleasantness of interaction, and may reflect the evaluators’ social competence. Pertaining to the social value of confirmatory behavior, Snyder and Stukas (1999) observed that confirmatory behavior may help to create the appearance of empathy between evaluators and the individuals they evaluate, whereas Nutt (2004) suggested that settling on a single idea early in the decision process is comforting. Interestingly, Snyder and Stukas (1999) suggested that even people who seek to confirm their negative expectations may be able to create smoother interactions than those who seek accuracy. Given the previous literature, it appears that, from the perspective of the social interaction between evaluators and the individuals they evaluate, confirmatory behavior is more desirable.

Nevertheless, the criterion of evaluation accuracy is likely to be more important than the social criterion in the assessment of these two behaviors’ effectiveness. Davies (1997) suggested
that confirmatory behavior may lead to more accurate evaluations of other individuals than low level of confirmatory behavior. Specifically, he found that the more confirmatory thoughts generated, the higher the accuracy ratings of personality feedback; the less confirmatory thoughts generated, the lower the accuracy ratings of personality feedback.

Implicitly supporting the opposite view (i.e., confirmatory behavior leads to less accurate evaluations), Ross and Nisbett (1991) observed that the perceivers (i.e., evaluators) who do not move beyond their presuppositions and first impressions can persist in inaccurate evaluations, not supported by objective information. Indeed, Ross and Nisbett (1991) observed that two or more perceivers or even the perceiver and evaluated individual can reach inaccurate decisions if they rely on assumptions and presuppositions and do not challenge them through attempts at their disconfirmation. By the same token, erroneous first impressions that are uncontested during the evaluation, as a result of the evaluator’s confirmatory behavior, may lead to erroneous selection decisions. In support of the effectiveness of low level of confirmatory behavior, Klayman and Ha (1987) observed that there can be conclusive falsifications, but only ambiguous verifications, where confirmatory behavior tends to be associated with the latter and low level of confirmatory behavior with the former. Still, a conclusive falsification cannot be achieved unless, as indicated by Klayman and Ha (1987), every single instance in which falsification can occur is searched and tried. Finally, Dipboye (1992) concluded that the evidence is mixed regarding the effect of first impressions on information processing in the employment interview, but he noted that most evaluators consistently notice and remember information that violates prior expectations, suggesting that low level of confirmatory behavior may be more effective than confirmatory behavior.
Based on this research, it appears that both these behaviors have their advantages and disadvantages. Neither behavior is necessarily worse than the other. It might be that the most preferred behavior depends on the context and dispositions of the evaluator and evaluated individual.

*Evaluation and Information Processing in the Employment Interview*

Interpersonal evaluations within organizations can be made as part of such employment decisions as selection, promotion, demotion, referral, and retention. The primary tool for selection decisions, the employment interview, can be defined as an interpersonal interaction between an interviewer (i.e., evaluator) and an applicant (i.e., evaluated individual). The objective of this interaction is to make accurate selection decisions, through gathering and processing of information and evaluating qualifications of the applicant.

As a *selection* technique, the employment interview is designed to collect and process applicant information that will allow subsequent judgments about the applicant’s future work performance. At the end of the interview, the interviewer synthesizes these judgments in the form of a selection decision or, at least, a rated assessment of the applicant. While the range of selection decisions is limited to two alternatives (i.e., either accept or reject the applicant), the decision-making itself is complex and may be prone to the use of judgmental shortcuts, such as heuristics. As suggested at the beginning of this study, the use of heuristics does not necessarily lead to inaccurate decisions. Meanwhile, inaccurate decisions can be made in the presence, as well as in the absence, of heuristics. There are two potentially inaccurate decisions that can be
made: an applicant can be either rejected when she/he should be accepted (similar to the Type I error) or accepted when she/he should be rejected (Type II error).

As an *interpersonal interaction*, the interview may be idiosyncratic in nature, in that an interviewer may conduct interviews with different applicants using different styles. While the interviewer might be willing to use a consistent approach across applicants, it might be that different applicants pose different challenges, motivating the same interviewer to engage in different behaviors for different applicants.

As an *information-gathering and processing process*, the interview includes the characteristics of a complex decision process, in which interviewers collect, encode, sort, rank, interpret, retrieve, and integrate applicant information. Some of this information is made available by the applicants themselves; some is obtained by interviewers from additional sources (e.g., references, application forms, resumes). Part of this information may be contradictory, as it is based on opinions and perceptions of different individuals (e.g., interviewers, applicants, individuals with whom applicants interacted previously). In addition, the volume of information and the processing of this information may differ from interviewer to interviewer. In support of the view that different interviewers can combine and process the same information differently, Dougherty, Ebert, and Callender (1986) found that individual interviewers display differences in the way they combine applicant information into summary judgments. Using a policy capturing analysis, Dougherty et al.’s (1986) study also identified interviewers’ differences in the predictive validity of their information processing. In the same vein, Ryan and Sackett (1989) found that the individuals who evaluated the same applicants for a job using different methods (e.g., personality tests) and assessing different areas (e.g., supervisory skills, assertiveness) disagreed with each other. Also, Graves and Karren (1992) suggested that effective interviewers
are more aware of their decision processes and use more complex decision models than less effective interviewers.

Given the previous literature, it seems that different interviewers may not give the same consideration to all applicant information and may process similar information differently. Some interviewers may retain only part of applicant information, while others may try to retain all available information but prefer certain sources (e.g., educational and work achievements, face-to-face interaction skills) and types (e.g., test scores, resume) of information. Therefore, interviewers may be subject to limitations with regard to applicant information gathering and processing. In brief, as observed by Dipboye (1992), the word interview derived from the French word entrevoir, which means to see imperfectly or to have a glimpse of. Consistent with this meaning, it might be that not all the interviewers process applicant information in the same manner; some may use rational decision-making models, others may use heuristic-based models of decision-making.

Confirmatory Behavior in the Employment Interview

It is likely that confirmatory behavior is enacted during employment interviews in the same manner as in any other interpersonal interaction. Similar to studies of impressional primacy effects, the interviewer may form first impressions about applicants at the beginning of an interview and, subsequently, conduct that interview so as to confirm first impressions. An alternative model conceives of the interview as a process in which interviewers look to disprove first impressions about applicants.

Confirmatory behaviors in the employment interview have been infrequently studied. Springbett (1958) suggested that interviewers’ first impressions play a major role in their final
decisions and advocated for the use of disconfirmatory questioning patterns. Other studies found empirical support for the interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior. For instance, Macan and Dipboye (1988) found that some interviewers tend to ask poorly qualified applicants more difficult questions than they ask qualified applicants. Nevertheless, Macan and Dipboye (1988) found that interviewers reported that they spent, on average, more time with qualified applicants (32 minutes) than with unqualified applicants (19 minutes). Based on this research, it appears that interviewers engaged in confirmatory behavior toward qualified applicants, asking them easier questions and interacting longer with them. Meanwhile, interviewers may engaged in low level of confirmatory behavior toward the poorly qualified applicants, asking them more difficult questions and spending less time with them. Alternatively, interviewers who ask the poorly qualified applicants more questions and spend less time with them may engaged in confirmatory behavior, trying to confirm their negative first impressions formed regarding those applicants. Two years later, these researchers found that the more favorable the interviewers’ first impressions of an applicant, the more likely the interviewers were to believe that the applicant performed better in the interview and the more positive was the final evaluation (Macan & Dipboye, 1990). Similarly, Dougherty et al. (1994) found that interviewers tend to use confirmatory behavior toward applicants. Confirmatory behavior analyzed in this study included a more positive style of interviewing, a tendency to sell the company, to provide more job information, and to gather less information from the applicants for whom there was a more positive first impression (Dougherty et al., 1994).

The interviewers’ susceptibility to first impressions can be considered a potentially serious biasing factor that may lead to less accurate evaluations of applicants. The interviewers who are susceptible to first impressions might rely on their impressions when making final
decisions. In consequence, these interviewers may make selection decisions too early in the interview based on their first impressions, and put some applicants at an advantage over other, equally qualified, applicants. Yet, the evidence regarding the effects of confirmatory behavior on interview *validity* and selection decision accuracy is mixed. On one side, according to Eder and Harris (1999) and Dougherty and Turban (1999), interviewers who engaged in confirmatory behavior may be more motivated to make accurate decisions. In the attempt to confirm their impressions about applicants, these interviewers may be more engaged in seeking out information, which, in turn, may increase the validity and accuracy of the interview. Conversely, it might be that when an interviewer engaged in confirmatory behavior, a halo effect influenced by his/her first impressions, assumptions, and stereotypes regarding the applicant could influence the evaluation toward less validity. Harsanyi (1962) defined the stereotype utility function as the utility of first impressions, or the degree to which these impressions are accurate. Their influence on the evaluation may be not necessarily undesirable; for example, Murphy and Balzer (1986) suggest that the halo can be an accurate element of evaluation.

However, Tversky and Kahneman (1974) suggested that expectations generated by first impressions may pressure interviewers to make conforming, rather than accurate decisions. It might be that after forming first impressions, interviewers who engaged in confirmatory behavior limited the search and processing of applicant information, and adjusted insufficiently as they learned more about applicants. In an effort to conciliate this mixed evidence, this study suggests that the relationship between the intensity of the interviewer’s first impressions and accuracy of the evaluation might be curvilinear (inverted U-shape). That is, “moderate” first impressions may lead to accurate evaluations through the mechanism described by Dougherty and Turban
Conversely, extreme first impressions may shape and drive the selection decision, stimulating the interviewer to decide in accord with these impressions. However, despite its subjectivity and potential biasing effect, the use of confirmatory behavior may have some merits. First, interviewers with certain personality traits (e.g., self-monitoring), abilities (e.g., interpersonal sensitivity), or interviewing experience may be more efficient when engaging in confirmatory behavior. It might be that such an interviewer evaluates applicants faster than interviewers who do not engage in confirmatory behavior, while being as accurate as these interviewers. To illustrate this suggestion, a meta-analysis of predictions of social outcomes revealed that predictions made based on thin slices of behavior have moderate to high rates of predictive accuracy (Ambady, Laplante, & Johnson, 2001). A thin slice is defined as a brief excerpt of behavior sampled by an evaluator from the evaluated individual’s behavioral stream, lasting between several tens of seconds and several minutes (Ambady, Bernieri, & Richeson, 2000). Furthermore, Ambady and Rosenthal (1992) suggested that exposure length was not related to greater predictive accuracy, suggesting that evaluations based on thin slices of behavior are as accurate as long-time-duration evaluations. Under such a scenario, the selection decision is likely to be more efficient, in that it is made faster than, and has similar accuracy with, long-time-duration evaluations.

Secondly, as indicated previously in this study, confirmatory behavior may be socially valuable. Specifically, interviewers who formed positive first impressions and engaged in confirmatory behavior, as well as interviewers who formed negative first impressions and engaged in low level of confirmatory behavior, may conduct smoother interactions with the individuals they evaluate. Moreover, interviewers are willing to identify desirable characteristics of the applicants about whom they formed positive first impressions, which would increase the
likelihood that these interviewers make positive selection decisions. In support of this possibility, Jablin (2001) suggested that some interviewers may adopt confirmatory behaviors to test their positive pre-interview impressions, but do not necessarily use confirmatory behaviors to validate negative first impressions. Given this suggestion, it seems that confirmatory behavior is more likely to lead to the identification of an applicant’s strengths and a positive selection decision, than to the identification of weaknesses and a negative selection decision.

Finally, as suggested by Dougherty and Turban (1999), an interviewer who engaged in confirmatory behavior may be more involved and committed to making accurate selection decisions. This interviewer may scrutinize applicant information thoroughly, searching for information that can confirm first impressions. As suggested by Dougherty and Turban (1999), a potential explanatory mechanism for the increased commitment of such an interviewer may be the interviewer’s ego-involvement (Ryan, 1982). Ego involvement was defined as a motivational state in which an individual links her/his feelings of self-worth to the performance at a particular activity or to his/her possession of a particular attribute (Ryan, Koestner, & Deci, 1991). As a result of ego-involvement, some interviewers may be more engaged in and committed to making accurate selection decisions. In conclusion, confirmatory behavior, as well as low level of confirmatory behavior, cannot be deemed a priori as undesirable in the context of the employment interview. They may or may not positively influence outcomes of the applicants’ evaluation, according to the context of the evaluation. This was the objective of this study: To identify dispositional and situational conditions relevant to the context of the evaluation, which may encourage the occurrence of the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior, and their influence on the applicants’ behavioral confirmation and interview outcomes.
CHAPTER 2: HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The extant literature on personality and motivational trait differences has largely emphasized the understanding of how different people, acting under different circumstances, come to selection decisions in organizational environments. Part of this literature, the theory and research reviewed in Chapter 1, suggested several research questions regarding the factors that may influence an interviewer’s tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior. These research questions relate to identification of individual and contextual antecedents of the interviewer’s behavior.

The research questions of interest in this study were: What personality and motivational traits predispose interviewers to respond to first impressions in a manner that confirms these impressions? What contextual factors interact with personality and motivational traits to influence interviewers’ engagement in confirmatory behavior? Do interviewers who form similar impressions about an applicant behave in the same manner toward that applicant? If not, why not?
The model with the proposed hypotheses is represented in Figure 2. The model suggests that two personality traits – openness-to-experience and conscientiousness – and two motivational traits – need-for-cognitive-closure and need-for-cognition – influence the tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior. According to the model, the influence of conscientiousness on this behavior is moderated by the time duration of the interview, whereas the effect of need-for-cognition is moderated by the intensity of first impressions.

Figure 2 – Model with the hypothesized relationships

Personality Traits – Behavior Hypotheses

Personality was defined as an “individual’s characteristic pattern of thought, emotion, and behavior, together with the psychological mechanisms – hidden or not – behind those patterns” (Funder, 2001, p.2). It is likely that some personality traits can influence the interviewer’s propensity to engage in confirmatory behavior during the interview.
This study adopted an interactionist view of the effect of personality on the confirmatory behavior, which was discussed in the previous chapter. Consistent with this view, Barrick, Mitchell, and Stewart (2003), and Stewart and Barrick (2004) stated that personality traits have their greatest effect on individual behaviors when the situation is relevant to the expression of those traits and when situational cues are weak, therefore allowing some behavioral discretion. Moreover, Stewart and Barrick (2004) emphasized that people choose situations that are congruent with their traits and that individual traits can alter situations. In this study, the personality-behavior relationship was studied in the context of the employment interview, which was likely to allow for some behavioral discretion and alteration of its outcomes by dispositional and situational factors.

Personality differences are often summarized in terms of the big five factors, which are deemed to be meaningful traits in predicting behavior (Neuberg, Judice, & West, 1997). Among these factors, openness to experience and conscientiousness seem to be particularly relevant for explaining interviewers’ behaviors. Indeed, as suggested in previous research, conscientious individuals tend to act in a goal-oriented manner (John & Srivastava, 1999), are less affected by raters’ leniency errors (Bernardin et al., 2000), and behave in a manner that is more independent of their attitudes (Tziner, Murphy, & Cleveland, 2002) than less conscientious individuals. Also, high open-to-experience individuals tend to be receptive to new approaches (McCrae, & Costa, 1997), while still using elaborated learning strategies (Blickle, 1996).

Although past research has not examined the relationships between personality traits and specific measures of the confirmatory behavior, a number of studies analyzed conscientiousness and openness to experience in conjunction with attitudes and behaviors that are relevant to evaluation and selection decision-making. For example, Blickle (1996) investigated the
relationship between several learning strategies and personality traits, and found that the learning discipline strategy (e.g., planning, regulating, monitoring, facilitation of information retrieval, control of resources) is highly correlated with conscientiousness, whereas the elaboration strategy (e.g., learning and encoding of materials, modification of cognitive processes, critical evaluation) correlates with openness to experience. Perhaps, evaluation can be thought about as a learning process, in which evaluators discern applicants’ strengths from weaknesses and predict their future behavior.

In a different study that analyzed these big five factors in conjunction with decision-making, LePine, Colquitt, and Erez (2000) found that openness to experience was positively related to decision quality after the rules were unexpectedly changed on a decision-making task. However, these researchers also found that dependability, one subcomponent of conscientiousness that includes orderliness, reliability, and cautiousness, was negatively related to decision quality. More recent research evidence suggests that, unlike conscientiousness, openness to experience is related to creative behavior in the workplace (George & Zhou, 2001). It might be that creativity is associated with a tendency to disconfirm, rather than confirm, previous states and attitudes.

Several explanatory mechanisms for the effect of the big five personality traits on decision outcomes have been proposed. Einstein and Lanning (1998) found that conscientiousness among men and openness to experience among women are the best trait predictors of ego development level. Ego development apparently corresponds to the development of the critical and independent thinking (Einstein & Lanning, 1998), suggesting the existence of some differences in the propensity to use the critical and rational thinking skills. Using the Rational Experiential Inventory, a measure of rational and experiential thinking styles,
Pacini and Epstein (1999) found that the rational thinking style was most strongly and directly related to ego strength, conscientiousness, and openness to experience.

In the next two sections, I further review and discuss findings relating interviewers’ conscientiousness and openness to experience to the dependent variables of confirmatory behavior. The discussion leads to hypotheses linking each of these personality traits to interviewers’ behaviors.

**Conscientiousness**

Conscientiousness has the highest validity of all the big five factors and tends to consistently predict job performance, as measured by different criteria. Saucier and Ostendorf (1999) identified four subcomponents of the conscientiousness trait: (1) *orderliness* (i.e., organized, neat, scrupulous, and meticulous versus disorderly, sloppy, unsystematic, and careless); (2) *decisiveness-consistency* (i.e., decisive, firm, persistent, and steady versus scatterbrained and inconsistent); (3) *reliability or trustworthiness* (i.e., dependable, responsible, prompt, punctual, respectful versus unreliable); and (4) *industriousness* (i.e., ambitious and purposeful, versus aimless, negligent, and lazy).

Conscientiousness has been positively related to job performance across performance measures and across many occupational groupings (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001), as well as to other criteria such as job satisfaction, income, and occupational status (Perrewe & Spector, 2002). Conscientious individuals typically think carefully before acting, are hardworking, self-disciplined, and resist distracting impulses (Deluga & Masson, 2000). They behave in a goal-directed manner, characterized by the tendency to think before acting, delay gratification, follow norms and rules, and take priorities (John & Srivastava, 1999). In a study of 164 sales
representatives, Barrick, Stewart, and Piotrowski (2002) found that conscientiousness was significantly related to accomplishment striving (r = .39). Conscientious individuals prefer outcome, rather than process, goals (Mitchell & Wood, 1994) and tend to perceive themselves as being capable and effective (Lee & Klein, 2002). Conscientiousness has been positively associated with the motivation to learn (Colquitt & Simmering, 1998) and with active, problem-focused coping ability (Watson & Hubbard, 1996). Conscientious individuals tend to be predisposed to proactivity (Gellatly, 1996) and dedicated to their jobs, in that they seek opportunities to do the right thing and pay attention to detail (Witt & Ferris, 2003).

Despite the apparent consistency of conscientiousness in predicting several desirable criteria in interpersonal and organizational contexts (e.g., job performance, satisfaction, income, accomplishment striving, motivation to learn), it has also been found to have some equivocal effects. For instance, although conscientious people exhibit goal-directed behavior and are dependable and thorough, they also tend to be workaholic and overly meticulous and orderly (George & Zhou, 2001), and tend to manifest an excessive preference for predictability (Hogan & Ones, 1997). Moreover, the excessively conscientious individuals may be compulsive, stingy, dependent, and stubborn (Hogan & Ones, 1997).

Conscientiousness has not been related to the interpersonal and organizational criteria across jobs and situations. In all likelihood, conscientiousness does not positively influence desirable criteria, such as job performance and satisfaction, in all occupations and all contexts. For instance, Deluga and Masson (2000) found that conscientiousness was unrelated to performance ratings of student leaders working and living with other students in the universities’ residence halls. In a similar vein, Lee and Klein (2002) and Martocchio and Judge (1997) found that conscientiousness was significantly and positively related to both self-efficacy and self-
deception, suggesting that conscientiousness can both promote and hamper learning. In an effort to reconcile these intriguing findings, Moon (2001) suggested that, in “escalation of commitment” dilemmas, two facets of conscientiousness, duty and achievement striving, may impact upon decision makers in opposing ways. Specifically, achievement striving, as a self-centered construct, may escalate commitment, whereas duty or responsibility, as other-centered construct, may de-escalate commitment (Moon, 2001). Summarizing these and similar research findings, Robertson, Baron, Gibbons, MacIver, and Nyfield (2000) stated that there may be limits to the range of occupations in which conscientiousness is closely linked to job performance, and Witt, Andrews, and Carlson (2004) suggested that conscientiousness interacts with situational influences to predict job behaviors. Based on this research, it appears that the effect of conscientiousness on job behavior and performance can be moderated by situational factors. Accordingly, one objective of this study was to identify situational factors that moderate the effect of conscientiousness on confirmatory behavior. It is likely that the identification of moderators can shed additional light on some of the intriguing findings regarding the effects of conscientiousness.

The need to identify potential moderators of the effects of conscientiousness has been convincingly presented (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001) and acted upon in the last several years. Frink and Ferris (1999) showed that, under conditions of accountability, individuals high in conscientiousness outperform individuals low in conscientiousness. Also, conscientiousness may stifle performance in those positions that require quick decision-making, such as the law enforcement (Tett, 1998) and front-line interaction (Deluga & Mason, 2000). In these jobs, flexibility rather than rigorous enforcing of policies is likely to contribute to better performance. The effect of conscientiousness on job behavior and performance has been found to be
influenced by job autonomy (Mount & Barrick, 1995), ability (Mount & Barrick, 1999),
closeness of monitoring and support of coworkers (George & Zhou, 2001), provision of
normative guidelines for behavior (Hochwarter, Witt, & Kacmar, 2000), and goal setting
(Gellatly, 1996). For instance, Gellatly (1996) found that the effect of conscientiousness on
performance is moderated by self-efficacy and personal goals, such that only conscientious
individuals who set goals and are committed to those goals tend to exert more effort and are
motivated to achieve.

Researchers have also taken a closer look at how conscientiousness interacts with other
personality traits in predicting interpersonal and organizational criteria. For example, Witt,
Burke, Barrick, and Mount (2002) found support for the hypothesis that the conscientiousness-
performance relationship is stronger for highly agreeable individuals. Based on these findings,
Witt et al. (2002) suggested that highly conscientious individuals who lack interpersonal
sensitivity might be ineffective in jobs that require cooperation with others. Moreover, Witt and
Ferris (2003) implied that those same linking mechanisms that cause conscientiousness to predict
desirable outcome in jobs that allow autonomy may have the opposite effect in jobs that require
interpersonal interaction. On one hand, conscientiousness may have positive effects in jobs that
require interpersonal interaction because conscientious individuals tend to be proactive listeners,
thorough in following up on issues identified by others, and, accordingly, facilitate interaction
(Witt & Ferris, 2003). On the other hand, Witt and Ferris (2003) suggested that
conscientiousness may be unrelated or even negatively related to performance in jobs that
require interpersonal effectiveness, among individuals low in social skills. Therefore, the
relationship between conscientiousness and performance may be moderated by social skills.
Relevant for this study, interviewers’ conscientiousness may interact with interviewers’ situational factors to encourage different interview behaviors. One situational factor, *time duration of the interview*, is hypothesized to moderate the effect of conscientiousness on interviewers’ behavior. Given the previous literature, it seems that highly conscientious interviewers are more likely to evaluate applicants with diligence, perseverance, and commitment than interviewers who are less conscientious. It might be that the extent to which interviewers exert effort is negatively correlated with their use of heuristics. More specifically, highly conscientious interviewers may be less likely to rely on heuristics (i.e., first impressions) and more likely to put forth effort.

However, the effect of conscientiousness is less clear when interviewers spend less time evaluating applicants. It is likely that due to time concerns interviewers cannot search extensively for information and extensively consider applicant information. When the interview is brief, conscientiousness may have the same effects as a sword with two edges. Interviewers’ processing of information may be hurried as a result of time concerns and preference for predictability (Hogan & Ones, 1997), that may take precedence over the systematic and detailed processing of applicant information. When time is limited, the tendency to be deliberate is likely to conflict with time concerns. In all likelihood, interviewers will have to make faster decisions, by using judgmental shortcuts and heuristics, among which impressional primacy is one of the most accessible. Given that finding counter-arguments to initial decisions may be difficult and time-consuming, highly conscientious interviewers who spend less time interviewing are likely to engage in low level of confirmatory behavior. This suggestion is consistent with the disconfirmation model (Edwards & Smith, 1996), according to which individuals spend more
time evaluating arguments that are incompatible with their initial decisions than compatible arguments.

Unlike highly conscientious interviewers who tend to be dependable and follow rules, less conscientious interviewers may be more likely to use heuristics such as impressional primacy. Less conscientious interviewers are likely to rely on their first impressions and engage in confirmatory behaviors, irrespective of the time duration of the interview. Tziner et al. (2002) seem to provide support for the suggestion that low conscientiousness is positively related to confirmatory behavior during interpersonal interactions. In an appraisal experiment, they found that behaviors of low conscientiousness evaluators were strongly correlated with their attitudes and beliefs about the appraisal system.

In conclusion, it may be that conscientiousness interacts with the time duration of the interview. Specifically, highly conscientious interviewers who spend more time interviewing will engage in low level of confirmatory behavior, whereas those who spend less time interviewing engage in more confirmatory behavior. Therefore,

Hypothesis 1a. Conscientiousness is negatively related to confirmatory behavior.

Hypothesis 1b. The time duration of the interview interacts with conscientiousness in explaining confirmatory behavior, such that the negative relationship between conscientiousness and confirmatory behavior is weaker for shorter time-duration interviews and stronger for longer time-duration interviews.

Openness to Experience

A different personality trait that could foster the use of heuristics is openness to experience. The openness-to-experience construct is relatively heterogeneous (Hough, 2003)
and the least well understood personality construct in the big five personality traits literature (Digman, 1990). For instance, Hough (2003) suggested that the openness-to-experience research would highly benefit from a better explanation of the construct validity (nomological nets) of its subcomponents. Abiding by this suggestion, Griffin and Hesketh (2004) believed that the openness-to-experience construct consists of two dimensions that relate differentially to job performance, thus reducing correlations between the overall measure of openness to experience and performance criteria. Following the same suggestion, Saucier and Ostendorf (1999) identified three subcomponents of the openness-to-experience construct: (1) intellect (i.e., intelligent, intellectual, analytical, knowledgeable, complex, and curious versus unreflective); (2) imagination-creativity (i.e., artistic, clever, innovative versus uncreative and conventional); and (3) perceptiveness or farsightedness (i.e., insightful, foresighted versus unobservant).

In this study, I hypothesized that openness to experience is a salient determinant of interview behavior. Previous literature appears to support the existence of a linkage between openness to experience and traits and attitudes related to decision-making behaviors. For example, openness to experience has been found to be consistently related to intellectual curiosity (LePine et al., 2000), rationality (Epstein & Pacini, 1999), elaboration (Blickle, 1996), psychological mindedness (Beitel & Cecero, 2003), independence of judgment, divergent thinking (McCrae, 1987), and critical thinking tendencies, such as evaluating reasons, evidence, or conclusions (Clifford, Boufal, & Kurtz, 2004). Moreover, Ashton, Lee, and Vernon (2000) suggested that openness to experience was substantially correlated with crystallized intelligence, as measured by vocabulary-related tests, but only weakly correlated with fluid intelligence, as measured by reasoning tasks. In the same vein, individuals who score high in openness to experience were found to score high on two measures of pattern analysis and information
processing capability (Costa, Fozard, McCrae, & Bosse, 1976), and to acknowledge frequent revisions in their attitudes (McCrae, & Costa, 1997). By contrast, low openness (i.e., closeness) to experience is reflected in a preference for what is familiar and concrete. Individuals who are closed to experience tend to “have compartmentalized thinking in which inconsistent beliefs were isolated and discrepant information was summarily rejected” (McCrae & Costa, 1997, p.838), tend to be conformist, conventional, and conservative (McCrae, Costa, & Busch, 1986), refuse to consider alternate points of view, and prefer the status-quo (Webster, Kruglanski, & Pattison, 1997).

Given the previous findings, it appears that openness to experience is uniquely related to the tendency to be flexible and willing to try new things during information processing. Furthermore, as a correlate of the adaptability to change (LePine et al., 2000), openness to experience is likely to be positively related to responsiveness to potential revisions of an initial decisions willingness to try new things and broadmindedness (McCrae, 1996), as well as to critique of the initially-favored alternative. At the opposite end of the openness continuum, closeness to experience is likely to be associated with a tendency to defend initially-favored decisions and avoid, rather than approach, different alternatives to decisional situations.

It may be that interviewers who are open to experience scrutinize all applicant information without any restraint. Accordingly, these interviewers may have more of an appreciation of the merits of information gathered after they formed first impressions than interviewers who are closed to experience. Therefore, high open-to-experience interviewers may come up with final decisions that are different than initial ones. In sum, open-to-experience interviewers who gather information that is inconsistent with their first impression are likely to intellectualize and engage in low level of confirmatory behavior. On the other hand, closed-to-
experience interviewers are likely to be affected by disconfirmatory biases, refute the inconsistent information, and engage in confirmatory behavior.

_Hypothesis 2. Openness to experience is negatively related to confirmatory behavior._

Motivational Traits – Behavior Hypotheses

_Need for Cognitive Closure_

In previous research, need for cognitive closure, which was referred to in this study simply as “need for closure,” has been investigated as both a dispositional and a situational variable. As a situational variable, need for closure may be heightened through time pressure, fatigue, perceived attractiveness of the task, accountability, and environmental variables such as noise (Kruglanski & Freund, 1983; Kruglanski, 1989; Kruglanski & Webster, 1991). For instance, Kruglanski (1989) suggested that accountability lowers the individuals’ need for closure because the evaluation apprehension increases when people are required to explain their decisions, thereby increasing the cost of premature closure.

In this study, need for closure was analyzed only as a dispositional variable, that is, as a dimension of stable individual differences, rather than a function of the situation. In order to minimize the impact of situational factors, this research is based on interviews that take place in similar environments (i.e., interview rooms). In addition, three other situational conditions – accuracy instructions, evaluation apprehension, and accountability pressures – that may lower need for closure (Richter & Kruglanski, 1999) has been controlled in this research.
According to the *lay epistemic theory* (Kruglanski, 1989), need for closure has been described as the tendency to process information quickly, formulate a solution, and maintain a clear view of the situation, as opposed to accepting confusion, ambiguity, or uncertainty. Research on need for closure, led in the last two decades by Kruglanski and Webster, suggests that need for closure varies along a continuum. At one end of the continuum, high need-for-closure individuals display cognitive impatience, thought rigidity, a tendency to leap to judgment on the basis of inconclusive evidence (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996); experience particular stress in relatively unfamiliar environments (Kosic, Kruglanski, Pierro, & Mannetti, 2004) and have a tendency toward self-enhancement (Taris, 2000). At the other end of the continuum, low need-for-closure individuals tend to increase the level of information processing, engage in extensive information search and processing, and generate multiple interpretations of the data collected (Kruglanski & Webster, 1996; Mayseless & Kruglanski, 1987).

It might be that these individual differences in need for closure influence decision-making behavior. For example, need for closure was found to induce a tendency to consult less information (Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2002) and exhibit less cognitive complexity and more simplicity (Van Hiel & Mervielde, 2003). In the same vein, high need-for-closure individuals were found to seek immediate and permanent answers (Shah, Kruglanski, & Thompson, 1998), use relevant judgmental cues, and preserve past knowledge and prior judgments (Webster & Kruglanski, 1998). Based on this research, it seems that need for closure tends to be positively related to the use of decision-making approaches that bring the most immediate practical benefits.

In addition to leading to immediate benefits, need for closure may have another advantage. Specifically, Webster and Kruglanski (1994) emphasized that the relative absence of
closure (i.e., low need for closure) may seem costly in some circumstances, in that no decision is made within reasonable time limits. Indeed, in the context of a selection task, the absence of closure would translate in the absence of any selection decision (i.e., either accept or reject an applicant), which would give no base for action toward applicants.

It is likely that high need-for-closure individuals may be motivated by having a simple, manageable, and more parsimonious representation of the environment. Accordingly, they may seek a simple and manageable cognitive representation of the environment. Such a cognitive representation is likely to be achieved through the use of heuristics. Most experimental findings seem to suggest that high need-for-closure individuals are more likely to use their first impressions in evaluating the other individuals and accept early hypotheses without further review than would low need-for-closure individuals. For instance, Webster and Kruglanski (1994) suggested that high need-for-closure individuals tend to be confident in their judgments and Taris (2000) found that they are not influenced by subsequent evidence that is potentially relevant, and tend to filter and reinterpret information that is not self-enhancing. By contrast, low need-for-closure was shown to foster the use of previously acquired information and extend the information-gathering and processing process (de Dreu, Koole, & Oldersma, 1999; Mayseless & Kruglanski, 1987).

Previous research also suggests that first impressions seem to guide the evaluation of high need-for-closure individuals, in the sense that more positive evaluations are likely to be formed when first impressions are positive and more negative evaluations are formed when preceded by negative first impressions. In this regard, Webster and Kruglanski (1994) discovered that people classified as high, versus low, in need for closure rated the job candidates more positively after hearing a positive-negative sequence and more negatively after hearing a
negative-positive sequence, suggesting that they are influenced by impressional primacy effects.

In the same vein, need for closure was found to enhance the magnitude of primacy effects during impression formation (Richter & Kruglanski, 1999), making high need-for-closure individuals more likely to base their evaluations of others on the first few pieces of information they gather. Trying to identify a mechanism that can explain this effect of first impressions, Shah, Friedman, and Kruglanski (2002) suggested that need for closure is positively associated with goal shielding. Shah et al. (2002) suggested that goal shielding consists of the activation of one focal goal, to which high need-for-closure individuals were committed, inhibiting the accessibility of the alternative goal(s). One interpretation of this finding is that, after making the initial decision that is based on first impressions, interviewers may focus on the confirmation of that decision, at the expense of the identification of arguments for the alternative decision(s). In other words, to the extent that an initial decision is made, the opposed alternative(s) is no longer endorsed. Had the opposed alternative to the selection decision been endorsed, it would have interfered with the commitment to the initial decision by competing for the limited time and effort of the decision-maker (Shah, 2005).

The previous research findings seem to support the suggestion that need for closure has important effects on the rigidity of first impressions formed about non-acquaintances and on the manner in which information is processed when first impressions are formed. According to the conceptual work on need for closure (e.g., Kruglanski & Webster, 1996), interviewers may reach decisions more quickly, and reduce uncertainty and ambiguity associated with the applicants’ evaluation. It might be that the cognitive closure can be fostered by favoring and defending an initial decision that is based on first impressions, rather than challenging that decision through the rest of the interview and reversing it. To put it differently, high need-for-closure may
motivate interviewers to engage in confirmatory behavior that is likely to contribute to the defense and confirmation of initial decisions. Conversely, low need-for-cognition can promote behavior that may favor interviewers’ tendency to challenge and, eventually, even disconfirm first impressions.

In sum, I hypothesized that need for closure is associated with interview behavior, such that interviewers high in need for closure seek to reduce the uncertainty-generated discomfort by making initial selection decisions sooner, rather than later. It is likely that high need-for-closure individuals may adhere to an initial decision, find additional arguments to support it, and be resistant to change, even in the presence of disconfirming information. Accordingly, I hypothesize that high need-for-closure individuals are more likely than low need-for-closure individuals to engage in confirmatory behavior, whereas low need-for-closure individuals are more likely than high need-for-closure individuals to engage in low level of confirmatory behavior.

*Hypothesis 3. Need-for-cognitive-closure is positively related to confirmatory behavior.*

*Need for Cognition*

Need for cognition has been conceptualized as the dispositional tendency to engage in effortful processing (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Unlike high need-for-cognitive-closure individuals who think only as hard as is necessary to reach satisfactory decisions and prefer the *outcome of thinking*, high need-for-cognition individuals tend to be thoughtful (Chatterjee, Heath, Milberg, & France, 2000) and favor the *process of thinking*.

In contrast to low need-for-cognition individuals, individuals characterized by high need for cognition show greater depth and breadth of information search (Levin, Huneke, & Jasper,
are more knowledgeable about and recall more of the information to which they have been exposed (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein, & Jarvis, 1996), interpret more cognitive information (Sojka & Giese, 2001), and are more likely to evaluate the quality of the argument and engage in more thorough processing of persuasive communications (Haugtvedt, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1992). Moreover, high need-for-cognition individuals are likely to engage in explanatory thinking (Lassiter, Briggs, & Slaw, 1991), develop complex causal explanations for the behavior of others (Fletcher, Danilovis, Fernandez, Peterson, & Reeder, 1986), and hold attitudes that are concordant (Thompson & Zanna, 1995), persistent over time, and resistant to change (Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992).

Conversely, people situated at the low end of the need-for-cognition continuum tend to avoid effortful processing and are persuaded by the peripheral, rather than substantive, cues (Cacioppo et al., 1996). They are routinely outperformed by high need-for-cognition individuals in solving complex and ill-defined problems (Unnikrishnan Nair, & Ramnarayan, 2000). When compared to high need-for-cognition individuals, low need-for-cognition individuals are more likely to fall victim to framing effects, which are thought to be due to susceptibility to peripheral, rather than substantive, cues (Smith & Levin, 1996; Zhang & Buda, 1999).

Concurring with the previous research, studies of persuasion and attitude change suggest the existence of individual differences in need for cognition. According to these studies, individual differences in need for cognition are reflected in decision-making strategies. For instance, Petty and Cacioppo (1986) suggested that some people have low need for cognition, which predisposes them to use heuristics that require less-than-effortful behaviors when assessing the validity of messages. In the same vein, Eagly and Chaiken (1993) suggested that decision-makers who score low in need for cognition tend to engage in less thorough and
systematic processing of information relevant to the decision than their high need-for-cognition counterparts. Similarly, Cacioppo, Petty, and Morris (1983) found that low need-for-cognition individuals tend to rely on simple cues when forming and modifying their attitudes, whereas high need-for-cognition individuals tend to think and process a larger range of cues. Additionally, Haugtvedt et al. (1992) implied that the threshold at which low need-for-cognition individuals choose to increase their efforts is likely higher than the corresponding threshold for high need-for-cognition individuals. A likely explanation for the effortful information processing of high need-for-cognition individuals is their tendency, when making decisions, to become alert sooner and start processing information at lower levels of perceived information difficulty than do low need-for-cognition individuals.

From the studies described above, it appears that a decision-making strategy that sets apart high need-for-cognition from low need-for-cognition decision-makers is the use of heuristics. Among these heuristics, impressional primacy may be especially relevant in distinguishing between high and low need-for-cognition individuals in interview contexts. It might be that low need-for-cognition individuals use more heuristics, such as impressional primacy, and, therefore, less-than-thorough information processing. On the contrary, high need-for-cognition individuals might be less prone to the use of impressional primacy and confirmation of first impressions. Consequently, high need-for-cognition individuals may be less influenced by first impressions, process more thorough information, and engage in low level of confirmatory behavior than low need-for-cognition individuals.

In support of the claim that high need-for-cognition individuals tend to engage in low level of confirmatory behaviors, Lassiter et al. (1991) found that these individuals recall more of the information to which they are exposed, especially when that information is inconsistent.
Moreover, high need-for-cognition, but not low need-for-cognition, individuals who are faced with conflicting and contradictory evidence are likely to recognize the inconclusive nature of this evidence and less likely to draw conclusions that support one side or the other (Kardash & Scholer, 1996). Mantel and Kardes (1999) put forward an explanation for these findings, suggesting that the high need-for-cognition individuals use detailed and attribute-based information-processing strategies, rather than generalized and attitude-based strategies such as those based on the use of first impressions. It might be that need for cognition is positively related to a tendency to consider more strategies in addition to those based on first impressions. As a result, the effect of first impressions on the judgments made by high need-for-cognition individuals may be more diluted than in the case of low need-for-cognition individuals. In sum, it might be that high need-for-cognition individuals tend to engage in verification rather than confirmation of applicant information, and in low level of confirmatory behavior.

Despite the implication of the previous research that high need-for-cognition individuals would be less prone to the use of heuristics (such as first impressions, referred to as impressional primacy), empirical evidence is still inconclusive. In fact, some research findings seem to support the idea that, under specific circumstances, need for cognition may be positively related to the use of heuristics. For example, Klayman and Ha (1987) proposed that decision-makers rely on positive test strategies under less friendly conditions, such as conditions characterized by situational variables including inadequate time, lack of experience, and heavy memory load. As mentioned in the previous chapter, a positive test strategy encourages confirmation of first impressions, and the use of heuristics, such as impressional primacy. Moreover, Tetlock and Boettger (1989) found that accountability is a situational variable that influences decision-making, by stimulating information processing and increasing the likelihood that decision-
makers use a heuristic known as the *dilution effect*. Dilution of diagnostic information attenuates its impact and intensifies the impact of non-diagnostic information on final decisions. In the conclusion of their study, Tetlock and Boettger (1989) suggested that decision-makers’ concerns about accountability tend to increase their susceptibility to the use of this heuristic. More specifically, they found that individuals who are kept accountable for their decisions may gather and process information more thoroughly, but also fail to recognize and disregard non-diagnostic information.

To make the relationship between need for cognition and information processing even less clear, other researchers suggested that need for cognition is negatively related to the ability to make accurate decisions. For instance, Gulgoz (2001) suggested that need for cognition is not necessarily an antecedent of superior cognitive performance, and Evans, Kirby, and Fabrigar (2003) mentioned that need for cognition is only modestly correlated with the IQ. To summarize, these findings (including findings from the Tetlock and Boettger (1989) study) seem to suggest a somehow counter-intuitive idea: that high need-for-cognition individuals may, in fact, use more heuristics during decision-making than low need-for-cognition individuals, when the perceived social context requires it.

In support of this alternative hypothesis, Petty and Jarvis (1996) found that the bets of high need-for-cognition individuals, but not the bets of low need-for-cognition individuals, were influenced by priming about either winning or losing a bet. Also consistent with the alternative hypothesis, Cacioppo et al. (1996) and Lord, Paulson, Sia, Thomas, and Lepper (2004) posited that the ability of high need-for-cognition individuals to objectively process new information about an attitude object (e.g., evaluated individual) may be affected by the attitudes of those individuals. Likewise, Haugtvedt and Petty (1992) observed that attitudes developed by high
need-for-cognition individuals tend to be more persistent and resistant to change than the
attributes of low need-for-cognition individuals. One interpretation of this study might be that
high need-for-cognition individuals are more effective processors of information when they form
less extreme and more flexible attitudes. Perhaps, when high need-for-cognition individuals
form and bolster extreme attitudes that are consistent with their first impressions, they are less
able to change these attitudes, even when they are confronted with information that contradicts
first impressions.

Accordingly, in the context of employment interview, it might be true that high need-for-
cognition interviewers who form extreme first impressions are more susceptible to impressional
primacy than low need-for-cognition interviewers who form extreme first impressions. By
contrast, the relationship between need for cognition and susceptibility to primacy effects may be
reversed in the case of high need-for-cognition interviewers who are faced with more conflicting
information and form less apparent first impressions. In support of the alternative hypothesis,
Kassin, Reddy, and Tulloch (1990) showed that high need-for-cognition jurors were more prone
to impressional primacy effect than their low need-for-cognition counterparts. These researchers
carried out a series of mock jury experiments in two groups of participants who were presented
with defense arguments, prosecution arguments, and a 45-minute interrogation of a suspect who
empathically asserted her innocence but told an imperfect story. One group of participants were
presented first with defense arguments, then with the interrogation, and finally with prosecution
arguments, while the other group of participants were presented first with prosecution arguments,
then with the interrogation, and finally with defense arguments. Contrary to what they
hypothesized, Kassin et al. (1990) found that high need-for-cognition participants were more
influenced than low need-for-cognition participants by the first-presented arguments (i.e.,
arguments that preceded the interrogation), supporting the positive relationship between need for cognition and susceptibility to first impressions. One reason why Kassin et al.’s (1990) hypotheses were not supported might be that, when faced with a strong initial argument, high need-for-cognition individuals tend to process subsequent information in a biased and overactive manner.

The unexpected findings of Kassin et al. (1990) suggest that the effect of need for cognition on information gathering and processing can be moderated by situational variables. Under some circumstances the interaction between need for cognition and the situational variable might encourage confirmatory behavior; under different circumstances, low level of confirmatory behavior is more likely.

This study hypothesized that the intensity of first impressions moderates the effect of need for cognition on interview behavior. Based on research on attitude strength (Abelson, 1995; Thompson, Zanna, & Griffin, 1995), the intensity of first impressions can be defined as the absolute difference from the midpoint of the impression scale. The midpoint of the impression scale corresponds to the lack of either positive or negative impression. Extreme impressions, either strong positive or strong negative, are characterized by large absolute differences from the scale’s midpoint. Moderate impressions can be weak positive or weak negative impressions and absolute differences from the midpoint are, in this case, small. The interactions between need for cognition and intensity of first impressions are summarized in the four hypotheses from Table 1.

First, it is hypothesized that high need-for-cognition interviewers who form moderate impressions will engage in low level of confirmatory behavior (square 1). In support of this hypothesis, Ahlering and Parker (1989) found that high need-for-cognition participants in an interpersonal evaluation context, which is very similar to that of an employment interview, were
Table 1 – Interaction effects of need for cognition and intensity of first impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need for cognition</th>
<th>Intensity of first impressions</th>
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<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Square 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low level of confirmatory behavior</td>
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<td>Square 3</td>
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<td>Confirmatory behavior</td>
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<td>Confirmatory behavior</td>
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<td>Balanced and potentially rational behavior: neither confirmatory nor low level of confirmatory behavior</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

less likely to be influenced by impressional primacy. These conclusions are in concordance with similar research findings discussed earlier in this section (e.g., Kardash & Scholer, 1996; Mantel & Kardes, 1999; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Participants in the study undertaken by Ahlering and Parker (1989) were presented with 36 sets of trait adjectives, with each set describing a different hypothetical “person.” Half of the sets were constructed to be evaluatively inconsistent, that is some were positive and some were negative, but consistent in meaning (e.g., energetic, resourceful, stubborn, egoistical), whereas in the other half, the same adjectives were combined to provide both evaluative and meaning inconsistency (e.g., energetic, resourceful, withdrawn, helpless). In some sets, the positive (i.e., desirable) trait adjectives came first, followed by the negative (i.e., undesirable) trait adjectives; in the other sets, the order of presentation was reversed, with the negative trait adjectives being presented first. All the sets were presented in random order to the participants, who were asked to form impressions of the “persons” described
and rate each described “person” on a 1 to 8 scale, where 1 = *highly unfavorable* and 8 = *very favorable*. Finally, the experimenter calculated each participant’s impressional primacy score by averaging, across the experimental sets, the difference between the rating for the negative/positive order of presentation and the rating for the positive/negative order.

Ahlering and Parker (1989) observed that the impressional primacy scores of high need-for-cognition participants were lower than the scores of low need-for-cognition participants. Based on this observation, Ahlering and Parker (1989) suggested that need for cognition can be negatively related to the susceptibility to first impressions. It is likely that impressions formed by the participants in this study were moderate, rather than extreme, since the participants received mixed information that was evaluatively inconsistent and, in half of the adjective sets, inconsistent in meaning, too. Accordingly, it was hypothesized that high need-for-cognition interviewers who form moderate first impressions about their applicants are likely to be more thorough information processors and search for more arguments in support of the alternative to an initial decision.

Secondly, it was hypothesized that high need-for-cognition interviewers who form extreme impressions engaged in confirmatory behavior (*square 2*). The *disconfirmation model* (Edwards & Smith, 1996) and *overactivity hypothesis* (Kassin et al., 1990) provide support for this hypothesis, in addition to the research findings regarding attitude persistence that were already mentioned (e.g., Cacioppo et al., 1996; Haugtvedt & Petty, 1992; Lord et al., 2004). The disconfirmation model suggests that the more incompatible a given argument is perceived to be, the more likely the perceiver will be to engage in attempts to undermine that argument (Edwards & Smith, 1996). Applying this model to the context of the current study, it might be that high need-for-cognition interviewers who already formed extreme first impressions, either positive or
negative, are more likely than those who formed moderate first impressions to regard the subsequently-gathered information that disprove these impressions as incompatible. As a result, interviewers who form extreme first impressions might look for counter-arguments that undermine the incompatible information. Searching for arguments that disconfirm information that is inconsistent with previous information crystallized in the form of first impressions is specific to disconfirmation bias (Edwards & Smith, 1996) and to confirmatory behavior.

Starting from the observation that people exposed to strong arguments tend to form extreme impressions, Kassin et al. (1990) developed the overactive hypothesis. This hypothesis proposes that need for cognition is positively associated with hyperactive information processing when information-processors received strong arguments and formed extreme first impressions. According to Anderson, Lepper, and Ross (1980), the hyperactive information processing may occur when information that disconfirms an initial decision is presented, encouraging the so-called belief perseverance bias. In a similar vein, in an experiment in which participants were exposed to two consecutive and contradictory messages, Haugtvedt and Petty (1992) also found that high need-for-cognition individuals are less persuaded by additional information, inconsistent with the initial information that served to form the initial attitude. Therefore, the overactivity hypothesis suggests that hyperactivity and perseverance can account for the tendency of high need-for-cognition interviewers to persist in defending their initial decisions.

Howard-Pitney, Borgida, and Omoto (1986) delineated an alternative explanation to the overactivity hypothesis, according to which high need-for-cognition individuals evaluate information in a more involved and more partisan manner. Hence, high need-for-cognition individuals tend to generate more unfavorable thoughts about the position with which they
disagree. Following this suggestion, it might be that need-for-cognition is positively associated with the tendency to preserve extreme first impressions, while denying data that challenge them.

Thirdly, it was hypothesized that low need-for-cognition interviewers who had formed moderate first impressions engaged in confirmatory behavior (square 3). In support of this hypothesis, Reich (2004) found that perceivers who formed non-extreme expectancies gather information in expectancy-biased manners and elicit expectancy-confirming behaviors from the individuals they evaluate. However, these effects observed by Reich (2004) when expectancies are moderate tend to be more attenuated when expectancies become extreme, suggesting that individuals who form extreme expectations are less likely to gather information in expectancy-biased manners and elicit behavioral confirmation.

Yet this suggestion seems to be at odds with research undertaken, among others, by Ahlering and Parker (1989), Mantel and Kardes (1999), and Petty and Cacioppo (1986), which support the first hypothesis from this section that relates moderate first impressions to low level of confirmatory behaviors. Nonetheless, that hypothesis specifically refers to high need-for-cognition individuals. With regard to low need-for-cognition individuals, Reich’s (2004) suggestion might still be true. In support of this assessment, Areni, Ferrell, and Wilcox (2000) seem to imply that low need-for-cognition individuals who form moderate first impressions, rather than high need-for-cognition individuals who form moderate impressions tend to engage in confirmatory behaviors. In a laboratory experiment, Areni et al. (2000) found that evaluations made by low need-for-cognition participants, but not those made by high need-for-cognition participants, were influenced by the participants’ attitudes, suggesting the low need-for-cognition evaluators tend to rationalize. It is likely that rationalizations are aimed at defending, justifying, and validating evaluations that are in agreement with the interviewers’ attitudes. For instance,
interviewers who have positive attitudes and form positive first impressions are more likely to rationalize in support of positive final decisions than to rationalize in support of negative decisions that contradict their attitudes. Consistent with these findings, low need-for-cognition individuals tend to use heuristics to assess the validity of messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), avoid effortful processing, and be persuaded by peripheral rather than substantive cues (Cacioppo et al., 1996), which may explain their tendency to try to confirm, rather than disconfirm moderate first impressions.

However, when low need-for-cognition individuals form extreme first impressions, they are unlikely to engage in thorough and systematic processing of information, aimed at either the confirmation or disconfirmation of their first impressions. It might be that low need-for-cognition individuals who had formed extreme first impressions were unlikely to process information thoroughly because extreme first impressions acted as a cue that increase confidence and signaled that decisions consistent with these impressions were accurate. In all likelihood, engaging in both confirmatory and low level of confirmatory behaviors can be effortful and ask for a commitment to processing information that low need-for-cognition individuals are not necessarily motivated to demonstrate. In support of the hypothesis that low need-for-cognition is not associated with confirmatory behaviors in extreme impression condition, Reich (2004) suggested that individuals who hold fairly extreme expectations or beliefs and make extreme initial decisions are less likely to elicit the behaviors they expect from the others. Similarly, low need-for-cognition interviewers who form extreme impressions may be less willing to continue to search for confirmatory information as they fail to bring forth the behaviors they expect from applicants. In support of the hypothesis that low need-for-cognition is not associated with low level of confirmatory behavior in the extreme impression condition, Haugtvedt et al. (1992)
suggested that the threshold at which low need-for-cognition individuals choose to increase their efforts is likely higher than the corresponding threshold for high need-for-cognition individuals. Therefore, the information collected by low need-for-cognition individuals has to be much more inconsistent with their first impressions than information gathered by high need-for-cognition interviewers, before they would engage in low level of confirmatory behavior. It might be that, as a result of their increased confidence, low need-for-cognition individuals perceived that the threshold at which more information-processing effort is required has not been reached.

A final argument in support of the hypothesis that low need-for-cognition cannot be related to either confirmatory or low level of confirmatory behavior, in extreme first impressions conditions is found in two studies that dealt with predictability and intention-behavior consistency. According to these studies, attitudes of low need-for-cognition individuals are less predictive of their behavior than those of high need-for-cognition individuals (Cacioppo, Petty, Kao, & Rodriguez, 1986), and the intention-behavior consistency is less likely among low need-for-cognition individuals (Pieters & Verplanken, 1995) than among high need-for-cognition individuals. Given the previous literature, it seems that first impressions and attitudes based on these impressions that are formed by low need-for-cognition individuals are less likely to serve as a base for subsequent behavior. In conclusion, low need-for-cognition interviewers who form extreme impressions engage in neither confirmatory nor low level of confirmatory behavior (square 4).

*The relationship between need for cognition and confirmatory behavior is moderated by the intensity of first impressions, such that:*

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Hypothesis 4a. For high need-for-cognition interviewers, those who form extreme first impressions will engage in more confirmatory behavior than those who form moderate first impressions.

Hypothesis 4b. For low need-for-cognition interviewers, those who form moderate first impressions will engage in more confirmatory behavior than those who form extreme first impressions.

Applicants’ Behavioral Confirmation Hypotheses

Behavioral Confirmation

In addition to the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior, the relationship between the interviewers’ first impressions and final selection decisions is likely to be mediated by applicant behaviors that are elicited by interviewers. These applicants’ behaviors are referred to as behavioral confirmation. Previous research identified the applicants’ tendency to engage in behavioral confirmation. For example, in a study described in detail in the previous chapter, Snyder and Swann (1978) found that evaluated individuals tend to engage in behavioral confirmation by acting in ways that confirm the specific attributes of the evaluators’ initial expectations. Moreover, Dipboye (1982, 1992) suggested that some applicants may behave during interviews in a manner that is consistent with the interviewers’ behaviors. Specifically, Dipboye (1982, 1992) observed that the interview interaction is more positive and the interviewer-applicant level of rapport is higher, following positive interviewers’ behaviors. Based on these findings, it is likely that some applicants tend to engage in behavioral
confirmation, as indicated by the level of rapport and interview interaction, with the intention to confirm positive interviewers’ behaviors that might have been stimulated by positive first impressions about those applicants.

Dougherty et al. (1994) also found that the interviewers’ first impressions, based on application blank and test scores, result in differences in applicant behavior. This study measured applicant behavior using ratings of applicant communication and applicants’ rapport with interviewers. This study intends to extend this finding from Dougherty et al (1994) study by analyzing if the applicants’ behavioral confirmation is related to the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior. As found by Dougherty et al. (1994), some applicants may engage in behavioral confirmation, thus confirming interviewers’ first impressions. It seems likely that those applicants believed that their interviewers had formed positive first impressions and were engaging in confirmatory behavior. However, applicants might also engage in behavioral confirmation when their interviewers formed negative first impressions and engage in low level of confirmatory behavior. The other combinations of the interviewers’ behavior and first impressions (e.g., negative first impressions and confirmatory behavior, and positive first impressions and low level of confirmatory behavior) may stimulate lower levels of behavioral confirmation, or behavioral disconfirmation.

*Exploratory Hypothesis (Research Question). Is the applicant’s behavioral confirmation related to the interviewer’s confirmatory behavior? (Are applicants more likely to engage in behavioral confirmation when interviewers engage in confirmatory behavior?)*
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Sample

The research participants included MBA students at a major public Midwestern university who conducted employment interviews with undergraduate students enrolled in the Fundamentals of Management class. The MBA students had the opportunity to conduct employment interviews for developmental and training purposes. Undergraduate students obtained extra credit for their participation in the research. Interviews for the proposed study were conducted using facilities provided by the College of Business Career Center, where both MBA and undergraduate students who participated in this study are likely to interview for jobs upon their graduation.

The total number of research participants was 372, including 41 MBA students who conducted interviews (referred to as “interviewers”) and 331 undergraduate students who were interviewed for their suitability for the College’s MBA Program (referred to as “applicants”). Each applicant participated in only one interview and each interviewer conducted, on average, eight interviews with eight different applicants. The time duration of each interview varied, but was limited to a maximum of 30 minutes.

Procedure

The basic data in this study were: (1) questionnaire data from the interviewers, measuring their personal traits and demographics; (2) tapes of the interviews that were used for independent
rating of the interviewers’ and applicants’ behaviors; and (3) interviewer rating forms that included interviewers’ first impressions and final ratings of applicants on a number of different dimensions.

First, each interviewer completed a consent form and signed up for a block of eight interview time slots. Then, each interviewer completed the questionnaire that measured demographic characteristics, personal traits, and control variables. Meanwhile, each applicant signed up for one interview time slot and provided her/his resumé and a completed application form, which were given prior to the interview, to the interviewer. Interviewers and applicants were also provided with a list of requirements for the admission in the MBA Program. Based on this applicant information, interviewers provided the pre-interview assessment ratings of the applicant (questions $E1 - E3$ in the Appendix 3). After the interviews, interviewers provided the post-interview ratings (questions $E4 – E11$ in the Appendix 3) and the applicant behavior questions (questions $E12 – E14$ in the Appendix 3).

Each interview interaction took place in one of the four interview rooms at the Career Center in the College of Business that has videotaping facilities and was video recorded. Subsequently, the videotapes were used for the assessment of the interviewers and applicants behaviors during the interview.

Before the interviews, interviewers received some basic orientation/training. The objective of this training was to review the list of requirements for admission to the MBA Program and suggest to interviewers some questions and basic approaches to use during the interviews. For their participation in this study, students received course credit and participated in a draw for three money prizes in amount of $500. In addition, they had opportunities to practice and develop their interview skills.
Measures

Independent Variables

*Conscientiousness and openness to experience.* The two personality traits were evaluated using a modified measure developed by Saucier and Goldberg (2002) as part of the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) (International Personality Item Pool, 2001). The IPIP is a collection of items in the public domain that can be used to measure the big five personality traits (Goldberg, 1999). The IPIP measurement instruments are comparable to the proprietary versions of the well-known big five measures, such as the NEO-PI-R (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Initial validity studies suggested that the IPIP measures typically predict outcome criteria as well as the original inventories (Goldberg, 1999). The criteria that have thus far been used for evaluation purposes include health behaviors, desirable activities (e.g., creativity), and undesirable activities (e.g., lack of dependability) (Goldberg, 1999).

The measure developed by Saucier and Goldberg (2002) for measuring the big five personality dimensions contains 50 items, with 10 items per scale of each of the five constructs. Ten items that were developed for the measurement of *openness-to-experience* and ten items developed for the measurement of *conscientiousness* were used. These short public domain scales correlate .79 with NEO *conscientiousness* scale and .84 with NEO *openness-to-experience* scale (Goldberg, 1999). Interviewer-participants were asked to rate how well statements regarding the assessment of *openness to experience* and *conscientiousness* typically describe themselves. The response format for all these items used a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = *very accurate* and 5 = *very inaccurate* and Cronbach $\alpha$ was .86 for the conscientiousness measure that includes 20 items and .79 for the openness to experience measure that includes 10 items.
Need for cognitive closure. In order to assess the presence of stable individual differences in the need for closure motivational trait, the interviewers answered the reduced 20-item scale of need for closure developed by Houghton and Grewal (2000). The reduced scale has the same five-dimension structure as the original composite scale for measuring individual differences in need for closure, developed by Kruglanski, Webster and Klem (1993) (Cronbach $\alpha = .84$). However, Houghton and Grewal (2000) noted that the reduced scale corrected some of the problems identified by Neuberg, Judice, and West (1997) in the original scale, including weak inter-item homogeneity and multidimensionality. The 20 items of this scale were grouped into the five dimensions of need for closure (Houghton & Grewal, 2000): (1) preference for order and structure (items NCC1-NCC4); (2) preference for predictability (items NCC5-NCC8), (3) decisiveness (items NCC9-NCC12), (4) discomfort with ambiguity (items NCC13-NCC16), and (5) closed-mindedness (items NCC17-NCC20). Although Neuberg et al. (1997) suggested that the need-for-closure scale can be used as a multidimensional scale, I used it in a monodimensional format because the dimension levels of need for closure were not hypothesized to interact differently with the other predictors or to predict different levels of the criterion. The response format is on a Likert 5-point scale, where 1 = very accurate and 5 = very inaccurate and Cronbach $\alpha = .66$. The five subscales for need for closure (Houghton & Grewal, 2000) have the following $\alpha$ coefficients: preference for order and structure $\alpha = .57$; preference for predictability $\alpha = .69$; decisiveness $\alpha = .68$; discomfort with ambiguity $\alpha = .66$; and closed-mindedness $\alpha = .56$.

Need for cognition. I assessed the interviewers’ need-for-cognition using the Short Form of the Need for Cognition Scale (Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984) that includes 18 items and has
Cronbach $\alpha = .89$. The response format is on a Likert 5-point scale, where 1 = *very accurate* and 5 = *very inaccurate*.

*Intensity of first impressions of applicants.* Immediately preceding each interview, interviewers were asked to complete, on the Interview Rating Form, one item from the Pre-interview Impression Scale (Chapman & Rowe, 2001) (item EI) and one additional item (item E2) that are listed in the Appendix 3. The overall Cronbach $\alpha$ for this measure was .89. Interviewers were asked to rate applicants on a 7-point scale, where 1 = *poor* and 7 = *excellent* on each of the first two dimensions. In addition, interviewers were asked to answer whether each of their applicants formed strong, either poor or excellent, or weak first impressions.

*Post-interview rating.* Immediately following each interview, interviewers were asked to complete the rest of the Interview Rating Form that included a questionnaire evaluating the applicant on nine items (items E3 – E11 in the Appendix 3) adopted from Dougherty et al. (1994) and Stevens and Kristof (1995). These items were used to measure interviewers’ assessment of the applicant’s job attitude, compatibility, responsibility, suitability (items E6 – E9) in the Appendix 3, Cronbach $\alpha = .88$ and probable interview outcomes (items E10 – E11, Cronbach $\alpha = .92$). The response format was on a 7-point scale, where 1 = *low* and 7 = *high* and the overall Cronbach $\alpha = .95$ for the scale that includes 9 items. The perceived applicant suitability and probability of organizational pursuit were found to be highly correlated ($r = .83$) (e.g., Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Additionally, in an open-ended question that was added at the end of the questionnaire, the interviewers were invited to detail their evaluations by commenting on the qualifications of the applicants they interviewed.
Time. The time duration of each interview was measured by two different coders. They were instructed to measure only the actual interview time, without considering the time spent separately by the interviewer and interviewee.

Dependent Variables

Six different coders were trained to watch the interview tapes and tally a number of different behaviors and information-gathering strategies on a coding form. Coders were trained with regard to the coding instructions and question definitions, but had no knowledge of interviewers’ initial ratings of applicants. They practiced coding the interviews from ten different videotapes (i.e., about 50 interviews) and discussed sources of disagreement.

Interviewer’s confirmatory behavior. Most interviewers displayed during interviews either positive or negative behavior or regard toward applicants. Following Dipboye, Fontenelle, and Garner (1984) and Dougherty et al. (1994), whether interviewers show positive or negative regard for applicants was measured using five different indicators: (1) coders’ tallies of the questions asked (i.e., closed questions, initial questions, and follow-up or probing questions); (2) verbal attitude that included incidents of agreeing with the applicant; (3) interview focus; (4) interviewing and vocal style; and (5) interviewer emotional expression and non-verbal behavior. All indicators of interviewers regard are listed in the Coder Rating Form (Appendix 6), which was completed by coders after reviewing the interviews. These indicators are also summarized in Table 2.

Depending on the pre-interview assessment of the applicant (i.e., first impressions), positive behavior or positive regard for applicant signaled a tendency to engage in a higher or lower level of confirmatory behavior. For example, positive behavior or positive regard for the
Table 2 – Interview behavior (interviewer’s regard toward the applicant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positive behavior or regard</th>
<th>Negative behavior or regard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions asked</strong></td>
<td>Supportive</td>
<td>challenging, testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbal attitude</strong></td>
<td>agreement, encouragement</td>
<td>demanding, (apparent) disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interview focus</strong></td>
<td>displayed a favorable orientation toward the applicant’s suitability or likelihood of acceptance, “sold” or promoted the Program to the applicant, provided information, examined applicant qualification to a lesser extent</td>
<td>displayed a less favorable orientation toward the applicant’s suitability or likelihood of acceptance, did not promote the Program, did not provide information, and examined applicant qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interviewing and vocal style</strong></td>
<td>positive: warm, understanding, sensitive, empathetic, considerate, nice, encouraging, approving, friendly, informal, humble, deferential, bright</td>
<td>negative: cold, not understanding, insensitive, not empathetic, inconsiderate, nasty, discouraging, disapproving, unfriendly, business like, arrogant, patronizing, dull, monotone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional expression and non-verbal behavior</strong></td>
<td>upbeat demeanor, eye contact, head nodding, verbal encouragers, smiling, involved body posture</td>
<td>confronting demeanor, no eye contact, no head nodding, no verbal encouragers, no smiling, disengaged body posture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

applicant indicated that interviewers engaged in confirmatory behavior when the pre-interview assessment or first impression was positive but a low level of confirmatory behavior when the pre-interview or first impression was negative. Alternatively, negative behavior or negative regard for an applicant indicated that interviewers engage in confirmatory behavior when the pre-interview assessment or first impressions was negative but a low level of confirmatory
behavior when the pre-interview assessment was positive. Dougherty et al. (1994) specified that positive regard for an applicant represented confirmatory behavior, when correlated with a positive level of first impressions about the applicant.

In order to calculate the index of interview behavior I used only the last three indicators of interview behavior – interview focus, interviewing and vocal style, and interviewer emotional expression and non-verbal behavior. Each of these three indicators were calculated by averaging the corresponding items that were measured on 7-point Likert scales and then centered so as the minimum value was -3 and the maximum value was +3.

The four items for the “interview focus” were: (a) displayed a favorable orientation toward the applicant’s suitability or likelihood of acceptance; (b) “sold” the Program; (c) provided information; (d) examined applicant qualifications. The 14 items for interviewing and vocal style are listed in the Appendix 3 and the six items for emotional expression and non-verbal behavior (also listed in the Appendix 3) were: (a) demeanor, behavioral style; (b) eye contact; (c) head nodding; (d) verbal encouragers; (e) smiling; and (f) body posture. Then, the index of confirmatory behavior was calculated by averaging these three indicators of interview behavior.

Whether interviewers engaged in high or low level of confirmatory behavior toward their interviewees was measured, for each interview, using two values: (1) first impressions indicated before the interview and (2) the index of (supportive) interview behavior during the interview. The interviewer confirmatory behavior for each interview was calculated as the statistical variance or spread of these two values subtracted from 18, which is the highest value of the variance. The variance is equal to the sum of the squared deviations from the mean and indicated how different the two values are. The variance was calculated using the formula:
where $\alpha_1$ and $\alpha_2$ represent the two values measured for each interview (first impressions and index of interview behavior), $\bar{\alpha}$ represents their average, and $n = 2$ is the number of values. According to Tables 3.1 and 3.2, interviewers engage in the highest level of confirmatory behavior (i.e., 18) when the variance is 0. This case corresponds to similar values for first impressions and index of interviewer behavior. As the values for first impressions and index of interviewer behavior are more different, the variance increases and confirmatory behavior decreases, indicating that interviewers engage in low level of confirmatory behavior. The lowest level of confirmatory behavior (i.e., 0) corresponds to the highest variance (i.e., 18), when the two variables took the most dissimilar values (i.e., +3 and -3). (Tables 3.1. and 3.2 convey the same information – the values of confirmatory behavior – displayed in two different forms: list and spreadsheet.)

**Applicant’s behavioral confirmation.** According to Dipboye’s (1992) model of self-fulfilling effect, applicants may respond in a manner consistent with interviewers’ behavior, that is, to engage in behavioral confirmation. The applicants’ behavioral confirmation was measured by averaging the coders’ ratings of items $E12 – E14$ from Appendix 3, which tapped the applicants’ communication and rapport with interviewers (i.e., “How much rapport do you believe that you had with this applicant?” “How would you rate this applicant with regard to his/her communication style?” “How would you rate your interaction with this applicant?”).

Consistent with Dipboye (1992) and Dougherty et al. (1994), these items refer to the applicants’ communication style and level of rapport with interviewers, as perceived by interviewers. Dipboye (1992) and Dougherty et al. (1994) made the assumption that higher level of rapport and more positive applicants’ communication style are indicators of applicants’
Table 3.1 – Interviewer’s confirmatory behavior (list form)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First impressions</th>
<th>Index of interview behavior</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Confirmatory behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
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<td>-3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>18</td>
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Table 3.2 – Interviewer’s confirmatory behavior (spreadsheet form)

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<thead>
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<th>First impressions</th>
<th>Index of interview behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very negative = -3</td>
<td>-3 18 17.5 16 13.5 10 5.5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative = -2</td>
<td>-2 17.5 18 17.5 16 13.5 10 5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly negative = -1</td>
<td>-1 16 17.5 18 17.5 16 13.5 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral = 0</td>
<td>0 13.5 16 17.5 18 17.5 16 13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly positive = +1</td>
<td>1 10 13.5 16 17.5 18 17.5 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive = +2</td>
<td>2 5.5 10 13.5 16 17.5 18 17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very positive = +3</td>
<td>3 0 5.5 10 13.5 16 17.5 18 18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

behavioral confirmation for positive interviewer behavior.

In order to calculate the degree to which applicants engaged in behavioral confirmation, the applicant’s level of rapport, communication style, and interaction (items E12 – E14) were
centered (-3 = no rapport, poor communication style, and no interaction to 3 = good rapport, excellent communication style, and good interaction) and then averaged for each interview. Finally, the values of the behavioral confirmation variable were calculated as the difference between 12 (which is the highest variance) and the variance of the values of three variables: first impressions, index of interview behavior, and the average of answers to the items $E12 – E14$. The highest level of behavioral confirmation corresponds to similar values of first impressions, index of interview behavior, and the average of the three items. As the values of first impressions, index of interview behavior, and the average of the items $E12 – E14$ are more different, their variance increases and the value of behavioral confirmation decreases.

**Control Variables**

Based on the previous research on the confirmatory behavior in the employment interview (Dipboye et al., 1984; Dougherty et al., 1994), I developed a set of control variables, including both demographic and situational control variables.

*Demographic characteristics.* The demographic variables are related to the interviewers who participated in this study and included: age, gender, work experience, education, and ethnic background. Demographic characteristics, in addition to personality and motivational variables, have been shown to influence the propensity to engage in confirmatory behavior. For example, London and Poplawski (1976) found that female interviewers tend to rate all applicants higher than do male interviewers, whereas Christiansen and Rosenthal (1982) suggested that the largest confirmation effects tend to occur among male interviewers, especially when they interview female applicants. Also, Furnham and Burbeck (1989) showed that more experienced
interviewers are less lenient in their evaluations, suggesting that interviewers’ job experience might be negatively correlated with their confirmatory behavior.

Situational control variables. The situational control variables that were considered are: the specificity of instructions, evaluation apprehension, and accountability pressures. Different interviewers may conduct interviews and make evaluations differently. Moreover, some interviewers may perceive more evaluation apprehension and accountability pressures than the others. These variables were measured by asking the interviewers to rate themselves with regard to: previous instructions received before the interview, how comfortable they feel when interviewing, and how accountable for their selection decisions they perceive to be.

Analyses

Hierarchical Linear Modeling Analyses

I used multilevel analyses with the objective of analyzing data at two different levels: interview level and interviewer level (assuming that each interviewer conducted eight interviews). It is likely that the interviewers’ personality and motivational traits manifested similarly across interviews. Accordingly, these traits were considered as “contexts” for all interviews conducted by the same interviewer and were incorporated into the analysis, as recommended by Kozlowski and Klein (2000).

In order to analyze the multilevel data from this study, I used hierarchical linear modeling (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Hierarchical linear modeling has been previously used to investigate questions arising in the interaction between individuals and situations (Griffin, 1997),
environment, person, and behavior (Vancouver, 1997), and micro and macro approaches to similar constructs (Seibert, Silver, & Randolph, 2004).

As indicated by Raudenbush and Bryk (2002), hierarchical linear modeling addresses three difficulties that have plagued analyses of multilevel data in organizational research: aggregation bias, misestimated standard errors, and heterogeneity of regression. Aggregation bias is manifested when the same variable has different meanings and, accordingly, may have different effects at the interview and interviewer levels. For instance, an interviewer’s tendency to form positive impressions and evaluations (i.e., leniency bias) may have influenced his/her interview behavior above and beyond the intensity of first impressions on a particular interview. At the interviewer level, intensity of first impressions was used as a proxy measure of the interviewer’s sensitivity and susceptibility to first impressions, whereas at the interview level it provided a measure of the specific conditions of that interpersonal interaction. Misestimated standard errors are likely to occur when the multilevel analysis overlooks the dependence among the interview behaviors of an interviewer. To address this problem, hierarchical linear modeling incorporated into the statistical model a unique random effect for each level of analysis and took into account variability in each random effect when estimating standard errors, as recommended by Raudenbush and Bryk (2002). Finally, by enabling the estimation of a separate set of regression coefficients for each interviewer and, then modeling the variation among interviewers with different dispositions, hierarchical linear modeling took into consideration the harmful effects of heterogeneity of regression that occurs when the relationships between dispositional and situational variables vary across interviewers.

As suggested by James and Williams (2000), the hierarchical linear modeling conceptually involves two simultaneous procedures. At level 1, the lower-level dependent
variable was regressed onto lower-level independent and control variables, and within-unit
intercepts (means) and slopes (relations) were estimated separately for each higher-level unit. If
unit intercepts or slopes varied significantly across units, they were treated, at level 2 analyses, as
outcomes. That is, the level 2 analyses modeled the effects of unit-level predictors on unit
intercepts and slopes, so that effects on intercepts indicated direct relations (i.e., main effect that
investigates whether an independent variable was related to the between-group variance in the
lower-level dependent variable after controlling for effects of the other independent variables)
and effects on slopes indicated cross-level interaction.

Specifically, in this study, hierarchical linear modeling analysis consisted of estimating
how much of the variance in the lowest level variable (i.e., interview behavior) was explained by
the higher level variables (i.e., interviewers’ dispositional characteristics and situational
variables). The relationship between dispositional characteristics and situational variables, and
interview behavior for each interviewer is described by the equation (1) that corresponds to the
level-1 model:

$$Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j} X_{1ij} + e_{ij}$$

(1)

where $Y_{ij}$ is the level-1 dependent variable, i.e., behavior of the interviewer $j$ during the
interview $i$ (it is assumed to be continuous and normally distributed);

$X_{1ij}$ is the level-1 independent variable (e.g., interviewer’s $j$ first impressions at the beginning
of the interview $i$);

$\beta_{0j}$ is the intercept that corresponds to the relationship within level-2 (i.e., interviewer $j$) that
corresponds to the mean level of interview behavior of the interviewer $j$;

$\beta_{1j}$ is the slope for the independent variables $1$ for the interviewer $j$; it corresponds to the
increase in measured interview behavior as the value of the independent variable
$1$ increases with one unit.
If the variance in the interview behavior that was explained by the independent variables included in the model was significantly greater than zero (as hypothesized), the means for the tendency to engage in a certain interview behavior (e.g., confirmatory behavior) were calculated for interviewers with different dispositions and interviewing under different situations. Finally, each of these means was regressed on the corresponding dispositional or situational variable, during the means-as-outcomes phase or level-2 conditional analyses (equations 2.1 and 2.2):

\[
\beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01} W_j + u_{0j} \tag{2.1}
\]

\[
\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11} W_j + u_{1j} \tag{2.2}
\]

where, \( W_j \) is an indicator variable that takes a value of one for high extremity of first impressions and a value of zero for low extremity of first impressions (i.e., moderate first impressions);

\( \gamma_{00} \) is the mean tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior for interviewers who form moderate first impressions;

\( \gamma_{01} \) is the mean difference in the tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior between the two conditions (i.e., low and high extremity of first impressions);

\( \gamma_{10} \) is the average first impressions – confirmatory behavior slope for low extremity of first impressions;

\( \gamma_{11} \) is the mean difference in first impressions – confirmatory behavior slopes between the two conditions;

\( u_{0j} \) is the unique effect of interviewer \( j \) on mean tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior holding \( W_j \) constant;

\( u_{1j} \) is the unique effect of interviewer \( j \) on the first impressions – confirmatory behavior slope holding \( W_j \) constant

(\( u_{0j} \) and \( u_{1j} \) are errors and represent level-2 random effects).

Output from these analyses includes an estimation of how much variance in the mean tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior was explained by differences in dispositional
variables (i.e., need-for-cognition) and situational variables (i.e., intensity of first impressions). In addition, this output includes the proportion of variance in individual interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior that was explained by each of the dispositional and situational variables. Table 4 indicates the level at which each variable was measured.

Table 4 – Level at which each variable were measured

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>H 1</th>
<th>H 2</th>
<th>H 3</th>
<th>H 4</th>
<th>RQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>Saucier &amp; Goldberg, 2002 IPIP equiv. of NEO-PI-R</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness to experience</td>
<td>Saucier &amp; Goldberg, 2002</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for cognitive closure</td>
<td>Houghton &amp; Grewal, 2000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for cognition</td>
<td>Cacioppo, Petty, &amp; Kao, 1984</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>direct measurement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First impressions</td>
<td>Chapman &amp; Rowe, 2001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regard</td>
<td>Dougherty, Turban, &amp; Callender, 1994</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions asked</td>
<td>Dipboye, Fontenelle, &amp; Garner, 1984</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>DV</td>
<td>DV</td>
<td>DV</td>
<td>DV</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence of abstract or concrete language</td>
<td>Semin &amp; Fiedler, 1988</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant behavioral confirmation</td>
<td>Dipboye, 1992 Dougherty, Turban, &amp; Callender, 1994</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer’s demographic characteristics</td>
<td>self-report</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s demographic characteristics</td>
<td>self-report</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>self-report</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity of instructions</td>
<td>self-report</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation apprehension</td>
<td>self-report</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability pressures</td>
<td>self-report</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample size and power analysis

Raudenbush and Bryk (2002) recommended that the optimal number of subjects at the level-1, which is noted \( n \) and represents the number of interviews that are recorded for each interviewer, should be as large as possible when the cost of sampling at level-2 (i.e., \( N \) number of interviewers) is large. Intra-class correlation coefficient \( ICC \) represents the correlation between randomly chosen units of analysis (i.e., interviews) in the same group (i.e., interviews performed by the same interviewers). This study was based on repeated measures over a short time period (all interviews performed by the same interviewers took place in March-April 2006). The number of units (i.e., interviews) \( N \) in this study was 331, formed of \( J = 41 \) interviewers and \( n \approx 8 \) interviews conducted by each interviewer.

The harmonic mean of group sizes, which represent the number of interviews conducted by each interviewer, was 7.8248. Using the harmonic mean, the design effect \( DE \) that measures the loss of information due to clustering was \( 1 + (7.8248 - 1) 0.1896 = 2.2940 \). With non-zero \( ICC \), as it was the case in this analysis, adding a new observation from an existing group (i.e., a new interview conducted by one the interviewers) did not add an “observation’s worth” of data.

Using \( DE \), the effective sample size was \( (41 \times 7.8248) / 2.2940 = 139.9 \). Accordingly, the clustered sample in this analysis was equivalent to a simple random sample of 140 participants (i.e., interviewees and interviews). However, had the analysis ignored the clustering and run as if observation were independent, the independence of errors assumption would have been violated, which would have downwardly biased standard errors and inflated the probability of making Type I error.
For a significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ (representing the Type I error probability or the likelihood of rejecting a true null hypothesis) and an equivalent sample size of 140 participants, the power level is 0.72 for a small effect size ($r = 0.15$), 0.92 for an effect size of $r = 0.20$, and 0.99 for a medium effect size ($r = 0.25$) (Cohen, 1977, p. 312).
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Coder Reliability Analyses

The first analysis had the objective of assessing the reliability of the coding of data. Each interview was recorded and then evaluated with regard to the interviewer’s behavior by two different coders who, each, completed one coding sheet. Before averaging the ratings for each item on the coding sheet and for each interview, the coder reliability of the two ratings, as assessed through the inter-rater agreement, was calculated using two different procedures.

First, in order to establish the extent of consensus on the coding of the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior by the two raters, the correlations between the scores of the two raters who rated the same interviews and percentage of times when they were in perfect agreement were calculated. This procedure treated the ratings as continuous data (ranging from 1 to 5) and produced correlations from .45 to .95 with an average correlation between the coders of .68. The correlations are reported in the next to the last column of Table 5 and indicate a moderate level of agreement between coders on most of the items. The percentage of times when raters where in perfect agreement are reported in the last column of Table 5.

The second approach treated the ratings as categorical data and assessed agreement on ratings correcting for chance agreement. Specifically, inter-rater reliability was assessed using the kappa coefficients (Gwet, 2002). Inter-rater reliability is an indicator of homogeneity that is based on the correlation of scores between the two raters who rated the same item. Table 5 also provides the kappa estimate, the associated standard error, and the lower and upper bounds of the 95% confidence interval. The confidence interval contains a “true” kappa coefficient with a
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Kappa</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Conf. Limits</th>
<th>Corr % agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Interview time</td>
<td>0.8559</td>
<td>0.0148</td>
<td>0.8270 – 0.8849</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Type of questions asked and other incidents attributed to the interviewer during the interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Questions asked by interviewer</td>
<td>0.7382</td>
<td>0.0205</td>
<td>0.6979 – 0.7784</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Closed-answer questions asked</td>
<td>0.6041</td>
<td>0.0466</td>
<td>0.5427 – 0.7255</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Follow-up or probing questions</td>
<td>0.5963</td>
<td>0.0312</td>
<td>0.5350 – 0.6575</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interviewer-agreed statements</td>
<td>0.5615</td>
<td>0.0400</td>
<td>0.4832 – 0.6398</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Items of interviewer laughter</td>
<td>0.6298</td>
<td>0.0290</td>
<td>0.5729 – 0.6868</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interviewer general orientation toward the applicant: program-selling vs. evaluating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Favorable suitability assessment</td>
<td>0.4912</td>
<td>0.0358</td>
<td>0.4210 – 0.5615</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Program sold to the applicant</td>
<td>0.6175</td>
<td>0.0330</td>
<td>0.5528 – 0.6821</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Program information provided</td>
<td>0.6203</td>
<td>0.0285</td>
<td>0.5645 – 0.6761</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Applicant capabilities examined</td>
<td>0.4577</td>
<td>0.0332</td>
<td>0.3926 – 0.5228</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Interview style as perceived in the interviewers behavior toward the interviewed applicant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Warm – Cold</td>
<td>0.5889</td>
<td>0.0310</td>
<td>0.5282 – 0.6496</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>0.4599</td>
<td>0.0333</td>
<td>0.3945 – 0.5252</td>
<td>0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sensitive – Insensitive</td>
<td>0.5209</td>
<td>0.0332</td>
<td>0.4558 – 0.5860</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Empathetic – Not empathetic</td>
<td>0.5432</td>
<td>0.0179</td>
<td>0.5082 – 0.5782</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Considerate – Inconsiderate</td>
<td>0.4104</td>
<td>0.0371</td>
<td>0.3376 – 0.4831</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Nice-Nasty</td>
<td>0.4777</td>
<td>0.0367</td>
<td>0.4059 – 0.5496</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Encouraging – Discouraging</td>
<td>0.5021</td>
<td>0.0212</td>
<td>0.4606 – 0.5437</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Approving – Disapproving</td>
<td>0.5024</td>
<td>0.0340</td>
<td>0.4358 – 0.5691</td>
<td>0.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Friendly – Unfriendly</td>
<td>0.5413</td>
<td>0.0346</td>
<td>0.4735 – 0.6090</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Business-like – Informal</td>
<td>0.4762</td>
<td>0.0358</td>
<td>0.4061 – 0.5464</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Arrogant – Humble</td>
<td>0.4228</td>
<td>0.0362</td>
<td>0.3519 – 0.4938</td>
<td>0.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Patronizing – Deferential</td>
<td>0.2916</td>
<td>0.0381</td>
<td>0.2168 – 0.3663</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Dull-and-monotone – Bright</td>
<td>0.5434</td>
<td>0.0311</td>
<td>0.4825 – 0.6043</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>High-pitched – Wishy-washy</td>
<td>0.4035</td>
<td>0.0385</td>
<td>0.3280 – 0.4791</td>
<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Confronting vs upbeat demeanor</td>
<td>0.5503</td>
<td>0.0351</td>
<td>0.4814 – 0.6192</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Interviewer non-verbal communication toward the applicant during the interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>0.5415</td>
<td>0.0405</td>
<td>0.4621 – 0.6208</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Head nodding</td>
<td>0.5486</td>
<td>0.0327</td>
<td>0.4846 – 0.6126</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Verbal encouragers</td>
<td>0.6087</td>
<td>0.0304</td>
<td>0.5492 – 0.6683</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Smiling</td>
<td>0.5412</td>
<td>0.0313</td>
<td>0.4798 – 0.6026</td>
<td>0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Body posture</td>
<td>0.5323</td>
<td>0.0334</td>
<td>0.4668 – 0.5977</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Interviewed applicant non-verbal communication toward the interviewer during the interview</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Matching demeanor</td>
<td>0.5373</td>
<td>0.0328</td>
<td>0.4730 – 0.6015</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
probability of 95% (Gwet, 2002). A rule of thumb for the interpretation of kappa’s values is that kappa larger than .20 but smaller than .39 is considered to be fair, values between .40 and .59 correspond to moderate inter-rater reliability, for kappa larger than .60 but smaller than .79 the inter-rater reliability is substantial, and kappa larger than .80 is considered to be outstanding inter-rater reliability (Landis & Koch, 1977). According to this interpretation, the minimum value of kappa, when coders are in complete disagreement, is negative, and the maximum value of kappa, when there is perfect agreement, is 1. Kappa is 0 when there is no more agreement than expected under independence of ratings.

Overall, the inter-rater reliability values from Table 5 suggest the existence of a moderate degree of consensus among different raters on the coding of the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior. Most inter-rater reliability values – 23 out of 31 – are moderate. Six inter-rater reliability values indicate that there was a substantial degree of agreement, one value indicates a fair degree of agreement, and, finally, one value indicates an outstanding degree of agreement between the coders. Meanwhile, the correlation coefficients for each of the 31 items are indicated in the last column of Table 5.

Correlation Analyses

Simple descriptive statistics (including means and standard deviations), along with the correlation matrix and reliability estimates (Cronbach α) were summarized in Table 6. Given the large number of variables and size of Table 6, the simple descriptive statistics from Table 6 were calculated, without taking into consideration the nested structure of data (i.e., the fact that the data were collected at two different levels: the interview and interviewer). Therefore, the
## TABLE 6
Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Variables

|                     | Mean | SD    | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9   | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16  | 17  | 18  | 19  | 20  |
|---------------------|------|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. First impressions (entered) | 52  | 1.39  | .79 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 2. Impressions extremity (extreme=1, moderate=0) | 32   | 4.7   | .23** |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 3. Final evaluation (entered) | 0    | 1.09  | .45** | .11* | .95 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 4. Total questions | 18.84 | 6.58   | -14* | .08 | -17** | .74 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 5. Type of questions | 72    | 1.30  | -01 | -01 | -02 | .20** | .64 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 6. Initial questions | 12.01 | 3.87   | -10 | -07 | -10 | .68** | .17** |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 7. Follow-up, probe | 3.03  | 2.65   | -08 | -01 | -11* | .26** | .34** | .16** | .60 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 8. Agree statements | 1.30  | 1.71   | .01 | .07 | .14* | -21** | .08 | -30** | .07 | .56 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 9. Laughter incidents | 2.62  | 3.22   | -03 | -04 | -01 | .01 | -06 | -14* | .04 | .21** | .67 |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 10. Age | 25.77  | 5.06   | .16** | .07 | .15** | -06 | -03 | -05 | -12* | -10 | -05 | -     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 11. GPA | 3.63  | 2.76   | .06 | -02 | -05 | -06 | -11** | -02 | .02 | -02 | -08 | -03 | -02 | -     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 12. Gender (women=1) | .47   | .50    | .11 | -03 | .01 | -11 | -07 | -09 | -13* | -02 | -08 | -01 | .01 | -     |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 13. Ethnicity | 1.40  | .94    | -04 | -09 | -01 | -20** | .01 | -16** | .08 | .31** | .24** | -14** | -01 | .02 | -     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 14. Work experience | 2.73  | 4.21   | .01 | -03 | .04 | -10 | -03 | -17** | -07 | -08 | .84** | .10 | -11 | -08 | -     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| 15. Applicant experience | 7.54  | 6.37   | .06 | .01 | .03 | -19** | -14* | -19** | -08 | .80 | .30** | .19** | -01 | -04 | .24** | .48** | -     |     |     |     |     |
| 16. Interview experience | 11.33 | 35.53  | .09 | .05 | .06 | -11** | -06 | -20** | .08 | .06 | .08 | -07 | -01 | -18** | .19** | .02 | 19** | -     |     |     |     |
| 17. Openness to experience | 0     | .47    | .10 | .04 | .14* | -21** | .01 | -14* | -02 | 22** | -04 | -08 | .05 | .27** | .57** | -24** | 25** | -01 | .79 |     |     |
| 18. Consent to experience | 0     | .43    | -02 | .05 | .03 | -07 | -01 | -07 | -02 | .10 | -06 | 13* | .15* | -36** | -24** | 14* | .04 | .10 | .07 | .86 |     |
| 19. Need for closure | 0     | .33    | -06 | -06 | -06 | -18** | -07 | .08 | -22** | .03 | .06 | -16** | -08 | -26** | -30** | .01 | .06 | .56** | -10 | -66 | -     |
| 20. Need for cognition | 0     | .53    | .22* | -03 | 19** | -23* | .01 | -24** | -07 | 28** | .08 | .23** | -01 | -08 | .39** | .33** | 46** | -10 | .52** | .42** | -41** | .89 |

Notes: Numbers followed by the ‘**’ sign in the table above indicate correlation coefficients that are significant at \( p \leq .05 \) Numbers followed by the ‘***’ sign in the table above indicate correlation coefficients that are significant at \( p \leq .01 \)
| 31. | Orientation (program-sell vs. evaluating) | 4.92 | .93 | .14 | .08 | .21** | -.35** | -.15** | -.50** | -.16** | .32** | .16** | -.10 | -.06 | .13 | .13 | .31** | -.02 | .22** | .41** | .24** | .11 | -.16** | .21** |
| 32. | Interview style | 4.97 | .75 | .03 | .03 | .11* | -.18** | -.06 | -.26** | .03 | -.35** | -.30** | -.09 | -.10 | .17** | .29** | .09 | .26** | .30** | .17** | .21** | -.20** | .32** |
| 33. | Non-verbal behavior | 4.93 | .71 | .01 | -.01 | .14* | -.08 | .05 | -.12** | .21** | .19** | .20** | .02 | -.19** | -.16** | .04 | .20** | .32** | .12 | -.01 | .09 | .04 | .20** |
| 34. | Confirmatory behavior based on total questions (variable #4 in this table) | 11.11 | 28.31 | .94** | 19** | .36** | -.06 | .01 | -.01 | -.06 | -.01 | -.03 | .14** | .09 | .07 | -.04 | .01 | .05 | .05 | .08 | -.02 | -.05 | 10 |
| 35. | Confirmatory behavior based on question type (variable #5 in this table) | .47 | 2.22 | .44** | 15** | .17** | -.03 | .41** | .08 | -.10** | .08 | -.08 | -.01 | .02 | -.07 | -.01 | -.05 | -.04 | .05 | .05 | .01 | -.10 | 04 |
| 36. | Confirmatory behavior based on initiated topics (variable #6 in this table) | 7.38 | 17.74 | .94** | 21** | .38** | -.06 | .05 | .06 | -.07 | -.04 | -.06 | 13** | .08 | .07 | -.05 | -.01 | .04 | .02 | .08 | -.08 | -.06 | 11** |
| 37. | Confirmatory behavior based on question probe (variable #7 in this table) | 1.73 | 6.31 | .72** | 13** | .34** | -.08 | .10 | -.07 | .21** | -.02 | -.08 | .07 | .05 | .02 | .01 | .01 | -.01 | 17** | .10 | .04 | -.01 | 08 |
| 38. | Confirmatory behavior based on agreement (variable #8 in this table) | .86 | 3.62 | .58** | 17** | .34** | -.11* | .06 | -.15** | -.06 | .38** | -.04 | .05 | -.03 | .09 | .08 | -.05 | .07 | 12* | .17** | -.05 | -.12* | 12* |
| 39. | Confirmatory behavior based on laughter incidents (variable #9 in this table) | 1.57 | 5.64 | .62** | .05 | .27** | -.08 | -.06 | -.12* | -.12** | -.02 | .36** | .01 | .05 | .01 | .04 | .01 | .08 | .10 | .08 | -.06 | -.04 | 07 |
| 40. | Confirmatory behavior based on orientation (variable #21 in this table) | 2.10 | 4.51 | .94** | 22** | .45** | -.17** | -.01 | .17** | -.06 | .05 | -.01 | 12* | .02 | .07 | .03 | -.01 | .08 | 22** | .15** | -.03 | -.09 | 11** |
| 41. | Confirmatory behavior based on non-verbal behaviors (variable #22 in this table) | 3.30 | 7.15 | .99** | 22** | .45** | -.14* | -.01 | .11 | -.07 | .03 | -.01 | 15** | .04 | .09 | -.01 | .01 | .07 | 11* | 12* | .01 | -.08 | 13** |
| 42. | Aggregate confirmatory behavior | 3.25 | 6.98 | .99** | 22** | .47** | -.15** | -.02 | -.10 | -.06 | .01 | -.04 | 16** | .05 | .09 | -.03 | .03 | .08 | 10 | 11* | -.01 | -.06 | 13** |
| 43. | Matching behavior | 16.77 | 1.68 | .56** | -.40 | .24** | -.03 | -.01 | .01 | -.08 | -.14* | -.07 | .05 | .03 | 14* | -.13* | -.05 | -.03 | .03 | .06 | -.13* | .04 | -.05 |
| 44. | Time pressure | 1.19 | 1.27 | .07 | .01 | .05 | -.02 | -.03 | .05 | -.01 | .01 | -.04 | -.03 | .05 | -.11 | .06 | .02 | .10 | 11* | .09 | .03 | -.03 | .08 |
| 45. | Emotional tone pressure | 0 | 6.0 | 15** | .07 | .04 | .04 | .08 | -.01 | -.08 | -.10 | -.17** | .16** | -.16** | .15** | -.34** | .01 | .30** | -.09 | .28** | .04 | 18** | -.08 |
| 46. | Impression management | 2.66 | 6.2 | .07 | -.06 | .01 | -.04 | -.02 | -.13* | .09 | -.10 | .06 | .19** | .17** | .19** | .19** | .03 | -.08 | .03 | .27** | -.31** | .03 | -.14* |
| 47. | Interview training | 1.28 | 8.1 | -.04 | .11 | -.05 | -.07 | .02 | -.01 | .01 | -.02 | .01 | -.20** | .22** | .01 | -.19** | -.32** | .40** | .20** | .01 | -.18** | -.19** | 21** |
| 48. | Feeling during interview (comfortable or tense) | .56 | 10 | -.04 | -.02 | .03 | -.04 | -.17** | -.07 | -.04 | .01 | -.11** | -.27** | .08 | 15** | .02 | -.04 | .23** | .27** | .10 | -.03 | -.10 | .03 |
| 49. | Responsibility | 1.15 | 5.8 | .13* | -.11 | -.14* | -.01 | .04 | .08 | -.02 | .12* | -.03 | .48** | -.17** | -.02 | .19** | -.11* | .07 | .02 | .04 | .09 | -.06 | -.03 |
| 50. | Perceived ability to accurately evaluate | 1.55 | .66 | .10 | 12* | .03 | -.11* | -.09 | .01 | -.08 | .23** | -.15** | -.16** | .20** | .07 | .48** | -.28** | 15** | .14** | .54** | .19** | -.55** | 32** |
| 51. | Interview time | 39.28 | 4.93 | .04 | -.04 | .18** | 15** | .01 | 10 | 10 | 13* | 17** | .04 | .08 | 16** | -.09 | -.07 | -.09 | .06 | .04 | .19** | -.07 | -.06 |

Notes: Numbers followed by the ‘**’ sign in the table above indicate correlation coefficients that are significant at p ≤ .05
Numbers followed by the ‘***’ sign in the table above indicate correlation coefficients that are significant at p ≤ .01
TABLE 6 (continuing)

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<td>.05</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>13*</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>14**</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Numbers followed by the ** sign in the table above indicate correlation coefficients that are significant at p ≤ .05
Numbers followed by the *** sign in the table above indicate correlation coefficients that are significant at p ≤ .01
reported significances of the correlation coefficients could be inflated as a result of associations involving level 1 (i.e., interview level) variables. Following the measurement of different indicators of confirmatory behavior, ten different types of confirmatory behavior were computed (variables 24-33 in Table 6), with the last one, aggregate confirmatory behavior, incorporating the previous ones.

As illustrated in Table 6, first impressions, as well as three main indicators of the interviewers’ behavior during the interview – orientation, positive interview style, and non-verbal behavior –, were positively correlated with the final evaluation of applicants, suggesting that interviewers did engage in confirmatory behavior. The interviewees’ matching demeanor, which measures the degree to which the interviewee replicated the interviewers’ behavior during the interview, was not correlated with confirmatory behavior, but was related to the interviewers’ orientation during the interview (r = .13) and interview style (r = .18).

Multilevel Analyses

Rationale

The data collected for this study was structured at two different levels: individual (i.e., interviewee or interview level) and group (i.e., interviewer level). The sample of data used in this analysis had multiple groups or “clusters,” where each group was formed of all the interviews conducted by one interviewer. Intra-class correlation ICC coefficient assessed the within-group similarity, which is the degree to which the observations from the same group were similar. When ICC = 0, all variance is considered to be within-group variance; therefore, the grouping doesn’t matter and the multilevel analysis is not required. The ICC of the confirmatory
behavior dependent variable equaled 0.1896 and was calculated as the proportion of total between-groups variance: 39.8737 / (39.8737 + 170.42) = 0.1896, which is in line with typical ICC values for behavioral research.

**Hypothesis 1 Analyses**

The output for the multilevel regression analysis that predicted interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior based on their conscientiousness and time pressure is represented below:

Predicted confirmatory behavior = 16.7734** - 0.4163 x Conscientiousness +
+ 0.3619 x Time pressure - 0.3064 x Conscientiousness * Time pressure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{00}$ (intercept)</td>
<td>16.7734**</td>
<td>0.1345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{10}$ (conscientiousness – behavior slope)</td>
<td>-0.4163</td>
<td>0.3183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{20}$ (time pressure – behavior slope)</td>
<td>0.3619</td>
<td>0.2269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{12}$ (conscientiousness – time pressure interaction)</td>
<td>-0.3064</td>
<td>0.4735</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Random Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{00}$ (between-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>0.4346**</td>
<td>0.1714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sigma^2$ (within-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>2.3475**</td>
<td>0.1977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fixed effects in the table above represent the estimates for the average regression equation within interviewers. Accordingly, the average interviewer level of confirmatory behavior was 16.77. However, none of the fixed effects, with the exception of the intercept term, is significantly different from 0. Therefore, no support was found for the first hypothesis that predicted an interaction effect of conscientiousness and time pressure in predicting confirmatory behavior. Moreover, by calculating the residual intraclass correlation, 0.4346 / (0.4346 + 2.3475) = 0.1562 it is concluded that about 15.6% of the variance in confirmatory behavior is between interviewers. The intraclass correlation represents the proportion of variance in the
dependent variable that is between interviewers. Given that the total between-interviewer variance is 18.9% (as calculated in the previous section), it can be concluded that there is still similarity in confirmatory behavior among different interviews conducted by the same interviewer after controlling for the effects of conscientiousness and time pressure.

**Hypothesis 2 Analyses**

The output for the multilevel analysis that predicted interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior based on their openness to experience is represented below:

Predicted confirmatory behavior = 16.7730** - 0.1841 x Openness to experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{00}$ (intercept)</td>
<td>16.7730**</td>
<td>0.1389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{10}$ (openness to experience – behavior slope)</td>
<td>0.1841</td>
<td>0.2943</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Random Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{00}$ (between-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>0.4856**</td>
<td>0.1782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sigma^2$ (within-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>2.3468**</td>
<td>0.1976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This hypothesis did not receive support. As the openness to experience value increased, the confirmatory behavior value increased, and the slope coefficient was not significant (at $p < 0.05$). The intraclass correlation is $0.4856 / (0.4856 + 2.3468) = 0.1714$ suggests that the openness to experience cannot account for the proportion of variance in confirmatory behavior that is between interviewers. The two random-effect components estimate the variance between the interviewers and within the interviewers, respectively. As the two random-effect components from the table above suggest, the variance within each interviewer is larger than the variance between interviewers.
Hypothesis 3 Analyses

The output for the multilevel analysis that predicted interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior based on their need for cognitive closure is represented below:

Predicted confirmatory behavior = 16.7748** + 0.2433 x Need for cognitive closure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{00}$ (intercept)</td>
<td>16.7748**</td>
<td>0.1393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{10}$ (need for cognitive closure – behavior slope)</td>
<td>0.2433</td>
<td>0.4229</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Random Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{00}$ (between-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>0.4909**</td>
<td>0.1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sigma^2$ (within-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>2.3452**</td>
<td>0.1973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where the intercept was significant (as indicated by **).

Accordingly, the overall expected value of the criterion, confirmatory behavior, was 16.7748 ($t_{39 df} = 120.39$, $p < 0.0001$) units, when the predictor, need for cognitive closure, was zero. As the need for cognitive closure value increased, the confirmatory behavior value slightly increased, but the need for cognitive closure – confirmatory behavior slope coefficient was not significant. The intraclass correlation is $0.4909 / (0.4909 + 2.3452) = 0.1731$ suggests that the need for cognitive closure cannot account for the proportion of variance in confirmatory behavior that is between interviewers.

After controlling for three other situational conditions, accuracy instructions, evaluation apprehension, and accountability pressures that may lower need for closure, as suggested by Richter and Kruglanski (1999), the hypothesis 3 was still not supported.
Hypothesis 4 Analyses

The output for the multilevel analysis that predicted interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior based on their need for cognition and extremity of first impressions regarding their interviewees is represented below:

Predicted confirmatory behavior = 17.2176** -
- 0.3489* x Need for cognition -
- 1.4089** x Extremity of first impressions +
+ 0.3019 x Need for cognition * Extremity of first impressions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{00}$ (intercept)</td>
<td>17.2176**</td>
<td>0.0938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{01}$ (need for cognition – behavior slope)</td>
<td>-0.3489*</td>
<td>0.1790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{10}$ (extremity of impressions – behavior slope)</td>
<td>-1.4089**</td>
<td>0.3269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{11}$ (need for cognition – extremity interaction)</td>
<td>0.3019</td>
<td>0.6074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Random Effect</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{00}$ (between-interviewer intercept variability)</td>
<td>0.09996</td>
<td>0.0838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{01}$ (covariance between intercepts and slopes)</td>
<td>0.2010</td>
<td>0.1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{11}$ (between-interviewer slope variability)</td>
<td>2.8010**</td>
<td>0.8895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sigma^2$ (within-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>1.3502**</td>
<td>0.1213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where the intercept, slope coefficient for the “Extremity of first impressions” variable, and the intercept term were significant (as indicated by **).

According to this output, the expected value of confirmatory behavior when the two predictors were zero was 17.2176. As the values of the two predictors increase, the expected value of the confirmatory behavior decreased, suggesting that high need-for-cognition interviewers who formed extreme first impressions engaged in lower levels of confirmatory behavior than low need-for-cognition interviewers who formed more moderate first impressions. The effect of the extremity of first impressions on confirmatory behavior and the effect of need for cognition were both significant. However, the effect of the interaction term between the extremity of first impressions and need for cognition on confirmatory behavior was not found significant.
To further analyze the relationship between need for cognition, extremity of first impressions, and confirmatory behavior, a model of moderation was tested:

**Extremity of first impressions = 0 (moderate first impressions):**

Predicted confirmatory behavior = 17.2176 - 0.3489 * Need for cognition

**Extremity of first impressions = 1 (extreme first impressions):**

Predicted confirmatory behavior = 15.8087 – 0.0470 x Need for cognition

This model analyzed the interaction between need for cognition and extremity of first impressions and its effect on confirmatory behavior. While the need for cognition predicted the engagement in confirmatory behavior, as does the extremity of first impressions, the two-way interaction term involving need for cognition and extremity of first impressions did not predict confirmatory behavior over and above the main effects of the two predictors: $\chi^2 (1, 322)$ criterion ($1093.1 - 1092.1 = 1.0$) was not significant, as it was smaller than $\chi^2 (1, 322)$ value at $\alpha = 0.05$.

The relation between need for cognition and confirmatory behavior, in both cases – when interviewers formed moderate first impressions and when they formed extreme first impressions – is represented in Figure 3. To summarize, low need-for-cognition interviewers who formed moderate first impressions (either positive or negative) were the most likely to engage in confirmatory behavior, while high need-for-cognition interviewers who formed moderate first impressions engaged in the low level of confirmatory behavior.

**Research Question Analyses**

Although not a hypothesis, the research question in this study investigated if the interviewee’s matching demeanor, as assessed by the degree to which the interviewee’s body posture, legs and arms position, and distance from the table matched the interviewer’s, was
predicted by the interviewer’s confirmatory behavior. As suggested by the output below, the interviewer’s confirmatory behavior was found to significantly predict the interviewee’s matching demeanor:

\[
\text{Predicted matching demeanor} = 1.1597^* + 0.5716^{**} \times \text{Confirmatory behavior}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fixed Effect</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{00}$ (intercept)</td>
<td>1.1597*</td>
<td>0.5061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\gamma_{10}$ (confirmatory behavior – matching demeanor slope)</td>
<td>0.5716**</td>
<td>0.02997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Random Effect</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\tau_{00}$ (between-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>0.04767*</td>
<td>0.03357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\sigma^2$ (within-interviewer variance component)</td>
<td>0.7371**</td>
<td>0.06242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

where the all coefficients were significant.
According to this output, the expected increase in the value of matching demeanor for each unit increase in the value of confirmatory behavior was $0.5716^{**}$ ($t_{280df} = 19.07$) units, which suggests that, as interviewers engaged in more confirmatory behavior, interviewees engaged in more matching demeanor. This value was significant.

Finally, to summarize this section, Table 7 includes an overview of all hypotheses and the research question, according to which one hypothesis was supported and the research question revealed that the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior drive the interviewees’ matching demeanor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis or Research Question</th>
<th>Support for the Hypothesized Relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypotheses 1a, 1b</strong>: Conscientiousness is negatively related to confirmatory behavior; this relation is weaker for brief interviews</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 2</strong>: Openness to experience is negatively related to confirmatory behavior</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 3</strong>: Need for cognitive closure is positively related to confirmatory behavior</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis 4</strong>: Intensity of first impressions moderates the relation between need for cognition and confirmatory behavior</td>
<td>Supported: low need-for-cognition interviewers who formed moderate first impressions are more likely to engage in confirmatory behavior than interviewers who formed extreme first impressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question</strong>: Is the applicant’s behavioral confirmation related to interviewer’s confirmatory behavior?</td>
<td>Support for the confirmatory behavior – matching behavior relationship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This dissertation research builds upon previous research on less-than-rational decision-making, especially research on the effect of primacy heuristics (i.e., first impressions) on interviewers’ behavior toward interviewees during the employment interview. Based upon conceptual contributions and empirical evidence regarding the interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behaviors, this research tried to identify circumstances under which interviewers are more likely to engage in these behaviors. One of the premises of this research was that individual traits of interviewers (i.e., dispositional factors), characteristics of the interview (i.e., situational factors), and interactions between these traits and characteristics combine to play a role in the interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior.

The hypotheses of this research stated that two of the interviewers’ personality traits (conscientiousness and openness to experiences), two characteristics of the interview (time pressure and extremity of first impressions formed by interviewers), and two motivational traits (interviewers’ need for cognition and need for cognitive closure) predict the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior. In addition, this study explored the degree to which the interviewees engaged in behavioral confirmation, which are behaviors that are elicited by the interviewer. While the interviewer’s confirmatory behavior can elicit many different behaviors, this study focused on only one specific type of behavioral confirmation: the interviewee’s behavior that is consistent, more specifically similar, with the interviewer’s behavior. That is, I explored the degree to which interviewees tend to imitate their interviewers’ body language (i.e., posture, distance from the interview table, and arms and legs position) during the employment interview.
The results provide empirical support for the hypothesis that the variation in the interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior is related to situational factors, as well as to interviewers’ traits. Specifically, support was found for the effect of need for cognition and extremity of first impressions on confirmatory behavior. Support was not found for the tendency of openness to experience, need for cognitive closure, and conscientiousness to explain confirmatory behavior.

The analyses of the second and third hypotheses revealed that openness to experience and need for cognitive closure do not explain the interviewers’ tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior. An explanation for these effects may be based on the observation that the employment interview has different characteristics than most other evaluation and decision-making processes. Specifically, interview evaluation is more complex and taxing, since interviewers usually make, over short periods of time, consequential evaluations of unknown individuals. It may be that some interviewers tend to be less involved in the evaluation during employment interviews than they are in other decisional processes, as suggested by the manifest tendency to rely on heuristics and other judgmental shortcuts. As a consequence, interviewers may tend to assert control, decide in more of a quick and dirty manner, and operate in a less diagnostic fashion than other evaluators or decision-makers. Therefore, instead of following a rational decision-making procedure (i.e., collect all information available, process it extensively, elaborate as many decisional alternatives as possible, generate criteria to compare those alternatives etc.), interviewers may begin their interviews by adhering to one decisional alternative and, subsequently testing it. This study suggests that some interviewers may even achieve higher validity with a decisional format that is based on the early formation of an initial decision.
This research study is one in a stream of research that suggests that interviewers may engage in less-than-rational evaluations that are based on the use of heuristics and that these evaluations can have consequences for validity (e.g., Dipboye, 1982; Dougherty et al., 1986; Dougherty & Turban, 1999; Dreher, Ash, & Hancock, 1988; Macan & Dipboye, 1990). As speculated by Eder and Harris (1999) and Dougherty and Turban (1999), interviewers may rely on first impressions, adhere early on to a decisional alternative, and engage in confirmatory behavior. These interviewers may actually be more motivated to make accurate decisions and valid evaluations. Despite the fact that their evaluations may not follow a rational decision-making model (or, maybe, because of this fact, as suggested by Kruglanski, 1989), these interviewers do not want to prove themselves wrong and are more engaged in gathering and analyzing information.

A possible explanation for this study’s findings and apparently supporting the suggestion that less-than-rational evaluators may be more involved during the interviews they conduct is based on the directional motivation concept (Kruglanski, 1989). According to Kruglanski (1989), directional motivation may originate from either esteem concerns that stimulate the evaluators’ ego-enhancing attributions or control concerns related to boosting predictability and avoiding uncertainties and ambiguities. Consequently, directionally-motivated evaluators may exercise the ability to apply intuition, insight, emotional assessment or other non-linear thinking styles (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2004) that may help to consistently prove themselves right (i.e., make accurate evaluations). These evaluations may be not only accurate, but also efficient, considering the limited time and effort spent, as well as gratifying, considering the comfort derived from conducting interviews in which evaluators perceive to have the “upper hand” by confirming their initial predictions about interviewees.
Consequently, interviewers who engage in confirmatory behavior may also be more open to new experiences that can confirm their pre-established decisional alternative and less motivated to find a closure to their cognitive processes. They may be more committed to and accountable for the evaluation outcomes and work harder. If this is true, as the results of this study seem to suggest, then the interviewers’ confirmatory behavior is not to be necessarily criticized, but rather viewed in a new, more favorable light.

Finally, the analysis of the study’s research question about the interviewees’ behavioral confirmation has one interesting implication: the interviewers’ actual behavior was found to significantly predict the interviewees’ matching demeanor (i.e., behavioral confirmation). Interviewees who initially formed positive impressions and faced, during the interview, warm, understanding, sensitive, more considerate and empathic, encouraging, friendly, approving, deferential, and humble interviewers tended to engage in matching demeanor to a larger extent than those who faced interviewers who were characterized by the opposite interview style. Meanwhile, interviewees who formed positive impressions and faced supportive interviewer behavior, in the form of nonverbal behavior and information about the Program they interviewed for, are more likely to engage in matching demeanor than interviewees who formed positive impressions but did not supportive interviewer behavior. This suggestion may have implications for the interviewers’ training.

Theoretical Contributions and Implications

The employment interview is by far the most widely used selection technique and the most important factor used in the selection decision (Dipboye, 1992). Furthermore, according to Bell (1992), the employment interview is the exclusive method for selecting job applicants for
85-90% of all companies. Research studies, including meta-analyses found that structured interviews can be quite valid (Chapman & Rowe, 2001; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). Meanwhile, as emphasized in the 2004 Federal Human Capital Survey, many organizational members believe that their organizations make poor evaluation and selection decisions, even when using structured employment interviews. It directly follows that the effectiveness of the employment interview as the main selection technique is questionable. Setting the stage for a paradox, at the same time many organizational evaluators and interviewers are apparently confident that they are generally able to identify individual strength and weaknesses and accurately characterize other individuals. Therefore, understanding why the employment interview, whether structured or not, underperforms and how the disconnect between the interviewers’ actual interview performance (i.e., accurate selection decision) and optimistic outlook on their interview performance occurs is a worthwhile endeavor. This is the area where I have tried to make a contribution with this dissertation research. I have studied how interviewers behave during the employment interview, how they make selection decisions, and under what circumstances they are likely to engage in a specific form of less-than-rational decision-making – decisions influenced by first impressions and confirmatory behavior.

The use of the structured interview has been the preferred recommendation in the employment interview literature. According to this literature, the structured interview can be objective, reliable and valid, reduces opportunities for differential treatment of the interviewees, provides comparable information from each interviewee, and protects employers against litigation and discrimination charges (Golub Williamson, Campion, Malos, Roehling, & Campion, 1997). However, this view has been contested by other empirical findings that suggest that, even when engaged in structured interview, interviewers do not necessarily make
completely rational evaluations. For example, Zedeck, Tziner, and Middlestadt (1983), using ten interviewers who assessed their interviewees on nine behaviorally anchored dimensions, found that interviewers generated significantly different overall and dimensional ratings of interviewees and Webster (1964) observed consistent differences between interviewers in their tendency to make favorable or unfavorable hiring decisions. These findings, according to which several interviewers make very different evaluations of the same interviewees, suggest that at least some interviewers do not make accurate evaluations.

One very plausible interpretation for these findings is the interviewers’ use of biases, heuristics or other judgmental shortcuts. Reviewing the interviewer response bias research, Dreher et al. (1988) mentioned that the strongest evidence for the use of biases comes from a study by Dougherty et al. (1986) that found a difference of approximately one standard deviation between the mean ratings of different interviewers who assessed exactly the same interviews. The biases that influence interviewers’ evaluations include the primacy effect, first impressions, and confirmatory behavior, which were studied in this dissertation research. The interviewers’ susceptibility to first impressions can be considered a potentially serious biasing factor that may lead to less accurate evaluations of applicants. Interviewers who are susceptible to first impressions might rely on their impressions when making final decisions. Accordingly, these interviewers may make selection decisions too early in the interview based on their first impressions, and put some applicants at an advantage over other, equally qualified, applicants. Tversky and Kahneman (1974) suggest that expectations generated by first impressions may pressure interviewers to make conforming, rather than accurate decisions. It might be that after forming first impressions, interviewers who engage in confirmatory behavior limit the search and
processing of applicant information, and adjust insufficiently as they learn more about applicants.

This study makes a theoretical contribution by empirically analyzing the relationship between interviewer-related dispositional and situational factors and confirmatory behavior, and a methodological contribution by using the multilevel analysis of data that reduced the risk of inappropriately collapsing across data obtained from multiple interviewers. By falling to consider the interviewers’ individual evaluation tendencies, which are consequences of dispositional and situational factors the previous results might have been artificially inflated (i.e., Type I error), leading to conclusions that did not have sufficient empirical support.

At a general level, this dissertation research takes into consideration at the organizational level one facet of a human tendency that has ubiquitous manifestations – far-from-rational decision-making. Such decisions are based on intuition, insight, perceptual flexibility (Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2004) and, in addition, on emotional assessments, wishful thinking, unwarranted stereotypes and prejudices. This tendency is by no means specific only to interviewers; it is common among many other professions, including managers, physicians, and occupations such as jurors (e.g., Kassin, Reddy, & Tulloch, 1990). For example, Groopman (2007) found that doctors spend, on average, only 18 seconds diagnosing each patient and speculated that 15-20% of all people are misdiagnosed in the United States. When preconceived notions or first impressions formed about a patient makes a physician feel irritated, simply dislike that patient, or close her/his mind off serious harm is likely.
Limitations

As noted previously, not all hypotheses from this dissertation research received support in the predicted direction. One plausible explanation is that the link between impressions and behaviors is not as strong as predicted and factors other than those discussed and analyzed in this research can influence behavior. It is likely that interviewers’ confirmatory behavior is not entirely a consequence of their first impressions; that is, interviewers’ impressions do not entirely guide their behavior toward interviewees during the interviews. Interviewers’ confirmatory behavior is likely to reflect other influences besides first impressions.

Two categories of factors can influence interview behavior over and above the influence of first impressions: (1) societal, cultural, and organizational norms and (2) individual customs and habits. With regard to the first category of factors, it is worth mentioning that the participants were either American-born or residents of other countries who have chosen to work, study, and live in the United States, in a highly competitive environment. An important characteristic of such an environment is non-discriminatory, equitable, and fair treatment of all individuals. Had some individuals perceived that they were treated differently, unfairly, or placed in uncomfortable contexts, they would have probably withdrawn themselves from the “competition,” reducing the supply of talent and making the environment less competitive. A direct implication is that the interviewers in this study are likely to value justice and fairness, and, accordingly, treat each interviewee with impartiality.

Moreover, employment interview practices, as consistently promoted in the research literature, textbooks, and organizational norms and routines, emphasize the importance of treating each interviewee in exactly the same manner (e.g., Campion, Pursell, & Brown, 1988; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). By treating everyone similarly, in a structured format, the
employment interview is believed to have incremental validity in the selection of new employees. Under such circumstances, interviewers in this study were likely to monitor more carefully their demeanor, body language, and interview style, so as to treat all their interviewees in a similar manner. This tendency may have been enhanced by the videotaping of the interviews. The interviewers knew that they were videotaped and, possibly, did not want to be seen or perceived to be unfair, impartial, or “play favorites.” Therefore, they may have tried to eliminate signs of preferential treatment and indicators of confirmatory behavior. Their willingness to treat all interviewees in the same manner and be perceived as fair may have interfered with their engagement in confirmatory behavior, influencing the verification of some of the hypotheses from this study.

Individual interviewers’ customs and habits may have also influenced their behavior toward interviewees during interviews over and above the influence of first impressions. It is likely that most interviewers do not approach each interview they conduct differently. Most likely they ask similar questions of most interviewees and do not change their interviewing strategy from one interview to another. Interviewers are likely to ask a pre-determined sequence of questions and conduct all interviews in a habitual manner. The use of a consistent interview approach is by no means specific only to interviewers. As they repeatedly engage in the same type of activity, most people use situational themes (Peterson & Seligman, 2004) that act as specific habits and lead them to show a preference for one particular behavior for each work and life situation they experience. Examples of such situational themes in an organizational context include positivity (i.e., the tendency to see what is good in situations and people), negativity, and empathy (i.e., anticipating and meeting the needs of others). According to Peterson and Seligman (2004), some people may even follow scripts (e.g., behave in one specific pre-
determined manner in each situation), without necessarily mastering them. It is likely that these habitual tendencies or situational themes complement the effect of first impressions and contribute to limiting the variance in the interviewers’ behavior during the different interviews that they conduct.

Aside from this indirect role, habits or situational themes can directly influence interviewers’ behaviors. Interviewers who made accurate evaluations in the past – evaluations that were confirmed by the subsequent work behaviors of those evaluated – may show more positive attitudes and gain confidence in using a certain interview approach and choose to repeat it in the future. As a result of this consistent approach, they may show more confidence and possibly less flexibility while interviewing. Following the suggestions made by the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), attitudes influence behavioral intentions, and both attitudes and intentions influence overt behaviors. In the case of the employment interview, interviewers who have made accurate evaluations may perceive that they have good abilities to evaluate others, are confident, and have positive attitudes in regard to their work activities (i.e., interviewing). Subsequently, these perceptions and attitudes influence – directly and indirectly through the path of behavioral intentions – their tendency to engage in confirmatory behavior, over and above the influence of first impressions. Support for this tendency is offered by the strategic decision-making research: Audia, Locke, & Smith (2000) found that past success increased the decision-makers’ satisfaction and increased satisfaction led decision-makers to repeatedly use the strategies that they have used in the past. In that research, Audia et al. (2000) found that higher satisfaction was associated with higher self-efficacy and more ambitious performance goals that increased dysfunctional persistence following radical changes in the environment.
Notwithstanding customs and habits, the information gathered during the interviews may somehow reflect other interviewer’s characteristics. When the interviewer makes sense retrospectively about the interview and evaluates an applicant, that interviewer’s preferences may influence the evaluation. In this regard, Starbuck and Milliken (1988) suggested that sometimes people’s reports about others tell as much about themselves as they tell about those with whom they interact and about the phenomena they claim to be observing. A string of research in this area of interpersonal interaction suggests that the reflection of interviewer’s characteristics on the manner they perceive and evaluate an applicant acts in a manner that is somehow similar to the effects of analytic procedure on the research findings (Starbuck, 1981; Webster & Starbuck, 1988). According to these suggestions, the phenomena a researcher sees, while performing research, reflect her/his analytic procedures: when a researcher reports the findings, this report tells as much about the analytic procedure (s)he used as it tells about the phenomenon that researcher claims to be analyzing.

Therefore, some interviewers may have engaged in what seemed to be confirmatory behavior not because they search to confirm their first impressions, but because that has been the manner in which they usually behave toward other people. What this study labeled as interviewers’ confirmatory behavior aimed at confirming positive first impressions might have simply been supportive behavior that those interviewers tend to exhibit in all interpersonal interactions. By the same token, interviewers’ confirmatory behavior aimed at confirming negative first impressions might have merely been those interviewers’ predisposition to more carefully scrutinize interviewees and show more suspicion toward them. If these situations really occurred, the interviewer’s characteristics and her/his distinctive way of behaving in interpersonal interactions may have functioned as confounds for that interviewer’s confirmatory
behavior. That is, those interviewers did not necessarily engage in confirmatory behavior; rather, they behaved according to how they have been as individuals and tended to interact with people. In conclusion, both external factors, associated to societal, cultural, and organizational norms and internal factors, associated to each interviewer’s individual characteristics may have had spurious effects on the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variable, acting as confound variables that could have reduced the observed effect of first impressions on confirmatory behavior.

While the factors mentioned above could have served as confounds for confirmatory behavior and led to inflated measures, other factors could curtail manifestations of confirmatory behavior, leading to its underestimation in this study. One of these factors is the interviewers’ possible use of impression management tactics to control their nonverbal behavior and maintain a professional appearance in front of interviewees. Although it raises no practical concern for the effectiveness of the employment interview, the interviewers’ impression management may have limit the manifestation of nonverbal behavior, preference for or disliking of each interviewee, and interviewing style. Therefore, this research may have identified fewer signs of confirmatory behavior not because the interviewers did not engage in confirmatory behavior, but because they concealed manifestations of confirmatory behavior (i.e., controlled their non-verbal communication, interviewing style, and interview focus) out of impression management concerns.

It is likely that the inference of causality between dispositional and situational factors on one side, and confirmatory behavior on the other, may have also been hampered by the fact that both interacting partners (i.e., interviewers and interviewees) engaged in impression management tactics. Empirical research in the employment interview literature (e.g. Kristof-Brown, Barrick,
Franke, 2002) has shown that interviewees seek to generate positive impressions during interviews by using these influence and persuasion strategies in the hope that they will receive more positive evaluations from their interviewers. The interviewees’ use of persuasion strategies such as impression management tactics has been shown to predict favorable interview evaluations and selection decisions (Gilmore, Stevens, Harrell-Cook, & Ferris, 1999; Kacmar & Carlson, 1999). Following this empirical findings, it may be that some of the interviewers made favorable evaluations of their interviewees not because they engaged in confirmatory behavior, but because they were lured into making these evaluations by interviewees’ impression management tactics. The research design controlled for the interviewers’ use of impression management tactics finding significant correlations between the use of these tactics and the number of initial questions asked by interviewers and their confirmatory behavior, as well as between the use of impression management tactics and the interviewers’ conscientiousness, openness to experience, need for cognition, and perceived time pressure. However, the research design from this study did not control for the interviewees’ use of impression management tactics.

This study was not experimental and was based on a convenience sample formed of undergraduate and graduate students that served as interviewees and interviewers, respectively. In exchange for their participation, students received course credit and participated in a draw for three money prizes in amount of $500. In addition, they had opportunities to practice and develop their interview skills. However, despite development and training incentive, their motivation might have been lower than the motivation of participants in real interviews. As such, the inferences of causality between dispositional and situational factors and confirmatory
behavior, as well as the generalizability of the hypothesized causal relationships, are further falsifiable.

Finally, confirmatory behavior is difficult to measure with accuracy and its correlations with the other variables in this study were smaller than anticipated. Given the respondents’ social desirability concerns, the measurement of motivation using self-reports had also its constraints.

Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the common self-perception that people, at least in the Western culture, are across-the-board rational decision-makers, there are convincing research findings that make the opposite suggestion: that people are less-than-rational decision-makers. Whereas this dissertation research focuses on the use of the first impressions and confirmatory behavior, many other studies have analyzed other forms of less-than-rational decision-making that are based on the use of biases, heuristics, and other judgmental shortcuts. However, the list of forms of less-than-rational decision-making is abundant, including heuristics such as representativeness and availability, and stereotypes about virtually every socio-professional category. Analyzing these other forms can shed light over their antecedents and consequences, helping with the understanding of why people are less-than rational decision-makers, how they make decisions, and with what consequences. One supposition emerging from this dissertation, to be examined by further research is that less than-rational decision-making is not avoidable, since it is deeply-rooted in human nature and not necessarily to be avoided, since it can lead to effective and accurate decisions.
This dissertation research provides a foundation for further investigations of the interviewer- and interviewee-related dispositional antecedents and interview-related situational antecedents of confirmatory behavior. Future research can identify other circumstances under which interviewers engage in confirmatory behavior and assess the effects of this behavior on the accuracy, efficiency, effectiveness, social value, and esteem of decision-makers and their interacting partners. The identification of theoretical frameworks or creation of theoretical models that can explain the process through which people make less-than-rational evaluations is of particular interest. Attribution theories (e.g., Kelley, 1971), sense-making theory (Weick, 1995), regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1998), and image theory (Beach, 1998) are chief candidates in this regard. Another important question that can be answered by future research is whether the structured interview should – and, especially, whether is realistic to – be recommended in the employment interview literature as the optimum approach or not. Despite its superior validity (Campion, Pursell, & Brown, 1988), and being endorsed by the rational decision-making model, the structured interview format seems to require from interviewers to simultaneously disregard their need for control, flexibility, and to be more diagnostic. As suggested by Ryan and Sackett (1998), a less-structured interview format may be a better alternative because evaluators may form, through data collection, hypotheses that can be tested, which are not to be considered in a structured interview format. Even more, some interviewers may achieve higher validities with less-structured interview formats, as research suggests the possibility of individual differences in the interviewers’ interview validity with such formats (Dougherty et al., 1986; Dreher et al., 1988). Confirming or falsifying the suggestions made by these researchers and this dissertation study can change or, respectively, uphold the current
recommendations made in the employment interview literature with regard to the recommended structured interview format.

Although this dissertation research does not address the likelihood that the emotions of the participants in the interview process influence interviewers’ first impressions, interviewees’ and interviewers’ interview behavior and outcomes, future research can address the affective component of the interview evaluation process. It may be that this component is especially influential, as suggested by Berscheid (2003) who emphasized that each individual’s behavior is embedded in her or his relationships with other individuals and stated the close association between individual interactions and the experience of emotion. Hence, interviewers may engage (or not) in confirmatory behavior, in part because of their emotions – whether inspired by their interviewees or already in place since before the interview. Emotions, as the basis, product, and origin of any social interaction (Zajonc, 1998) can represent both antecedents and consequences of the interview behavior and can influence interview outcomes both directly and indirectly through the mediational path of confirmatory behavior.

Finally, although this dissertation research found that some interviewers are likely to engage in more confirmatory behavior toward their interviewees, no assessment has yet been made to determine the effects of confirmatory behavior on the selection decision. In particular, are favorable selection decisions confirmed by the work performance of those selected? Are their performance appraisals positively correlated with the selection decisions and first impressions formed at the time of the employment interview? A longitudinal study, with follow-up evaluations of those interviewees who are selected for a job may be able to answer these questions. Therefore, this dissertation research recommends and encourages future research that follows interviewees over an extended period (1-2 years) after their hiring, in search of better
understanding of the social effects, accuracy, efficiency, and effectiveness effects of confirmatory behavior. More specifically, this research should examine which evaluations made at the time of employment interviews are confirmed and which are not after the hiring and then (1) under what circumstances evaluations are confirmed / disconfirmed (e.g., time pressure, specific information about interviewees communicated before interviews), (2) what dispositional characteristics of the interviewer, interviewee, and interviewer-interviewee pair make confirmation or disconfirmation of the selection decision more likely, and (3) are these selection decisions less accurate than those made based on a structured interview format? It might be that confirmatory behavior may lead to more accurate selection decisions than structured interviews.

Conclusion

This dissertation research developed and tested a less-than-rational model of interpersonal evaluation in the context of the employment interview, which is based on the use of first impressions and confirmatory behavior. Interviewer dispositional characteristics and interview context, as well as interactions between context and characteristics were found to be related to interviewers’ behavior. This dissertation research extends the work on confirmatory behavior and interview decision-making by focusing on circumstances under which confirmatory behavior occurs. This dissertation research also articulates several areas of research that scholars can pursue next to understand the less-than-rational employment interview decisions. These findings are important for developing understanding of why and how individual characteristics and interview context shape the interview behavior and outcomes.
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Items of the personality-traits measurement instrument:

OE1: Have a rich vocabulary.
OE2: Have difficulty understanding abstract ideas. – reverse scored
OE3: Have a vivid imagination.
OE4: Am not interested in abstract ideas. – reverse scored
OE5: Have excellent ideas.
OE6: Do not have a good imagination. – reverse scored
OE7: Am quick to understand things.
OE8: Use difficult words.
OE9: Spend time reflecting on things.
OE10: Am full of ideas.
C1: Am always prepared.
C2: Leave my belonging around. – reverse scored
C3: Pay attention to details.
C4: Make a mess of things. – reverse scored
C5: Get chores done right away.
C6: Often forget to put things back in their proper place. – reverse scored
C7: Like order.
C8: Follow a schedule.
C9: Shirk my duties. – reverse scored
C10: Am exacting in my work.
C11: Go straight for the goal.
C12: Work hard.
C13: Am not highly motivated to succeed – reverse scored
C14: Turn plans into action.
C15: Plunge into tasks with all my heart.
C16: Do just enough work to get by. – reverse scored
C17: Do more than what’s expected of me.
C18: Set high standards for myself and others.
C19: Put little time and effort into my work. – reverse scored
C20: Demand quality.
Appendix 2 – Items of the motivational-traits measurement instrument:

*NCC1:* I find that establishing a consistent routine enables me to enjoy my life.
*NCC2:* I enjoy having a clear structured mode of life.
*NCC3:* I like to have a place for everything and everything in its place.
*NCC4:* I find that a well ordered life with regular hours suits my temperament.
*NCC5:* I dislike unpredictable situations.
*NCC6:* I don’t like to be with people who are capable of unexpected actions.
*NCC7:* I prefer to socialize with familiar friends because I know what to expect from them.
*NCC8:* I enjoy the uncertainty of going into a situation without knowing what might happen. – reverse scored
*NCC9:* I tend to put off important decisions until the last moment. – reverse scored
*NCC10:* I usually make important decisions quickly and confidently.
*NCC11:* I would describe myself as indecisive. – reverse scored
*NCC12:* I tend to struggle with most decisions. – reverse scored
*NCC13:* I dislike it when a person’s statement could mean many different things.
*NCC14:* I feel uncomfortable when someone’s meaning or intentions are unclear to me.
*NCC15:* I feel uncomfortable when I don’t understand the reason why an event occurred in my life.
*NCC16:* When I am confused about an important issue, I feel very upset.
*NCC17:* Even after I made up my mind about something, I am eager to consider a different opinion. – reverse scored
*NCC18:* When considering a conflict situation, I usually see how much both sides can be right. – reverse scored
*NCC19:* When thinking about a problem, I consider as many different opinions on the issue as possible. – reverse scored
*NCC20:* I always see many possible solutions to problems I face. – reverse scored
*NC1:* I would prefer complex to simple problems.
*NC2:* I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.
*NC3:* Thinking is not my idea of fun. – reverse scored
*NC4:* I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities. – reverse scored
*NC5:* I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance I will have to think in depth about something. – reverse scored
*NC6:* I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.
*NC7:* I only think as hard as I have to. – reverse scored
*NC8:* I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones. – reverse scored
*NC9:* I like tasks that require little thought once I’ve learned them. – reverse scored
*NC10:* The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.
*NC11:* I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.
*NC12:* Learning new ways to think doesn’t excite me very much. – reverse scored
*NC13:* I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.
*NC14:* The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.
*NC15:* I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.
NC16: I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort. – reverse scored
NC17: It’s enough for me that something gets the job done; I don’t care how or why it works. – reverse scored
NC18: I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.
Appendix 3 – Pre-interview and post-interview evaluation instruments:

*Pre-interview impressions* (first item from the Pre-interview Impression Scale, Chapman & Rowe, 2001):

*E1:* Overall impression of the applicant based on written information (resume, application blank, GPA).

*E2:* Based upon the written documentation about the applicant that you reviewed, how would you rate this applicant when compared to other applicants who you have interviewed.

*Post-interview ratings of the applicant:*

  - 3 items from Dougherty et al. (1994) scale (job attitude, compatibility, responsibility):
    *E3:* How do you rate this applicant’s attitude toward job (motivation, likely work satisfaction, consistency of work opportunities and applicant’s goals and aspirations)?
    *E4:* How compatible is this applicant with current employees (interpersonal skills)?
    *E5:* How responsible is the applicant (sound judgment, initiative, meeting deadlines)?

  - 6-item Stevens and Kristof (1995) general scale (qualifications, attractiveness, regard, overall assessment, likelihood of offering an on-site visit and a job offer):
    *E6:* How qualified is this applicant for the job?
    *E7:* How attractive is this applicant as a potential employee of your organization?
    *E8:* How highly do you regard this applicant?
    *E9:* How well did this applicant do in the interview?
    *E10:* How likely are you or your organization to offer this applicant an on-site visit?
    *E11:* How likely are you or your organization to offer this applicant a job?

*Applicant behavioral confirmation* (3-items from Dougherty et al., 1994):

*E12:* How much rapport do you believe that you had with this applicant? *(1 = no rapport to 7 = high level of rapport)* or How well did you mesh with the applicant?

*E13:* How would you rate this applicant with regard to his/her communication style? *(1 = poor to 7 = excellent)* or How well did this applicant present himself/herself?

*E14:* How would you rate your interaction with this applicant? *(1 = very negative to 7 = very positive)*
Appendix 4 – Questionnaire for the Interviewers:

Please answer or select the best response for each of the following questions about yourself:

Age ___ Gender Woman □ Man □

Ethnic Background:
Asian/Pacific Islander □ African American □ Caucasian/White □ Latino □ Native American □

Do you have full-time work experience? Yes □ No □
If you answered affirmatively the previous question, how many years of experience do you have? ___
If you answered affirmatively the previous question, please succinctly list the area(s) of experience.
______________________________________________________________________________________

Have you ever participated in an employment interview? Yes □ No □
I participated in _ employment interviews as a job applicant (please indicate the number of interviews).
I participated in _ employment interviews as an interviewer (please indicate the number of interviews).

The interviews you usually conduct have been
Very structured □ Moderately structured □ Relatively unstructured □ Very unstructured □

The format you generally use while interviewing has been
Behavioral description interview □ Situational interview □ Both formats □ None of the formats □

Beyond the training session organized at the beginning of this study, the interviewer training you have received in the past has been
Extensive □ Moderate □ Limited □ Completely lacking □

When you have participated in interviews, you generally feel Easy and comfortable □ Tense □

With regard to selection decisions, you have generally felt Very accountable □ Moderately accountable □

In the past, your ability to identify truly qualified job applicants has been
Extraordinary □ Very good □ Good □ Normal □

Please indicate to what extent the following statements are characteristic of you. Please keep the scale in mind as you rate each of the statements below
1 – very inaccurate or extremely uncharacteristic; 2 – inaccurate or somewhat uncharacteristic; 3 – neutral or uncertain; 4 – accurate or somewhat characteristic; 5 – very accurate or extremely characteristic.

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<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Very Inaccurate</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
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<td>I like to have the responsibility of handling a situation that requires a lot of thinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking is not my idea of fun.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would rather do something that requires little thought than something that is sure to challenge my thinking abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to anticipate and avoid situations where there is a likely chance I will have to think in depth about something.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find satisfaction in deliberating hard and for long hours.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only think as hard as I have to.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer to think about small, daily projects to long-term ones.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like tasks that require little thought once I’ve learned them.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The idea of relying on thought to make my way to the top appeals to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoy a task that involves coming up with new solutions to problems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning new ways to think doesn’t excite me very much.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer my life to be filled with puzzles that I must solve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The notion of thinking abstractly is appealing to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would prefer a task that is intellectual, difficult, and important to one that is somewhat important but does not require much thought.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel relief rather than satisfaction after completing a task that required a lot of mental effort.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s enough for me that something gets the job done; I don’t care how or why it works.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually end up deliberating about issues even when they do not affect me personally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 5 – Interview Rating Form:

Please use the rating scale below to rate the applicant # ______ before conducting the interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall impression of the applicant based on written information</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based upon the written documentation about the applicant that you reviewed, how would you rate this applicant when compared to other applicants who you have interviewed?

| Better than | 10% | 25% | 35% | 50% | 65% | 75% | 99% |

Please use the rating scales below to rate the applicant # ______ after the interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you rate this applicant’s attitude toward job (i.e., motivation, likely work satisfaction and performance, goals, and aspirations)?</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you rate this applicant on compatibility with others?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you rate this applicant on responsibility (sound judgment, initiative, meeting deadlines)?</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do you rate this applicant’s overall qualifications for the job?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How highly do you regard this applicant?</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would have decisional power, how likely would be to make this applicant a job offer?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How well did this applicant do in the interview?</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please characterize in your own words your opinion about this applicant. The only requirement is to come up with arguments that are honest and support your evaluation of the applicant, as indicated in the answers above. Other than that, your arguments can be related to any characteristic of the applicant. (Feel free to use the back of this page for more space).

........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................
........................................................................................................................................

Thank you!
Appendix 6 – Coding Form:

Interview # _____  Interview time _____  Irrelevant discussion _____  Coder ________

Tallies of:

Total number of questions asked by the interviewer _____
Number of closed questions asked by the interviewer _____
Number of initial questions (i.e., introducing a topic) asked by the interviewer _____
Number of follow-up or probing questions asked by the interviewer _____

(please add one line while watching the interview for each type of questions; e.g., mark ‘I’ for the interviewer’s first closed question, then ‘I_’ for the second one, ‘I_I’ for the third one, and so on).

Number of interviewer statements agreeing with the interviewee _____
Number of incidents of interviewer laughter _____

In this interview, the interviewer:

to no extent  to a great extent

displayed a favorable orientation toward the applicant’s suitability or
likelihood of acceptance in the MBA Program

“sold” the MBA Program to the applicant

provided information about the MBA Program

examined applicant qualifications

In this interview, the interviewer was:

warm  not understanding

sensitive  empathetic

considerate  nice

encouraging  approving

friendly  business like

arrogant  patronizing

dull and monotone  high-pitched

not at all  time to time  persistent

- confronting  indifferent  + upbeat

Demeanor, Behavioral Style

not at all  somehow  a lot

Matching Demeanor

Please assess the degree to which the interviewee’s body posture, arms and legs position, and distance from
the table match those of the interviewer:

Looking at the interviewer during the interview, please assess her/his with regard to:

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7

1  2  3  4  5  6  7


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VITA

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