Conscientiousness Cues in AVIs: How Cues Interact

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Abstract

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The rise of virtual interviewing technology, notably Asynchronous Video Interviews (AVIs), has transformed personnel selection practices worldwide due to their cost and time efficiencies. Yet, research on potential biases in AVIs, particularly concerning contradictory cues impacting perceived applicant personality, remains scarce. I conducted a 2x2x2 design (messiness) x (professional dress) x (job type) to examine the possible buffering effect messiness has on the perception of professional dress, the heightened importance of conscientiousness-related cues when selecting canidates for certain jobs and these conscientiousness-related cues's biasing effects on perceived conscientiousness and final interview outcomes. Results reveal environmental cleanliness significantly affects perceived conscientiousness and hireability, with tidier settings favoring candidates. Additionally, technical role applicants are perceived as more conscientious than those in client-facing positions. Notably, candidates in client-facing roles with formal attire and messy backgrounds received lower scores, emphasizing the importance of recording in tidy environments or utilizing background filters for fairness in hiring processes.

Keywords: Bias, Conscientiousness, Asynchronous Video Interview

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Conscientiousness Cues in AVIs: How Cues Interact

Asynchronous Video Interviews (AVIs) represent a recent advancement in personnel selection practices, offering a convenient alternative to traditional face-to-face and videoconferencing interviews such as Zoom. AVIs involve presenting interviewees with pre-selected questions on a screen and instructing them to record their responses via video. These recorded video responses are then evaluated by the organization at a later time. Unlike synchronous interviews, AVIs lack real-time interaction and do not involve an interviewer.

Organizations worldwide are increasingly adopting AVIs to leverage their advantages in terms of cost, time, and scheduling (Brenner et al., 2016; Castro & Gramzow, 2015). However, unlike face-to-face interviews, AVIs are typically conducted from the applicants' homes, revealing aspects of their surroundings that would remain unseen in an in-person setting (Roulin et al., 2023; Powell et al., 2023). Although the primary objective of an interview is to assess candidates based on job-related factors such as knowledge, skills, and experience, other factors unrelated to the job can unintentionally influence interview ratings, such as the personality of the interviewees (Cook et al., 2000; Huffcutt et al., 2011).

Visual cues, including those present in AVI backgrounds, can provide interviewers with insights into an applicant's personality, subsequently influencing interview ratings (DeGroot & Gooty, 2009). In the present study, I explored the impact of visible background cues displayed during AVIs on the attribution of personality traits and interview score outcomes. The findings of this research have implications for both applicants and organizations involved in conducting virtual interviews, shedding light on the potential effects of background cues on interview evaluations.

Advantages of AVIs

AVIs present a range of advantages compared to traditional in-person and synchronous interviews. They offer cost-effective solutions for organizations, enabling rapid interviewing of applicants within a given timeframe, reducing employee time investment, and minimizing travel and scheduling expenses (Brenner et al., 2016; Castro & Gramzow, 2015). Notably, clients witnessed significant improvements in their time-to-hire rates, with a remarkable 64% enhancement (ConveyIQ, 2019). Additionally, they enjoyed substantial cost savings, as travel expenses were reduced by up to 50% (ConveyIQ, 2019). In the context of global hiring, AVIs hold particular value, especially when interviews involve participants across different time zones. They significantly decrease travel costs, enhance efficiency, and provide greater flexibility in scheduling (Griswold et al., 2021). Additionally, AVIs enable interviewers to review and assess video recordings at their convenience and as many times as necessary (Sellers, 2014). Another advantage of AVIs is their ability to expand the selection pool and enhance diversity. Organizations have the flexibility to expand their candidate pool beyond the limitations of a specific geographical region when conducting interviews, enabling them to reach a broader and more diverse range of potential candidates (Catano et al., 2022; Gorman et al., 2018; HireVue, 2019). This expanded reach promotes inclusivity and allows for a more comprehensive evaluation of candidates from diverse backgrounds. Overall, AVIs offer cost-effectiveness, scheduling flexibility, convenience, and the opportunity for broader candidate selection, making them a favorable choice for organizations seeking efficient and diverse personnel selection processes.

AVIs are also highly structured since all candidates receive the same set of interview questions, the structured format of AVIs removes the opportunity for interviewers to probe or ask follow-up questions, it minimizes the chance for applicant questions, and allows equal length

of time for applicants to respond to questions. Structured interviews have many advantages over unstructured interviews such as better reliability and validity (Campion et al., 1997), reduced bias and reduced opportunity for impression management (Levashina et al., 2014). Overall, the structured format of AVIs should contribute to a more accurate and consistent evaluation of candidate qualifications (Levashina et al., 2014). AVIs offer the additional advantage of being recorded and stored, allowing evaluators to review and assess the videos as many times as needed. This feature also facilitates the involvement of multiple evaluators who can collectively review and score the candidate responses, as pointed out by Hockett (2018). Furthermore, since AVIs do not involve an interviewer, applicants are not influenced by the interviewer's behavior or reactions to the candidate's responses, which can introduce bias. This absence of interviewer bias enhances the validity and reliability of the interview process (Levashina et al., 2014). Overall, there is potential for AVIs to offer a cost-effective and time-efficient solution to the recruitment process while providing a reliable and objective measure of candidate qualifications.

The popularity of AVIs has significantly increased over the past decade due to their numerous advantages in interviewing technology. HireVue, an AVI platform, experienced an exponential increase in the number of AVIs conducted, reaching 10.5 million interviews in the first half of 2023 alone compared to a cumulative 24 million by the end of 2021, 8 million by the end of 2018, 2.5 million in 2016, and 13,000 in 2012 (Greenfield, 2016; HireVue, 2018; HireVue, 2021; Reynolds, 2023). However, despite the growing adoption of AVIs, there is limited information available about their potential adverse effects on some applicants. Researchers have expressed concerns about how candidate backgrounds captured in AVI recordings could introduce bias in the interview performance ratings (Lukacik et al., 2022; Roulin et al., 2023). The presence of any bias in the selection process could have detrimental

consequences, as it may result in organizations screening out suitable candidates and negatively

affect applicant diversity (Catano et al., 2022).

To prevent such negative outcomes, it is imperative to conduct research to better

understand how cues in the AVI may impact interview performance outcomes. However, few

empirical studies have explored the potential biases that this modality may introduce. Therefore,

research agendas have called for more studies to fill this gap (Lukacik et al., 2022). A better

understanding of the impact of AVIs on interview outcomes is crucial to ensure that selection

processes are fair and unbiased.

Potential Bias in AVIs

Researchers have expressed concerns about the potential bias that could be introduced in

AVIs due to the ability to observe applicants' backgrounds in the recorded interviews, potentially

influencing employment decisions (Lukacik et al., 2022). Unlike traditional face-to-face

interviews, where interviewers are only given access to visual cues regarding a candidate's

clothing or appearance, AVIs allow interviewers access to visual cues in a candidate's

background. Visual cues introduce opportunities for interviewer bias and judgment. For

instance, research has found that candidates rated high in physical attractiveness or professional

appearance had higher final interview scores and were more likely to be invited to the next

interview stage (Barrick et al., 2009; Suen et al., 2019; Torres & Gregory, 2018). Research has

found that raters rely on visual cues in the applicant's environment to form initial impressions of

the applicant (Gosling et al., 2002). Raters might rely on visual cues in the applicant's

surroundings to evaluate their personality or suitability for the job, which is a matter of concern

(Lukacik et al., 2022). For instance, candidates displaying cues suggesting parental status were

perceived as warmer and received higher ratings in interview performance (Roulin et al., 2023).

Similarly, candidates with cues indicating consistency with the evaluator's political party were seen as warmer and received higher ratings in interview performance and potential work performance (Roulin et al., 2023). Thus, visual cues in an applicant's recorded surroundings may introduce bias in the selection process. Biased perceptions may jeopardize some applicants' chances of selection despite the suitability of their job-related skills and qualifications. The presence of bias in the selection process has detrimental effects on organizations, particularly in terms of limiting the diversity of their hires (Catano et al., 2022). Additionally, biased judgments from raters in the selection process may lead to the disqualification of high-quality applicants who did not receive a favourable ranking (Catano et al., 2022). Thus, it is crucial for researchers to better understand the impact of background cues in the selection process, and the mechanism by which certain elements may introduce bias.

Why Messiness and Lack of Professional Dress may be Stigmatizing

Empirical research in the field of personnel psychology provides evidence that nonverbal cues have a stigmatizing effect on the evaluation of interview performance (Gifford et al., 1985; Imada & Hakel, 1977; Martín-Raugh et al., 2023). In 2023 a meta-analysis conducted by Martín-Raugh et al. found that nonverbal cues have an impact on interviewers' evaluations of job candidates. The nonverbal cues that presented the strongest association with interview performance were found to be professional appearance, eye-contact and head movement. Goffman's theory of social stigma argues that characteristics that deviate from normative expectations can be stigmatized and perceived unfavorably as a result (Goffman, 2009). For applicants involved in AVIs, any signs of unconventional characteristics in their recorded video may result in stigmatization and subsequent exclusion from job consideration. Research supports this theory, with studies finding that raters scored candidates lower when they failed to reflect

formal aesthetic qualities (Barrick et al., 2009; Torres & Gregory, 2018) or had a messy

background (Powell et al., 2023). This is a major issue with AVIs as senior recruiters report that

some applicants view AVIs as "sitting on the other side of the phone with a friend. The challenge

is a lot of people don't see it as a professional interview, so they are dressed in t-shirts or very

casual and just not as presentable as they would be if they walked into a face-to-face interview"

(Mejia & Torres, 2018, p. 694). They also report that some applicants record their video

interviews in messy or chaotic settings "interviewing in front of inappropriate backgrounds,

photos or posters; allowing pets or children to roam into the interview while on camera" (Mejia

& Torres, 2018, p. 694). Research findings suggest that such visual cues during an interview

influence rater's scores through perceptions of the applicant's personality (DeGroot & Gooty,

2009).

Interviewer judgment on Applicant Personality - Brunswik's (1956) lens model

Research has clearly demonstrated that raters make personality attributions during

interviews that influence their final interview score, whether they realize it or not (Cook et al.,

2000; DeGroot & Gooty, 2009). These personality attributions can be examined through

Brunswik's (1956) lens model (see Figure 1). According to Brunswik's lens theory, cues in a job

candidate's environment serve as a kind of lens through which observers can make inferences,

judgments, or interpretations of the candidate's underlying attributes. For example, a messy

environment could serve as the lens through which an observer perceives an applicant's level of

Conscientiousness. In Brunswik's model, cue utilization refers to the extent to which observers

use cues (e.g., messy background) to make personality attributions (e.g., low conscientiousness)

(Borkenau & Liebler, 1992). The extent in which a cue is accurate (e.g., the extent that the

applicant's messy environment is related to low conscientiousness) is the extent to which a cue is

considered valid. If the cue is utilized and valid this results in observer accuracy. Personality-

related cues in a video interview can come from the way someone behaves, the tone of

someone's voice, the way someone dresses, or even cues in one's environment.

Figure 1

A Modified Version of Brunswik's Lens Model
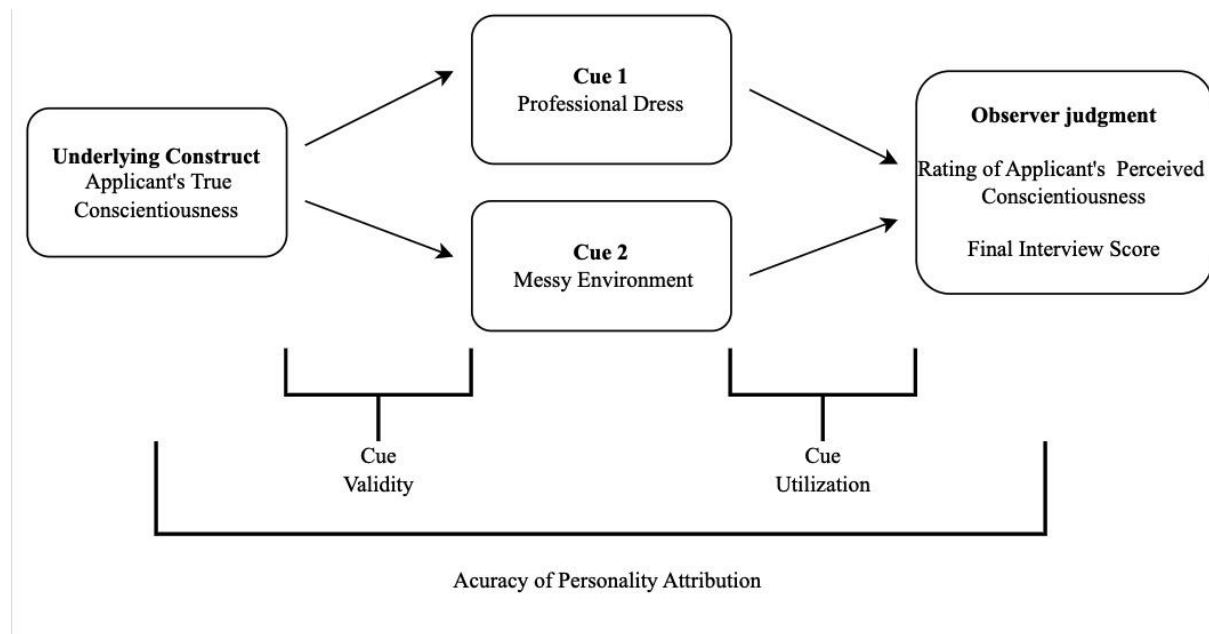
There is evidence to suggest that individuals select and create environments that reflect

who they are, and observers can use the cues available in those environments to form reasonably

accurate impressions of the applicant's personalities (Gosling et al., 2002). Gosling et al (2002)

illustrates two mechanisms through which an individual's personality can be linked to their

environment including behavioral residue and identity claims. Behavioral residue is not

intentional and refers to the physical traces of activities conducted in the environment (e.g.,

empty bottles of alcohol the morning after a party). On the other hand, identity claims are

intentional and refer to the choices someone makes to purposefully make a space their own—

such as choosing paint, posters, pictures, artifacts and decor that they feel represents them. In a

study conducted by Gosling et al. (2002), observers could predict individuals' personalities based on their surroundings. The findings revealed two important aspects: a) personal environments consistently evoked similar impressions among different independent observers, and b) observer impressions exhibited some level of accuracy for personality traits such as extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and emotional stability. These findings suggest that individuals leave discernible cues of their personality in their environments. Therefore, if a candidate is interviewed in a setting that reflects their true personality, these cues can be accurately perceived by the interviewer, resulting in a more accurate impression of the candidate.

However, during interviews candidates often use impression management tactics in order to manipulate the recruiter's perception of them (Rosenfeld et al., 1995). Studies show impression management tactics work; meta-analytic findings concluded that impression management is effective at influencing hiring decisions and positively affects supervisor and interviewer evaluations of individuals in work contexts (Higgins et al., 2003; Ho et al., 2021; Peck & Levashina, 2017). A candidate could intentionally arrange their recorded environment in such a way as to display certain personality-related cues in order to influence the recruiter's opinion of them. These cues may or may not be an accurate representation of the candidate. In a similar fashion, the candidate may also be recording their interview in a location that does not reflect their personality such as recording in someone else's office, recording in a public setting, or recording in a living space they share with someone else (such as a roommate). As a result, their environment may provide inaccurate personality-relevant information.

Moreover, Barrick et al. 's (2009) meta-analysis reveals that self-presentation tactics have stronger relationships with interview ratings than they do with job performance ratings. In other words, what you see in the interview may not be what you get on the job, so personality-related

cues in the AVIs may or may not be valid. Since the validity of the cue is uncertain, observer

accuracy is jeopardized. Thus, interviewers who use available cues to make personality-related

judgments may introduce bias into the selection process. Although my thesis does not focus on

the validity of cues, I make this point to address the argument that background cues are accurate

and can be an effective tool used to assess an applicant's personality; Barrick et al (2009) show

that this may not always be the case.

The Role of Conscientiousness

There is some evidence to suggest that recruiters may be (intentionally or unintentionally)

looking for cues during an interview to gain insight into an individual's personality (Van

Iddekinge et al., 2004; Van Iddekinge et al., 2005). According to the Five-Factor Model,

personality can be distilled into five fundamental traits: (1) extraversion, which measures a

person's level of energy, sociability, and friendliness; (2) agreeableness, reflecting an individual's

inclination to prioritize others' needs over their own; (3) conscientiousness, encompassing

qualities such as competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and

deliberation; (4) neuroticism, indicating a predisposition to experience negative emotions like

anger, anxiety, self-consciousness, irritability, emotional instability, and depression; and (5)

openness, which gauges a person's open-mindedness, imagination, creativity, and insightfulness

(Costa & McCrae, 1992; John et al., 2008; John & Srivastava, 1999). Among these five

personality traits, conscientiousness has consistently exhibited the strongest association with job

performance, spanning a wide array of occupations (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Zell & Lesick,

2022). For this study, I manipulated cues associated with the trait of conscientiousness because it

is the most job-relevant personality trait.

The Current Study

In the current study, I focused only on the right side of Brunswik's lens model—cue interaction and cue utilization. I will explore how different conscientiousness-related cues are used together in making attributions about an individual's level of conscientiousness and final interview performance. I will use an experimental design to manipulate messiness, professional appearance, and employment position in an AVI to test the effects on observers' ratings of perceived interviewee conscientiousness and final interview performance ratings.

With the introduction of virtual interview technology, visual cues in one's recorded surroundings may serve as a cue for conscientiousness. Gosling et al (2002) found that when evaluating the office of a conscientious person, evidence suggests that observers used cues related to messiness, cleanliness, organization, and degree of clutter to evaluate conscientiousness. Likewise, Powell et al. (2023) found evidence that candidates in a messy environment received lower ratings on conscientiousness and interview performance relative to candidates in a clean condition. This logically makes sense as an observer will likely infer that a candidate in a clean space must have spent time cleaning, and cleanliness is a cue for conscientiousness. I expect to find the same results as Powell et al. (2023). In my study messiness refers to clutter in the background (e.g., clothing lying around and un-made bed), and the video was recorded in a bedroom.

Hypothesis 1a: A job candidate in a clean environment will receive higher interviewer ratings of conscientiousness than will a candidate in a messy environment.

Hypothesis 1b: A job candidate in a clean environment will receive higher ratings of interview performance than will a candidate in a messy environment.

Another visual cue that pertains to conscientiousness is professional appearance. Professional appearance encompasses elements such as personal hygiene, grooming, and

appropriate attire, and it has demonstrated correlations with interview outcomes (Barrick et al.,

2009; Kinicki & Lockwood, 1985; Mack & Rainey, 1990; Martín-Raugh et al., 2023).

Professional appearance can serve as a visual indicator for observers to assess conscientiousness,

as it requires additional time, effort, and preparation to present oneself in a professional manner.

Furthermore, there are established norms regarding professional dress and grooming

expectations during interviews, such as wearing business attire and maintaining well-groomed

hair. Deviating significantly from these norms, such as wearing a hoodie, may lead to a

perception of lower conscientiousness due to perceived unpreparedness and/or laziness.

According to the NEO Personality Inventory, conscientiousness has six facets: competence,

order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation (Costa & McCrae,

1992). Wearing casual attire to a job interview might signal low achievement striving, low self-

discipline or even low deliberation, as the applicant might have not put enough thought into how

to properly dress for an interview. In fact, research has shown a connection between formal attire

and conscientiousness (Borkenau & Liebler, 1992). Additionally, research supports the assertion

that individuals who present themselves in professional attire are often seen as more credible,

responsible, and self-assured (Underwood et al., 2003).

Hypothesis 2a: A job candidate dressed in professional attire will receive higher

observer ratings of conscientiousness than will a candidate in casual attire.

Hypothesis 2b: *A job candidate dressed in professional attire will receive higher ratings*

of interview performance than will a candidate in casual attire.

Although preliminary research has demonstrated that visual cues in an interview may

impact a candidate's perceived conscientiousness and final interview ratings (DeGroot & Gooty,

2009; Gosling et al., 2002; Powell et al., 2023), less is known about how these cues interact with

one another. According to Brunswik's lens theory, environmental cues should be utilized based on their validity (Brunswik, 1956). Brunswik posits that in a natural environment, organisms learn to recognize that certain cues and relationships between objects and their outcomes are more reliable and trustworthy than others (Brunswik, 1940). In other words, individuals develop an understanding of which cues provide more accurate information and can be used to make effective judgments and decisions. Therefore, observers have to acknowledge the hierarchy of more or less reliable and useful cues in order to make an accurate decision regarding the evaluation of the environment.

Brunswik suggested the best way to examine the hierarchy of cues was by examining them in their natural, ecological environment through a correlation-based procedure. Two studies have examined the correlation between visual cues in interviews and self-reported personality measures in order to assess cue validity in accordance with Brunswik's lens model. The correlation between formal dress and self-reported conscientiousness is around .25 (Borkenau & Liebler, 1992), while the correlation between organization and self-reported conscientiousness was found to be .29 in office settings and .35 in a bedroom setting (Gosling et al., 2002). Since messiness has higher cue validity (and thus higher cue hierarchy), observers should in theory weigh it more strongly in the presence of weaker cues when making conclusions regarding a candidate's level of conscientiousness.

In the past, dressing professionally for a job interview held great significance as it served as a prominent visual indicator for hiring managers. However, the importance of professional attire has undergone changes in recent times as virtual interviews spiked in popularity. In the realm of virtual interviews, websites offering guidance now tend to focus primarily on maintaining a clean background, while sometimes disregarding the emphasis on professional

dress (ex. Laker et al., 2021). Indeed, research has uncovered that applicants were sometimes

observed to be dressed in a notably casual manner in AVI's, lacking the same level of

presentability as they might exhibit in a traditional face-to-face interview (Mejia & Torres,

2018).

This can be exemplified when considering contradictory cues (e.g., a job applicant

wearing a suit in a messy room). As mentioned earlier, characteristics that fall outside of

normative expectations can become stigmatized and viewed unfavourably as a result (Goffman,

2009). Interviewing in a messy room is a much greater violation to social norms, than

interviewing in casual clothing. Likewise, observer ratings may be impacted by cognitive

dissonance. Cognitive dissonance is the perception of contradictory information and its mental

toll (Festinger, 1957). In order to reduce cognitive dissonance, the observer may believe the

stronger cue, and explain away the weaker cue. The idea that stronger cues have a buffering

effect on weaker cues can be seen in the study by Oostrom et al. (2021), which found that only

applicants with very high levels of competence were granted leeway when violating norms of

attire during job interviews as competence is a stronger cue than professional dress. When

presented with a job applicant wearing a suit in a messy room, observers may attribute the messy

room to low levels of conscientiousness, and attribute the suit to the applicant's attempt at

impression management. Thus, I hypothesize that personality cues do not simply have an

additive effect but rather that the presence of stronger cues (such as a messy background)

lowers/eliminates the utilization of weaker cues (such as professional dress) in the presence of

incongruence.

Hypothesis 3a: Cleanliness will moderate the effect of candidate dress on perceived

candidate conscientiousness, such that in the presence of a messy room the influence of attire on

perceived conscientiousness is anticipated to be minimal. Conversely, within a tidy setting, it is

expected that clothing will have an impact on perceived conscientiousness.

Hypothesis 3b: Cleanliness will moderate the effect of candidate dress on the final

interview score, such that in the presence of a messy room the influence of attire on perceived

hirability is anticipated to be minimal. Conversely, within a tidy setting, it is expected that

clothing will have an impact on perceived hirability.

When considering how background cues in AVIs influence interview ratings, it is

important to consider if the impact from background cues may be more strongly pronounced in

some jobs than others. In high-ranking client-facing roles (such as accountants, consultants or

lawyers) individuals may be more strongly penalized for the presence of visual cues related to

low conscientiousness during an interview. Dressing casually is a stronger deviation from social

norms in professional service-oriented roles, than they would be in technical non-client-facing

roles such as IT workers or website developers. A study by Easterling et al. (1992) examined the

characteristics and utilization of employee dress codes in professional service-oriented

organizations. Findings from the survey indicated that attire holds significance in the marketing

of services due to traditions in the professions and the expectations of customers. Thus,

applicants applying for roles in these fields must look professional (such as recording interviews

in tidy backgrounds, and interviewing in professional dress). As a result, I predicted that

individuals who were applying to these jobs would be penalized more heavily for the presence of

low-conscientiousness-related cues such as a messy background or casual dress.

Hypothesis 4a: Job type will moderate the effect of candidate dress on perceived

candidate conscientiousness, such that applicants are more likely to be penalized for dressing

casually during the interview if they are applying to professional client-facing roles (compared to applicants who apply to technical roles).

Hypothesis 4b: Job type will moderate the effect of candidate dress on the perceived final interview score, such that applicants are more likely to be penalized for dressing casually during the interview if they are applying to professional client-facing roles (compared to applicants who apply to technical roles).

Hypothesis 5a: Job type will moderate the effect of candidate cleanliness on perceived candidate conscientiousness such that applicants are more likely to be penalized for recording in a messy room during the interview if they are applying to professional client-facing roles (compared to applicants who apply to technical roles).

Hypothesis 5b: Job type will moderate the effect of candidate cleanliness on the final interview score, such that applicants are more likely to be penalized for recording in a messy room during the interview if they are applying for professional client-facing roles (compared to applicants who apply to technical roles).

Methods

Participants

Participants were recruited using Prolific and were financially compensated for the completion of a 15-minute task with 2.5 British pounds (about 4 CAD). Individuals were required to be over the age of 18, be proficient in English, and reside within Canada or the United States. Within Prolific, we recruited users with hiring experience. A power analysis indicated a need to recruit 368 raters on prolific – with about 46 raters in each condition (see Appendix D for power analysis). To accommodate for missing or unusable data we collected data from 412 raters.

Participants included in the final analysis were 373 anglophone Prolific users residing in

Canada ($n = 114$) and the United States ($n = 259$). A little less than half of the participants were

female (43.8%, n = 163; male: 53.5%, n = 199; other: 2.4%, n = 10, no response: $n = 1$), and

their ages ranged from 19 to 84 years old ($M = 43.25$, $SD = 13.88$). Most participants held a

Bachelor's degree (46.4%; Master's degree: 20.4%; High School diploma/GED: 17.4%;

Associate's degree: 7.5%; College diploma: 5.1%, PhD: 2.7%; Less than bachelor's degree:

0.5%). The majority of participants reported being White/Caucasian ($n = 259$; Asian: $n = 46$;

Black/African-American: $n = 46$; Mixed race: $n = 9$; Hispanic/Latino: $n = 24$; Middle Eastern: n

$= 6$; Native/Aboriginal/Indigenous: $n = 6$; Other: $n = 2$). The majority of respondents (82.6%, $n =$

308) reported having no prior experience rating asynchronous video interviews. The individuals

who have rated them reported previously rating between 1 and 40 AVI interviews ($M = 6.13$, SD

$= 7.14$).

Procedure & Design

Participants completed an online Qualtrics questionnaire as part of their participation in

the study. Participants' informed consent was obtained before being randomly assigned to one of

the eight conditions (messy vs clean) x (casual dress vs formal dress) x (professional client-

facing role vs technical role). The survey consisted of several steps. Firstly, participants read the

job description for the position they have been assigned (refer to Appendix A). The job

description was either for the role of change management consultant as this is a client facing

role, or computer scientist as this is a technical non-client facing role. Next, participants watched

a series of three videos, each featuring an interview question presented through AVI software

(refer to Appendix B for the interview questions). The three videos were the same in both groups

regardless of what job description the individual was assigned. The videos displayed the

interview questions in text format and a young woman responded to each question according to a scripted performance. The actor recorded their video responses in four different conditions: a) professional dress and a tidy background b) professional dress and a messy background c) casual dress and a tidy background or d) casual dress and a messy background. The interview scripts were the same for both roles. The three interview questions were a) non-role specific b) rated by industrial-organizational psychology students to ensure that they achieved the intended score of approximately 3 (out of 5) on their respective BARS (see Appendix B for full scripts). Each video had a duration of approximately 60-90 secs (see Appendix F for screenshots of the aplicant in differing conditions). After watching all three interview questions, participants evaluated the candidate's perceived conscientiousness, overall interview performance and completed three brief attention checks. Participants were then asked a question to assess the reasoning behind their assessment of the applicant's personality and final interview score. Participants were also asked to rate the candidate's perceived socioeconomic status to rule it out as a potential confounding variable. Finally, participants were asked to provide demographic information about themselves.

Before examining responses to manipulation checks and conducting the factorial ANOVAs, I first cleaned the data and checked for outliers. Having noticed that some applicants were providing inconsistent or arbitrary responses, I chose to remove outliers to ensure the integrity of our findings. After splitting the file into the eight different conditions of the job type (computer science vs consultant), dress (professional vs casual and background (tidy vs messy) I looked at the Z scores for the two dependent variables hirability and perceived conscientiousness. Any responses below or above a Z score of +/- 1.96 were removed – resulting in 28 exclusions. Upon closer examination of the data, I verified that many of the excluded

participants exhibited low-quality data, characterized by numerous failed attention checks, inconsistent responses, and a substantial number of unanswered questions. Additionally, any participants who failed both the first and the second attention check were removed – resulting in three additional exclusions. For a more detailed explanation of these attention checks, please consult the study measures section. Finally, individuals who self-reported a lack of attentiveness during the study (scoring less than 3 out of 5 or providing no response to the relevant question) were removed -resulting in an additional 8 exclusions. This meticulous screening process resulted in the exclusion of 39 participants.

Measures

Conscientiousness. Conscientiousness was measured using eight adjectives from Saucier's (1994) Mini-Markers of the Big-Five (organized, efficient, systematic, practical, disorganized (reversed), sloppy (reversed), inefficient (reversed), careless (reversed)). Participants were asked to rate the candidate's personality from 1 (*very uncharacteristic of the applicant)* to 5 (*very characteristic of the applicant).* The internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a coefficient of .87, indicative of strong internal reliability.

Socioeconomic Status. Socioeconomic Status was measured by asking participants to complete an adapted version of the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status (see Appendix D), where participants were asked to rank applicants from 1-10 on perceived socioeconomic status, with a higher score representing higher perceived socioeconomic status (Adler et al., 2000).

Interview Performance. I used the same 4-item overall hireability scale (see Apendix C) used in Powell et al.'s paper (2023). It was a five-point scale that asked general questions about

the applicant's hirability such as "How qualified is this applicant for the position?" It was

answered by assigning a rating from 1 (*not qualified*) to 5 (*very qualified*). The internal

consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, resulting in a coefficient of .91,

indicative of strong internal reliability.

Attention Checks. Participants were required to undergo three attention checks as part of

the study. The first attention check was integrated into the hirability scale, prompting participants

to select "1 (not qualified)." The second attention check was embedded in the conscientiousness

scale, involving a statement such as "eats concrete." Additionally, participants were asked to rate

their attentiveness on a scale of 1 to 5 : "On a scale of 1-5 how closely were you paying attention

during the study". It was answered by assigning a rating from 1 (*not paying attention*) to 5

(*paying close attention*) – a score less than three is flagged. Participants who failed two or more

attention checks were excluded from the final analyses (but were still compensated for their

time).

Manipulation check. To gauge the participants' attentiveness to the room's cleanliness

cue, I asked participants to respond to the following question: "On a scale of 1 to 5, how would

you rate the cleanliness of the room in the person's background?" (1 = *very messy*, 5 = *very tidy*).

To gauge the participants' attentiveness to the actor's dress cue I asked participants to respond to

the following question: "Please provide your assessment of the candidate's level of

professionalism in terms of dress on a scale of 1 to 5?" (1 = *very unprofessional*, 5 = *very*

professional). Lastly, participants were asked, "On a scale of 1-5, how often do you think the

applicant will be required to meet with clients" (1 = *very rarely,* 5 = *very often*).

Assessing Cue Utilization. To assess cue utilization I asked participants the following

open-ended questions: "Briefly explain in your own words what about the applicant/interview

led to your final evaluation of their personality?" and "Briefly explain in your own words what about the applicant/interview led to your final evaluation of their interview performance?". I used some examples of the participant's open-ended responces as a way to illustrate some of the key results from my quantitative analysis. I did not conduct any formal qualitative analysis of this data as this was not the focal point of my study, and I deemed many of the open ended comments too limited for a proper qualitative analysis.

Awareness of the study manipulations. As a final measure in the study, participants were asked to indicate what they believed the study focus was in an open-text response form.

Results

Manipulation Checks

In the study, three manipulation checks were conducted. The first check aimed to determine if raters noticed whether the candidate was recording in a messy bedroom. Raters were asked to rate the cleanliness of the room on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = *very messy*, 5 = *very tidy*). The mean was 4.21 (SD=.84) for raters in the "tidy" condition and 2.71 (SD=1.26) in the "messy" condition, t (371) = 13.44, p < .001, indicating that the manipulation was effective, as there was a noticeable difference in perceived cleanliness between the two conditions. I elected not to utilize manipulation checks as exclusion criteria due to the potential for some participants to overlook the candidate's background or to conceptualize job roles differently, particularly regarding client-facing aspects. My objective was to preserve the authenticity of our study in relation to real-world implications.

Additionally, Cohen's d was calculated to assess the effect size, yielding a value of d = 1.39 which suggests a very large effect. The second manipulation check focused on whether raters observed the candidate's attire. Raters were asked to assess the candidate's level of

professionalism in terms of dress on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = *very unprofessional*, 5 = *very professional*). The mean was 2.21 (*SD* = 1.09) for the casual condition and 4.35 (*SD* = .79) in the formal condition t (370) = 21.91, p < .001 suggesting that the manipulation was successful. Additionally, Cohen's d was calculated to assess the effect size, yielding a value of d = 2.26 which suggests a very large effect. The final manipulation check aimed to determine if raters could link the candidate's job title to the frequency of client meetings. Raters were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how often they thought the candidate would be required to meet with clients (1 = *very rarely*, 5 = *very often*). The mean was 2.90 (*SD* = 1.10) for raters who were informed that the candidate was applying for a computer science job and 3.96 (*SD* = 0.87) for raters who were informed that the candidate was applying to a change management consulting job t (371) = 10.27, p < .001. This suggests that raters were able to associate the job title with the expected frequency of client meetings, indicating the effectiveness of the manipulation. Additionally, Cohen's d was calculated to assess the effect size, yielding a value of d = 1.07 which suggests a very large effect.

Hypothesis Tests

Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations can be found in Table 1. Before conducting the two factorial ANOVAs (one with perceived conscientiousness and one with perceived hirability as a dependent variable) I checked for normality and homogeneity of variance. According to the Shapiro-Wilk test of normality, the consultant job type/casual dress/tidy background group demonstrated a normal distribution for both dependent variables. The consultant job type/casual dress/messy background group exhibited a normal distribution for the conscientiousness scale. Additionally, the computer science/professional dress/messy background group showed a normal distribution for the conscientiousness scales. However, all in

all other groups Shapiro-Wilk was significant ($p < .001$) indicating that the data significantly

deviated from a normal distribution. Levene's test indicated unequal variances in both scales ($p <$

.001). Due to observed violations of normality and homogeneity of variance, I employed

bootstrapping as a robust methodology to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the results.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Conscientiousness	4.16	0.67						
2. Hirability	3.86	0.83	.66**					
3. SES	5.88	1.39	.20**	.24**				
4. Gender	1.49	0.55	.02	-.07	-.08			
5. Age	43.25	13.88	-.02	.01	-.09	.01		
6. Education	4.54	1.43	-.08	-.01	.00	-.02	-.02	
7. AVI Experience	1.17	0.38	.07	.05	-.01	.08	.08	.12*

Note. N =373, *= $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$. SES = Perceived Socioeconomic Status. Gender is coded as Male = 1, Female = 2 and Other =3. Education is coded 1 = Less than High School, 2 = Highschool/GED, 3 = College, 4 = Associates degree, 5= Bachelor's degree, 6= Masters and 7 = PhD. AVI experience is coded as 1= Has not rated an asynchronous video before and 2= Has rated an asynchronous video before.

To examine the data, I performed separate 2 (computer science vs consultant) x 2 (casual

dress vs formal dress) x 2 (tidy vs messy) factorial ANOVAs for conscientiousness ratings and

interview performance as the dependent variables. Means and standard deviations for each

condition are presented in Tables 2 and 4, and full ANOVA results are presented in Tables 3 and

5.

ANOVA with Conscientiousness as the dependent variable

My initial hypothesis (1a) posited that a job applicant situated in a tidy setting would receive higher conscientiousness ratings compared to a candidate in a disorganized environment. To examine this hypothesis, I investigated the main effect of cleanliness. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of cleanliness $F(1,365) = 67.99$, $p < .001$, *partial n^2* = .157, indicating that the clean condition ($M = 4.42$, $SE = .05$) garnered higher conscientiousness ratings than the messy condition ($M = 3.91$, $SE = .04$). Thus, hypothesis 1a was supported.

Table 2

Conscientious Ratings – Cell Means for the 8 Conditions

Job Type	Casual/Formal	Messy/Tidy	*n*	*M*	*SD*
Computer Scientist	Casual	Tidy	48	4.56	0.38
Consultant	Casual	Tidy	46	4.28	0.48
Computer Scientist	Casual	Messy	50	3.99	0.78
Consultant	Casual	Messy	47	3.95	0.58
Computer Scientist	Formal	Tidy	48	4.41	0.47
Consultant	Formal	Tidy	42	4.45	0.39
Computer Scientist	Formal	Messy	39	3.97	0.70
Consultant	Formal	Messy	53	3.67	0.87

Hypothesis 2a posited that a prospective employee dressed in formal attire would receive higher conscientiousness ratings compared to a candidate dressed in casual attire. To examine this hypothesis, I investigated the main effect of dress on perceived conscientiousness. The results revealed that there was no significant main effect of dress $F(1,365) = 1.29$, $p = .257$, *partial n^2* = .004, indicating that the participants in formal attire ($M = 4.14$, $SE = .05$) did not

receive higher conscientiousness ratings than candidates in casual attire ($M = 4.19$, $SE = .04$).

Hypothesis 2a was not supported.

Table 3

Fixed-Effects ANOVA Results using Conscientious Ratings as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	F (1, 365)	p	partial η^2
Job Type	5.17	.024	.014
Dress	1.29	.257	.004
Cleanliness	67.99	.001	.157
Job Type x Dress	0.46	.830	.000
Job Type x Cleanliness	0.18	.674	.000
Dress x Cleanliness	1.62	.204	.004
Job Type x Dress x Cleanliness	5.34	.021	.014

Note. N = 373.

Hypothesis 3a proposed that the cleanliness of the environment would influence the

relationship between candidate dress and perceived conscientiousness. Specifically, I predicted

that in the presence of a messy room, the influence of attire on perceived contentiousness was

anticipated to be minimal. Conversely, within a tidy setting, I expected that clothing would have

an impact on perceived conscientiousness. To test this hypothesis, I explored the moderating

role of cleanliness on the effect of candidate dress on perceived conscientiousness by examining

the interaction term between cleanliness and dress in my ANOVA. Hypothesis 3a was not

supported, as indicated by the results of the F-test for the interaction term of dress and

cleanliness, $F(1,365) = 1.62$, $p = .204$, *partial n^2 = .014*. More precisely, as anticipated, when the

room was disorderly, candidates were consistently rated lower on perceived conscientiousness,

regardless of their attire. However, contrary to my initial expectations the applicant was rated higher on conscientiousness in the tidy room regardless of their attire. Descriptive statistics indicated marginal mean scores of $M = 4.41$ ($SE = .06$) for the casual dress/tidy condition, $M = 3.97$ ($SE = .06$) for the casual dress/messy condition, $M = 4.44$ ($SE = .06$) for the formal dress/tidy condition and $M = 3.85$ ($SE = .06$) for the formal dress/messy condition. Hypothesis 3a was not supported.

Hypothesis 4a proposed that the type of job sought would influence the relationship between candidate dress and perceived conscientiousness. It posited that candidates dressing casually during an interview would face a greater likelihood of being penalized if they were applying to professional client-facing roles, compared to those applying to technical roles. To test this hypothesis, I explored the moderating role of job type on the effect of candidate dress on perceived conscientiousness by examining the interaction term between job type and dress in my ANOVA. However, contrary to my initial expectations the applicant was rated higher on conscientiousness when applying for a technical role regardless of their attire as indicated by the results of the F-test for the interaction term for job type and dress ($F(1,365) = 0.46$, $p = .830$, *partial $\eta^2 < .001$*). Descriptive statistics indicated marginal mean scores of $M = 4.22$ ($SE = .07$) for the technical job/formal dress condition, $M = 4.26$ ($SE = .06$) for the technical job/casual dress condition, $M = 4.07$ ($SE = .06$) for the customer-facing job/formal dress condition and $M = 4.12$ ($SE = .06$) for the customer-facing job/casual dress condition. Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

Moving to Hypothesis 5a, it proposed that the type of job sought would moderate the relationship between background cleanliness and perceived conscientiousness. Specifically, it is suggested that applicants recording in a messy room during the interview would be more likely

to be penalized if they were applying to professional client-facing roles compared to those applying to technical roles. To examine this hypothesis, I investigated the moderating role of job type on the effect of background cleanliness on perceived conscientiousness by examining the interaction term between job type and cleanliness in my ANOVA. However, the results did not show a significant moderation effect of job type ($F(1,365) = 0.18$, $p = .674$, *partial $\eta^2 < .000$*), indicating that the penalty for recording in a messy room did not significantly differ between applicants targeting professional client-facing roles and those targeting technical roles. Descriptive statistics indicated marginal mean scores of $M = 4.49$ ($SE = .06$) for the technical job/ tidy condition and $M = 4.00$ ($SE = .07$) for the technical job /messy condition, $M = 4.36$ ($SE = .07$) for the client-facing job /tidy condition and $M = 3.82$ ($SE = .06$) for the client-facing job /messy condition. Hypothesis 5a was not supported.

ANOVA with hirability as the dependent variable

Hypothesis 1b posited that a prospective employee situated in a tidy setting would garner superior ratings for interview performance compared to an individual in a disorderly environment. To assess this hypothesis, I examined the main effect of cleanliness on interview performance scores. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of cleanliness, $F(1,365) = 7.71$, $p = .006$, *partial $n^2 = .021$*, indicating that the clean condition ($M = 3.98$, $SE = .06$) garnered higher interview performance ratings than the messy condition ($M = 3.76$, $SE = .06$). Thus, hypothesis 1b was supported.

Hypothesis 2b posited that a prospective employee dressed in formal attire would garner superior ratings for interview performance compared to an individual in casual attire. To assess this hypothesis, I examined the main effect of dress on interview performance scores. The results revealed that there was no significant main effect of dress, $F(1,365) = 0.074$, $p = .786$, *partial n^2*

< .001, indicating that the participants in formal attire (M = 3.90, SE = .06) did not receive higher overall interview ratings than candidates in casual attire (M = 3.84, SE = .06). Hypothesis 2b was not supported.

Table 4

Interview Performance Ratings – Cell Means for the 8 Conditions

Job Type	Casual/Formal	Messy/Tidy	n	M	SD
Computer Scientist	Casual	Tidy	48	4.02	0.60
Consultant	Casual	Tidy	46	3.88	0.70
Computer Scientist	Casual	Messy	50	3.72	0.96
Consultant	Casual	Messy	47	3.78	0.69
Computer Scientist	Formal	Tidy	48	4.05	0.83
Consultant	Formal	Tidy	42	3.97	0.83
Computer Scientist	Formal	Messy	39	3.88	0.84
Consultant	Formal	Messy	53	3.59	0.96

Hypothesis 3b suggested that cleanliness would moderate the impact of candidate dress on final interview scores. Specifically, I predicted that in the presence of a messy room, the influence of attire on perceived hirability was anticipated to be minimal. Conversely, within a tidy setting, I expected that clothing would have an impact on perceived hirability. To test this hypothesis, I explored the moderating role of cleanliness on the effect of candidate dress on perceived hirability by examining the interaction term between cleanliness and dress in my ANOVA. Hypothesis 3a was not suppported as indicated by the results of the F-test for the interaction term for dress and cleanliness, ($F(1,365)$ = 0.17, p = .685, *partial η^2 < .001*). More

precicly, as expected, in a disorderly room, candidates received consistently lower perceived hirability ratings, irrespective of their attire. However, contrary to my initial expectations the applicant was rated higher on hirability in the tidy room regardless of their attire. Descriptive statistics indicated marginal mean scores of $M = 3.94$ ($SE = .08$) for the casual dress/tidy condition, $M = 3.75$ ($SE = .08$) for the casual dress/messy condition, $M = 4.02$ ($SE = .09$) for the formal dress/tidy condition and $M = 3.78$ ($SE = .08$) for the formal dress/messy condition. Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Table 5

Fixed-Effects ANOVA Results using Interview Performance Rating as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	F (1, 365)	p	partial η^2
Job Type	1.70	.193	.005
Dress	0.08	.786	.000
Cleanliness	7.71	.006	.021
Job Type x Dress	0.77	.382	.002
Job Type x Cleanliness	0.01	.973	.000
Dress x Cleanliness	0.17	.685	.000
Job Type x Dress x Cleanliness	1.41	.236	.004

Note. N = 373.

Hypothesis 4b extended the investigation into the moderating role of job type, suggesting that the type of job would influence the impact of candidate dress on the perceived final interview score. It hypothesized that applicants dressing casually during the interview would be more likely to receive lower performance ratings if they were applying to professional client-facing roles compared to those applying to technical roles. To test this hypothesis, I explored the

moderating role of job type on the effect of candidate dress on perceived hirability by examining

the interaction term between job type and dress in my ANOVA. However, contrary to my initial

assumptions, the applicant's attire did not influence their hirability rating for a technical role, as

indicated by the results of the F-test for the interaction term for job type and dress ($F(1,365) =$

0.77, $p = .382$, *partial $\eta^2 = .002$*). Descriptive statistics indicated marginal mean scores of $M =$

4.01 ($SE = .09$) for the technical job/formal dress condition, $M = 3.85$ ($SE = .08$) for the technical

job/casual dress condition, $M = 3.79$ ($SE = .08$) for the customer-facing job/formal dress

condition and $M = 3.84$ ($SE = .08$) for the customer-facing job/casual dress condition. Hypothesis

4b was not supported.

Finally, Hypothesis 5b extended the exploration of job type moderation to the impact of

background cleanliness on the final interview score. It hypothesized that applicants recording in

a messy room during the interview would be more likely to receive lower performance ratings if

they were applying to professional client-facing roles compared to those applying to technical

roles. To examine this hypothesis, I investigated the moderating role of job type on the effect of

candidate cleanliness on perceived hirability by examining the interaction term between job type

and cleanliness in my ANOVA. However, the results did not show a significant moderation

effect of job type ($F(1,365) = 0.01$, $p = .973$, *partial $\eta^2 < .001$*), indicating that the penalty for

recording in a messy room did not significantly differ between applicants targeting professional

client-facing roles and those targeting technical roles. Descriptive statistics indicated marginal

mean scores of $M = 4.04$ ($SE=.08$) for the technical job/ tidy condition and $M = 3.82$ ($SE = .09$)

for the technical job /messy condition, $M = 3.92$ ($SE = .09$) for the client-facing job /tidy

condition and $M = 3.70$ ($SE = .08$) for the client-facing job /messy condition. Hypothesis 5b was

not supported. A summary of the hypotheses testing results can be found in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Hypotheses Testing Results

Hypothesis	Supported
Hypothesis 1a: A tidy setting is associated with higher conscientiousness ratings.	Yes
Hypothesis 1b: A tidy setting is linked to higher interview performance ratings.	Yes
Hypothesis 2a: Formal attire is associated with higher conscientiousness ratings.	No
Hypothesis 2b: Formal attire is linked to higher interview performance ratings.	No
Hypothesis 3a: In the presence of a messy room, the influence of attire on perceived conscientiousness is anticipated to be minimal. Conversely, within a tidy setting, clothing is expected to have an impact on perceived hirability.	No
Hypothesis 3b: In the presence of a messy room, the influence of attire on perceived conscientiousness is anticipated to be minimal. Conversely, within a tidy setting, clothing is expected to have an impact on perceived conscientiousness.	No
Hypothesis 4a: Job type moderates the relationship between candidate dress and conscientiousness.	No
Hypothesis 4b: Job type moderates the impact of candidate dress on perceived hirability.	No
Hypothesis 5a: Job type moderates the relationship between candidate cleanliness and conscientiousness.	No
Hypothesis 5b: Job type moderates the impact of candidate cleanliness on perceived hirability.	No

Note: "Supported" indicates that the hypothesis was statistically supported, "Partial" indicates partial support, and "No" indicates that the hypothesis was not supported.

Additional Results

A statistically significant main effect of job type on conscientiousness was observed, $F(1,$ $373 = 5.16$, $p = .024$, *partial* $\eta^2 = .014$. More specifically, raters who were told the candidate was

applying to a computer science role ($M = 4.24$, $SE = .05$) tended to give higher ratings than raters

who were told the candidate was applying to a consulting role ($M = 4.09$, $SE = .04$).

Table 7

Fixed-Effects ANOVA Results using Conscientious Ratings as the Dependent Variable with

Socioeconomic Status Included as a Covariate

Predictor	F (1, 365)	p	partial η^2
Job Type	5.76	.017	.016
Dress	0.69	.408	.002
Cleanliness	67.15	.001	.157
Job Type x Dress	0.00	.957	.000
Job Type x Cleanliness	0.12	.733	.000
Dress x Cleanliness	1.47	.227	.004
Job Type x Dress x Cleanliness	4.20	.041	.011

Note. N = 373. Socioeconomic status was included as a covariate in the analysis.

A significant three-way interaction was found involving job type, dress, and cleanliness

in relation to conscientiousness, F (1, 373) = 5.34, p = .021, *partial η^2* = .014. Upon closer

inspection of Table 2, it appears that the incongruence of background cues (messy background

and formal dress) resulted in starkly lower ratings of applicant conscientiousness when the

candidate was applying to a client-facing role such as consulting. In fact, contrast comparisons

using Bonferroni correction indicated that candidates applying to consulting roles received

significantly higher ratings when they were dressed casually and had a messy background ($M =$

3.95, SD = 0.58), than when they were dressed formally and had a messy background (M = 3.67,

SD = 0.87) with a mean difference of 0.26 (SE = 0.12), p = .032. This underscores the nuanced

interplay between environmental cues, attire, and job type in shaping perceived

conscientiousness during the evaluation process.

Table 8

Fixed-Effects ANOVA Results using Interview Performance Rating as the Dependent Variable

with Socioeconomic Status Included as a Covariate

Predictor	F (1, 365)	p	partial η^2
Job Type	1.99	.159	.005
Dress	0.40	.527	.001
Cleanliness	6.92	.009	.019
Job Type x Dress	1.55	.214	.004
Job Type x Cleanliness	0.00	.988	.000
Dress x Cleanliness	0.07	.790	.000
Job Type x Dress x Cleanliness	0.68	.409	.002

Note. N = 373. Socioeconomic status was included as a covariate in the analysis.

I also examined both ANOVAs with socioeconomic status as a covariate. This was done

to confirm that an individual's rating is attributed to personality traits rather than perceptions

linked to their socioeconomic status; for instance, wearing a suit might create an impression of

greater affluence. However, controlling for socioeconomic status did not alter the findings as

shown in Table 7 and Table 8, indicating that the observed relationships between personality

traits and ratings remained robust and were not significantly influenced by socioeconomic status.

I also performed a 2 (computer science vs consultant) x 2 (casual dress vs formal dress) x 2 (tidy

vs messy) factorial ANOVA with socioeconomic status as the dependent variable. ANOVA

results are presented in Table 9. The results revealed no significant main effects or interactions among these variables on socioeconomic status.

Table 9

Fixed-Effects ANOVA Results using Socioeconomic Status as the Dependent Variable

Predictor	F (1, 365)	p	partial η^2
Job Type	0.28	.596	.001
Dress	1.33	.249	.004
Cleanliness	1.10	.295	.003
Job Type x Dress	1.78	.183	.005
Job Type x Cleanliness	0.02	.898	.000
Dress x Cleanliness	2.14	.144	.006
Job Type x Dress x Cleanliness	1.03	.312	.003

Note. N = 373.

Upon review of the open-ended responses, it was observed that 99% of participants provided comments in the open-box section. Regarding the question asking raters to explain in their own words what aspects of the applicant or interview influenced their final evaluation of the applicant's personality, responses averaged 17.1 words. For the query concerning the aspects influencing their final evaluation of the applicant's interview performance, responses averaged 17.6 words. Additionally, responses to the question prompting raters to provide open-text responses indicating their interpretation of the study's focus had an average of 9.8 words. It's important to note that the open-ended textual data was not subjected to formal analysis, such as content or thematic analysis. However, select quotes will be referenced in the discussion.

Discussion

Despite the increasing popularity of AVIs, there has been limited exploration of the potential biases introduced by visible backgrounds in AVI recordings on the ultimate outcomes of interviews. This research aims to fill this gap by examining how AVI background settings can impact perceptions of applicant personality and hireability using Brunswik's lens theory as a theoretical framework for this assessment.

Overall the findings underscore a significant influence of environmental cleanliness on perceived conscientiousness and perceived hirability as participants in tidy settings received higher ratings than those in messy environments. Further analyses revealed that applicants for technical roles garnered higher perceptions of conscientiousness compared to those applying for client-facing positions. Moreover, a noteworthy three-way interaction involving job type, dress, and cleanliness was identified. Specifically, individuals applying to client-facing roles, dressed formally with a messy background, received markedly lower scores than their casually dressed counterparts with the same background. This emphasizes the intricate dynamics of environmental cues in shaping perceptions. Nevertheless, despite research participants' written responses possibly suggesting a connection, there was no statistical impact of dress on conscientiousness or hireability. I further elaborate below on my reasons for believing this to be the case. The study's findings lead to several noteworthy and pertinent conclusions for job applicants, organizations, and researchers who utilize AVI's. This study similarly found no evidence supporting the idea that adopting formal attire and maintaining a tidy background resulted in elevated perceptions of socioeconomic status compared to individuals dressed casually with a messy background.

Messy Background's Impact on Rater's Perceptions

As hypothesized, the results of the study highlight a notable impact of environmental cleanliness on both perceived conscientiousness and perceived hirability. Participants situated in tidy environments were perceived to be more conscientious and had a higher likelihood of being hired. These findings align seamlessly with the conclusions drawn in a prior study conducted by Powell et al. (2023), further affirming the robustness and reliability of the observed correlation between the orderliness of the environment and the evaluative judgments made in professional contexts. Despite identifying a significant three-way interaction, it is noteworthy that the main effect of cleanliness exhibited substantially greater magnitude, approximately fifteen times larger than that of the interaction effect. Consequently, it is imperative to emphasize this predominant effect in my discussion. Likewise, in the open-ended written comments, it was clear messiness reflected poorly on the canidates personality – particularly their organization skills. One written response expressed: "Their background came across as disorganized and messy, which makes me believe that they may be a bit unorganized or messy as a characteristic."

Technical Role Vs Client Facing Role – Perceptions of Conscientiousness

In this study, candidates applying for the computer science role were rated higher in conscientiousness compared to those pursuing change management consultant role. The observed difference in conscientiousness assessments between the two groups may be explained by the more rigorous evaluation of perceived conscientiousness in the client-facing role. This suggests that candidates in client-facing positions undergo heightened scrutiny, particularly in assessing conscientious traits during video interviews. Such scrutiny could contribute to the variations in conscientiousness evaluations observed between the two groups in this study. An alternative explanation could be that participants held a stereotype suggesting that individuals in computer science roles are more conscientious compared to those in consultancy positions. To

gain a better understanding of the reasoning for the difference in conscientiousness between the two groups I examined the open-ended written responces. Some raters within the computer science group appeared to assign lesser importance to professionalism, particularly regarding candidate attire, as evidenced by a respondent's remark: "I don't care what she wears because as a computer programmer or software engineer, you don't need to wear business casual or fancy clothing.". While some raters in the in the consultant group assigned greater emphasis to profesionalism: "She had great answers and was very articulate but her wearing a sweatshirt showed some unprofessionalism." Given the emphasis placed on professionalism in some of the open-ended written responses, it appears there may be additional evidence supporting the notion that the observed variance in conscientiousness assessments between the two groups may be attributed to the more stringent evaluation of perceived conscientiousness in client-facing roles.

Dress on Candidate Perceptions

Contrary to previous research our study did not find a main effect of dress on perceived conscientiousness or interview outcomes (Kinicki & Lockwood, 1985; Mack & Rainey, 1990). Even though there was no main effect of dress found in our study, some raters commented that they did take dress into account when making their final judgement, especially for the client-facing consultant position: "I think the fact that the applicant was dressed in a very casual attire made me think they weren't serious about the interview. I would not have been comfortable hiring this person to meet with managers and senior leaders in other companies like the job entails." On the other hand, raters who were informed the applicant was applying to a technical job rarely commented on dress. Our findings contradict previous research by Sotak et al. (2024) which found evidence to support that attire style (business formal vs casual) had an indirect effect on candidate perceptions. Given the apparent contradictions with prior studies, further

exploration of these dynamics is imperative to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted factors influencing hiring judgments.

Three Way Interaction: Dress, Tidiness, and Job Type

The findings revealed a notable concern among raters when candidates applying to client-facing roles dressed formally but presented a messy background, resulting in lower ratings. Delving deeper into the written responses, I noticed a consistent pattern emphasizing the significance of professionalism. Raters expressed a heightened sensitivity to the incongruence between the candidate's formal attire and the disorderly surroundings, with one rater articulating the impact: "They were dressed appropriately, but the first thing I noticed was the pile of blankets and casual clothing that would betray their image of professionalism." Despite positive remarks on professional dress, the incongruence with a messy background seemed to amplify the visibility of disorderliness, particularly in client-facing roles, contributing to lower perceived conscientiousness scores.

While comments from raters who watched the applicant apply for the same position in casual attire did not comment on her dress and made comments related to her demeanour such as: "She seemed honest and genuine, and I felt this from her demeanour and from my experience working with someone similar to her in terms of the way she talks, body language, etc..". Although the casual dress and messy background did provide some negative perceptions of the candidate, raters focused more on the candidate's mannerisms and interview responses when the cues were congruent. This underscores the nuanced interplay between attire, background, and perceived professionalism, warranting further exploration to elucidate these complexities in the hiring process. For example continuing to examine how variations in attire presentation and/or

video backgrounds within different industries or organizational cultures could impact perceived

professionalism could provide valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics of the hiring process.

It is noteworthy that some raters consciously attempted to avoid letting the messy

background influence their judgment, as exemplified by one rater who stated, "I tried to overlook

their private space, considering it may not necessarily reflect their behavior at work (similar to an

auto body worker with a dented car or an electrician using many extension cords at home). I

assumed she was washing her bedding, explaining the stripped bed. She displayed a positive

outlook and appeared very cheerful and friendly." Additionally, several raters refrained from

commenting on background cues, directing their attention instead to the content of the responses.

These variations highlight discrepancies in how raters evaluate background cues in video

interviews.

Video Cue's Effect on Perceived Social-Economic Status

A study conducted by Li (2022) found evidence to support that individuals presenting

with a neat background and professional attire received higher social status judgments in online

meetings compared to those in casual dress with a messy background. However, results of my

factorial ANOVA, with socioeconomic status as the dependent variable, present a more nuanced

view. Contrary to earlier findings, no significant effects or interactions were observed. However,

our study did find a correlation between perceived socioeconomic status and perceived

conscientiousness, and a correlation between perceived socioeconomic status and perceptions of

hirability. These findings indicate a need for additional research in this domain.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this research carry significant weight for both job applicants

and organizations involved in the hiring process. For job applicants participating in

asynchronous video interviews (AVIs), the findings underscore the importance of considering

the visual elements of their interview settings, particularly the cleanliness of the background.

Awareness of how environmental cues, such as a messy background, can influence perceptions

of conscientiousness and hireability is crucial. Candidates should recognize the potential impact

of these visual cues on evaluators' judgments and aim to present themselves in environments that

align with the professional standards expected by the industry.

People's surroundings can indeed reflect certain personality traits, and observers can

accurately perceive personality based on cues in an individual's living environment (Gosling et

al., 2002). However, it is also important to note that the environment in which an individual

records an interview may not necessarily represent their true personality. Applicants may have

recorded in a shared space others have made messy. For example applicants might have to share

a room with messy siblings or roommates, or record in a shared space like an apartment that

others have made messy. Some applicants may live in small spaces due to financial constraints,

making it look messy simply because it's tiny.

Indeed, Barrick et al.'s (2009) meta-analysis indicates that self-presentation tactics during

interviews correlate more strongly with interview ratings than with subsequent job performance

ratings. This implies that the impressions formed during interviews may not necessarily align

with the candidate's actual job performance, raising doubts about the validity of personality-

related cues observed in asynchronous video interviews (AVIs). Given the uncertainty

surrounding the reliability of these cues, there is a risk of compromising the accuracy of observer

judgments. Consequently, interviewers who heavily rely on environmental cues to make

personality-related assessments may inadvertently introduce bias into the selection process.

It is crucial to emphasize this point to challenge the assumption that background cues offer precise insights into an applicant's personality. Therefore, I recommend that organizations proactively communicate their expectations regarding professionalism, attire, and overall presentation for both the interview and the job to ensure clarity for applicants. This transparent communication fosters inclusivity, particularly for individuals who may not intuitively grasp social norms. Nerodivergent individuals frequently expressed a sense of being uninformed about the hiring process, particularly for neurodivergent individuals grappling with deciphering implicit cues (Davies et al., 2023). Thus, expectations of professionalism during interview should be comunicated prior to the job interview. Moreover, transparent communication regarding expectations fosters a sense of trust and mutual respect between the organization and its potential employees, ultimately contributing to higher levels of employee satisfaction and retention. Overall, prioritizing transparent communication of expectations during the interview and on the job regarding professionalism and presentation reduces bias in the selection process and serves the organization's best interests by not unnecessarily excluding strong potential candidates who may be unaware of the company's professionalism expectations.

Theoretical Implications

This research offers theoretical implications that align with Brunswik's (1956) lens model and extend to the domain of personality assessment during video interviews, shedding light on the intricate relationship among visual cues, perceived professionalism, and hiring decisions. Grounded in Brunswik's lens model, which suggests that judgments are shaped by the cues available to observers, this study enhances our understanding of how visual elements contribute to the formation of personality perceptions in the hiring context. The model acknowledges that individuals consider multiple cues when forming judgments, but the impact of each cue may

vary depending on the context and the specific characteristics of the observer. Furthermore, cues may interact with one another in complex ways, and the significance of each cue may be influenced by the presence or absence of other cues. For example, in the context of hiring assessments during video interviews, the Brunswik lens model indicates that while both attire and background cleanliness are relevant cues, their combined effect on the evaluator's judgment may not be straightforward. Instead, the interaction between these cues (along with others) may shape the overall impression formed by the evaluator. Thus, the Brunswik lens model promotes a nuanced understanding of how individuals utilize available cues to make judgments in diverse situations. Specifically, the study suggests that in client-facing roles, conflicting cues may be especially noticeable, leading observers to prioritize the more prominent cue (such as a messy background) over the less prominent one (formal attire) to aleviate cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957). This nuanced perspective challenges the notion of a simple additive effect of cues and underscores the importance of considering their interaction. Ultimately, the findings underscore the necessity for a comprehensive understanding of the visual elements influencing hiring decisions, aligning with Brunswik's lens model by recognizing the central role of available cues in the evaluation process.

Limitations

While this research presents several intriguing implications for researchers, applicants, and organizations, it is not devoid of certain limitations. The study employed a simulated selection environment, implying that the findings might lack generalizability to authentic selection settings (Blacksmith et al., 2016) as the current study employs an experimental design rather than replicating a high-stakes selection setting.

In addition, in our study the condition featuring a messy background was characterized by an exceptionally disordered setting, including multiple pieces of clothing strewn across the bed and an open closet. It is important to note that this scenario, marked by extreme disorder, is not typical in real-world conditions. Consequently, future research endeavors should investigate whether similar effects persist in environments with a more moderately messy bedroom setup.

Additionally, the use of a single candidate or actor in this study introduces a limitation regarding the generalizability of the findings. The candidate's characteristics, such as age, gender, and race, may not be representative of the broader population of job seekers. As a result, caution should be exercised when extending the study's conclusions to candidates who differ in these key demographic factors. Future research incorporating a more diverse set of candidates is warranted to enhance the external validity of the findings.

 Moreover, in this study, the AVI videos were recorded individually instead of using a studio setup and software to modify the background. To address potential variations in eye contact, verbal mannerisms, body movement, lighting, and audio features across the videos, the mock AVI applicant recorded each video four times. Despite these efforts, there is a possibility that subtle differences might have introduced a potential unknown confounding factors into the study results. Future research endeavors should seek evaluations of these elements from Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to ensure consistency between conditions.

Another limitation of the study is the limited experience of participants in evaluating asynchronous video interviews (AVIs), with evaluations typically ranging between 1 and 40 AVIs. This lack of extensive experience with AVIs may have led participants to rely more heavily on their synchronous hiring experience and the norms associated with it. Consequently,

their evaluations of AVIs may have been influenced by these pre-existing norms and expectations, potentially affecting the interpretation and judgment of candidate performances.

While there is an increasing trend towards utilizing advanced resources and video-editing proficiency to record video responses within a studio environment and subsequently manipulate the background, there exist both advantages and disadvantages to this practice. Occasionally, such renderings may lack naturalness and appear visibly manipulated. Implementing this approach would serve to reduce discrepancies between conditions, thereby enhancing the overall methodological robustness of the study. However, my methodology prioritized realism, where the fidelity of my videos was notably high, suggesting a tradeoff between realism and methodological control.

Lastly, another limitation to acknowledge is the potential influence of the question "Tell me why diversity, equity, and inclusion are important to you" on the participants. Given that the job description emphasizes the significance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and this question was deemed important enough to be included as one of the three interview questions, it may have primed raters to be more aware of their biases and as a result, weakened the effect of dress and messiness as cues for hirability.

Future Directions

While the current study sheds light on the differences in conscientiousness assessments between technical and client-facing roles, it remains uncertain whether these findings will apply universally to all client-facing positions. Therefore, there is a need for further investigation to determine whether similar patterns emerge across various client-facing occupations. Specifically, research should examine whether the observed differences extend to non-professional client-facing roles, such as server, retail assistant, or flight attendant positions, or if they are unique to

professional client-facing roles like lawyers or consultants. By exploring the breadth of applicability across different client-facing occupations, future research can provide valuable insights into the nuanced dynamics of conscientiousness assessments in diverse job contexts.

Additionally, future research should investigate whether proactive communication of professionalism expectations benefits individuals who may struggle to interpret social cues, such as neurodivergent individuals. This research direction would further advance efforts towards promoting diversity and equity in organizational recruitment practices.

Additionally, further research should explore how participants' familiarity with AVIs impacts their AVI evaluation processes and identify strategies for mitigating the influence of synchronous hiring experiences on AVI assessments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study addresses a significant gap by examining biases introduced through visible backgrounds in asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) and their impact on interview outcomes. The results underscore the substantial influence of environmental cleanliness on perceived conscientiousness and hireability, with participants in tidy settings receiving higher ratings. Further analysis reveals that applicants for technical roles are perceived as more conscientious than those applying for client-facing positions, suggesting heightened scrutiny in client-facing roles during video interviews. A three-way interaction involving job type, dress, and cleanliness shows that individuals applying to client-facing roles with formal attire and a messy background receive lower scores than those applying with casual attire and the same background. Despite participants' comments suggesting a connection, no statistical impact of dress on conscientiousness or hireability was found. The study has practical implications, emphasizing the importance of organizations encouraging individuals to record in a tidy room or

with a blurred background or background filter to ensure a fair and equitable hiring process. It also contributes theoretical insights, suggesting that researchers should acknowledge the complexity of background cue interaction rather than assuming a simple additive effect. This perspective contributes to refining theoretical frameworks guiding our understanding of how various cues collectively shape perceptions of professionalism in the hiring context.

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Appendix A

Job Description: Change Management Consultant at Shay and Co.

Shay and Co. is a leading consulting firm specializing in change management and organizational transformation. We partner with businesses across various industries to help them navigate complex changes and achieve their strategic objectives. Our team of experienced change management professionals delivers innovative solutions and supports clients in implementing effective change strategies. We are deeply committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) work environment. Our mission is to provide cutting-edge solutions while cultivating a culture of collaboration, growth, and empowerment.

Job Overview:

We are seeking a dynamic and experienced Change Management Consultant to join our team. As a Change Management Consultant, you will play a crucial role in assisting our clients through significant transitions, ensuring successful change adoption, and driving organizational effectiveness. You will collaborate with client stakeholders, identify change opportunities, develop comprehensive change management plans, and guide the implementation of strategies to minimize resistance and maximize employee engagement.

Responsibilities:

Develop Change Management Strategies and Plans:

- o   Collaborate with client leadership to define change objectives, scope, and desired outcomes.

- o   Design and implement change management strategies, plans, and communication materials.

- o   Create comprehensive change management frameworks and methodologies tailored to client needs.

Execute Change Management Activities:

- o   Support the implementation of change initiatives by providing guidance, tools, and resources.

- o   Develop and deliver training programs to equip employees with the necessary skills to adapt to change.

- o   Facilitate workshops and group sessions to build change resilience and foster a positive change culture.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication:

- o   Identify and engage key stakeholders, establishing strong relationships and effective communication channels.

- o Develop clear and compelling communication plans to promote awareness, understanding, and acceptance of change.

- o Provide ongoing communication and support to address questions, concerns, and feedback from stakeholders.

Monitor and Evaluate Change Progress:

- o Track the progress of change initiatives and measure the effectiveness of change management strategies.

- o Collect and analyze feedback from employees and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.

- o Prepare regular progress reports, highlighting key achievements, challenges, and recommendations.

Change Leadership and Coaching:

- o Advise and coach client leaders on change management best practices, fostering their ability to lead and inspire change.

- o Provide guidance and support to project teams and change agents, empowering them to facilitate change at the grassroots level.

Requirements:

Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Organizational Psychology, or a related field (Master's degree preferred).

Proven experience (2 years) as a Change Management Consultant or in a similar change management role.

In-depth knowledge of change management principles, methodologies, and best practices.

Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to think strategically and adapt to dynamic environments.

Excellent communication and presentation skills, with the ability to articulate complex concepts to diverse audiences.

Exceptional stakeholder management abilities, with the capacity to build trust and credibility at all levels of an organization.

Proficiency in change management software and tools.

Relevant certifications in change management (e.g., Prosci, ACMP) are highly desirable.

Demonstrated ability to lead and motivate cross-functional teams.

Flexibility to travel and work on-site with clients as needed.

Join us at Shay and Co. and be part of a team dedicated to delivering excellence while fostering an inclusive and empowering work environment. Together, we will shape a culture that celebrates diversity and supports the professional growth and wellbeing of our employees.

Job Description: Computer scientist at Shay and Co.

Shay and Co. is a dynamic company specializing in innovative technical solutions. We are deeply committed to fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive (DEI) work environment. Our mission is to provide cutting-edge solutions while cultivating a culture of collaboration, growth, and empowerment.

We are seeking a skilled and passionate Computer Scientist to join our dynamic team at Shay and Co. As a Computer Scientist, you will play a vital role in driving our technical initiatives, developing innovative algorithms and software solutions, and contributing to the advancement of our products and services.

Responsibilities:

- Design, develop, and implement software applications and solutions

- Conduct research and analysis to identify technical challenges and propose innovative solutions.

- Develop and optimize algorithms for data processing, machine learning, and optimization tasks.

- Write clean and efficient code following industry best practices and standards.

- Conduct thorough testing and debugging to ensure the reliability and performance of software applications.

- Stay up to date with emerging technologies and trends in computer science, and recommend their integration into projects when appropriate.

Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Software Engineering, or a related field.

- Proven experience (2 years) in software development, algorithm design, and implementation.

- Strong programming skills in languages such as Python, Java, C++, or similar.

- Proficiency in data structures, algorithms, and software design principles.

- Experience with machine learning, data mining, or artificial intelligence is highly desirable.

- Solid understanding of software development methodologies, version control systems, and software testing techniques.

- Strong problem-solving and analytical skills, with the ability to tackle complex technical challenges.

- Experience with cloud platforms and technologies (e.g., AWS, Azure) is a plus.

- Demonstrated ability to adapt to new technologies and quickly learn and apply new concepts.

Join us at Shay and Co. and be part of a team dedicated to delivering technical excellence while fostering an inclusive and empowering work environment. Together, we will shape a culture that celebrates diversity and supports the professional growth and wellbeing of our employees.

Appendix B

Interview Script

Interview Q1: What would you say are your strongest qualities?

Response

My strongest qualities that make me a valuable asset in the workplace are problem-solving skills, adaptability, and a strong work ethic.

One thing I'm really good at is solving problems. When faced with difficult situations, I can look at all the details and come up with smart solutions. I know how to tackle challenges by using effective strategies that help me find answers and make progress. This positive and solution-focused way of thinking helps me handle tasks and projects with confidence.

I'm also highly adaptable and versatile. I feel comfortable working in all kinds of different environments. I enjoy collaborating with people from diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise. I'm at my best when things change quickly, and I need to think fast and adjust to new circumstances. Being adaptable allows me to work well with others and be a great team player.

Another quality that sets me apart is my strong work ethic and dedication. I am known for putting in a lot of effort to achieve high-quality results. Meeting deadlines is something I take very seriously, and I always do my best to get things done on time. I am motivated by a desire to keep getting better, and I'm proud of the extra effort I put in to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Interview Q2: Tell me how you contributed to the company's success in your previous position.

Response

In my previous role, we were under poor leadership in which we had a bad time with organizing tasks and so a lot of tasks fell to the side and were not completed well or on time. We

just had a hard time communicating within our team and to other teams and it was hard to get

everyone on the same page. This was a problem because missing client deadlines due to being

disorganized does not look good on the company or the employees.

 We wanted to change the environment that the team worked in to foster communication and

collaboration within and between teams. In order to do this, I proposed to my teams that we used

a collaborative online platform where we could have virtual chats and share information,

calendars, and documents online. The proposal was approved, and we implemented the use of

this online platform in all of the teams I was on. Although this seems like a minor

implementation, it helped the teams organize our tasks and keep track of deadlines.

Interview Q3: Tell me why Diversity Equity and Inclusion are important to you

Response

As a visible minority, I know first-hand the struggles of trying to work in a field with

predominantly white co-workers. I often feel like I have to work twice as hard to earn a spot in

my company. I avoid bringing traditional food to work, talking about traditional events I attend

outside of work, or even showing pictures of myself in traditional dress as I have noticed my co-

workers treat me differently when I express pride in my origins. My current company

emphasizes the importance of "not seeing colour", and treating everyone the same. However, I

believe I would feel more comfortable in a workplace that celebrates diversity

Celebrating diversity fosters a more inclusive and welcoming work environment. When

employees feel accepted, respected, and valued for their unique backgrounds, perspectives, and

identities, it creates a sense of belonging.

Appendix C

Overall Hireability Items

1. How qualified is this application for the position?

2. In your opinion, how attractive would this applicant be to the hiring organization?

3. How well did this applicant do in the interview?

4. If you were the hiring organization, how likely would you be to offer the candidate the

   job?

Appendix D

MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status

Instructions: Think of this ladder as representing where people stand in Canada / The United States. At the **top** of the ladder are the people who are the best off – those who have the most money, the most education, and the most respected jobs. At the **bottom** are the people who are the worst off – those who have the least money, least education, the least respected jobs, or no job. The higher up you are on this ladder, the closer you are to the people at the very top; the lower you are, the closer you are to the people at the very bottom.
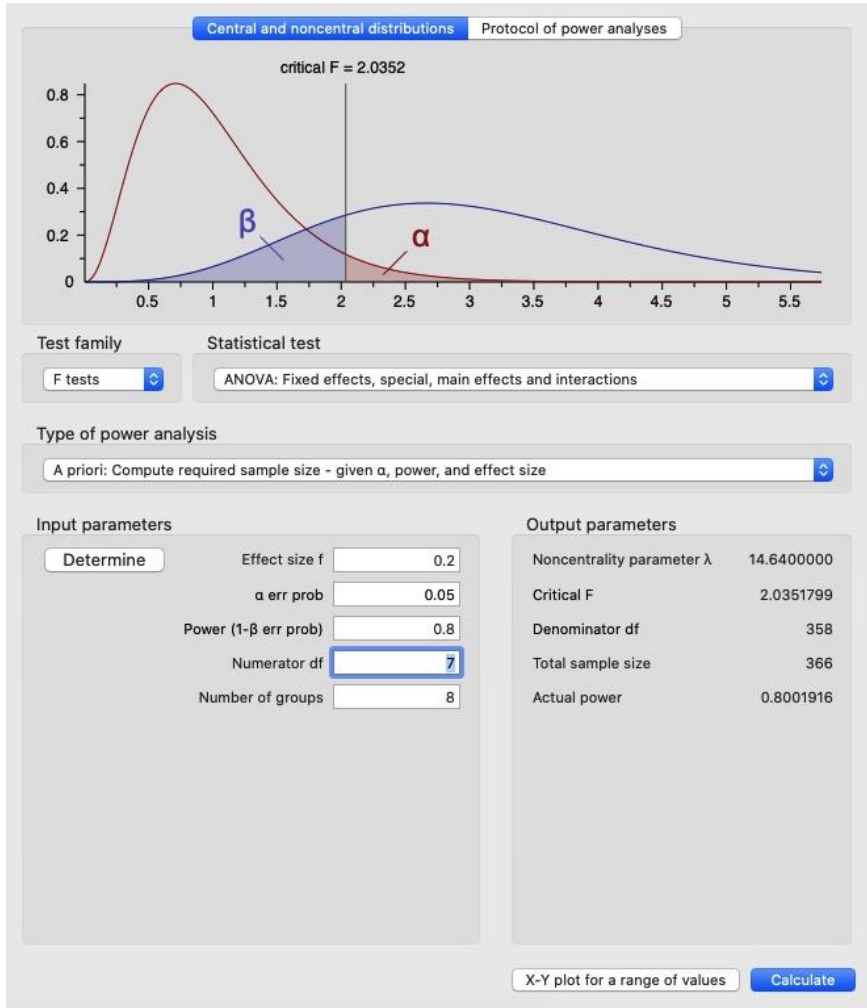
Where would you place the applicant on this ladder?

Please choose the number on the rung where you think the applicant stands at this time in their life relative to other people in Canada/The United States

Appendix E

G Power

Appendix F

Screen Shots of Candidate

Formal Dress/Tidy Background

Casual Dress/ Messy Background