

## Confirming First Impressions in the Employment Interview: A Field Study of Interviewer Behavior

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This research examined behavioral styles used by interviewers to confirm their first impressions of job applicants. Three interviewers in a corporate setting formed first impressions based on application blank and test score information. They then conducted audiotaped interviews. Coders independently coded 79 interviews and found that first impressions were related to confirmatory behavior. Interviewers followed up positive first impressions, for example, by showing positive regard toward applicants, "selling" the company and giving job information, and gathering less information. Applicants' communication style and rapport with interviewers also differed. Significant differences in confirmatory behaviors also occurred among the three interviewers. A number of interviewer behaviors, especially positive regard, were related to applicant behavior in interviews. Although previous studies of expectancy confirmation have produced mixed results, our results suggest that interviewers in natural settings do use confirmatory strategies, underscoring the importance of additional research on "self-fulfilling prophecies."

The employment interview is the most frequently used technique for selecting employees (Arvey & Campion, 1982). Given its importance, researchers have focused on both the interview's predictive validity and the decision processes resulting from the interaction of applicants and interviewers (see Harris, 1989). One area of recent interest is the extent to which interviewers engage in "expectancy confirmation" behaviors. Interviewers may behave in a manner confirming first impressions, such that postinterview decisions are positively related to preinterview evaluations (Dipboye, 1982, 1992; Macan & Dipboye, 1990). Using actual employment interviews, we investigated interviewers' use of confirmatory behavior strategies, part of the process by which preinterview impressions are confirmed in applicants' final evaluations.

Dipboye (1982, 1992) presented a model of self-fulfilling prophecy in the employment interview that serves as a conceptual basis for our research. The model specifies that both cognitive and behavioral biases mediate the effects of preinterview impressions on applicants' evaluations. Behavioral biases, the focus of our study, involve interviewers' behaving in a fashion that confirms their first impressions of applicants. Interviewers, for example, may display a sense of "positive regard" or "nega-

tive regard" toward applicants based on their initial evaluations. Applicants may then respond in a manner consistent with the interviewers' positive or negative behavior. Cognitive biases also occur if interviewers distort information to support first impressions, using selective attention and recall of information. This sequence of behavioral and cognitive biases produces a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Although several studies have investigated confirmatory questioning, these studies have produced mixed findings (e.g., Binning, Goldstein, Garcia, Harding, & Scattaregia, 1988; Sackett, 1982). Further, although such studies provide useful information about expectancy confirmation, they are somewhat limited by the use of student samples and artificial interview procedures, such as having interviewers choose questions from a list. We extend earlier research by collecting data from corporate interviewers who evaluated actual applicants in a business setting and by measuring variables likely to be influenced by first impressions but not included in earlier research.

### Empirical Evidence

Studies investigating interviewers' use of confirmatory questioning strategies are based on social psychological studies demonstrating the tendency for people to confirm preheld beliefs (Snyder & Swann, 1978). For example, Snyder and Swann found that subjects in social interactions used confirmatory questioning strategies, such as selecting more "introverted" questions to ask of introverts. Further, in a second study, results indicated that interviewees behaved in the expected direction. Sackett (1982) conducted four studies that extended Snyder and Swann's research to employment contexts and found little evidence for confirmatory questioning strategies. Similarly, McDonald and Hakel (1985) also did not find confirmatory questioning in simulated interviews.

Macan and Dipboye (1988) extended this line of research and found that interviewers who assessed poorly qualified applicants asked more difficult and fewer positive questions than in-

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interviewers who examined more qualified applicants. However, interviewers did not structure questions in a manner forcing applicants' responses to confirm preinterview impressions, leading Macan and Dipboye (1988) to conclude there was little evidence that preinterview impressions led to strong confirmatory biases. Finally, Binning et al. (1988) found support for confirmatory questioning strategies when subjects freely generated their own questions, but found no evidence of confirmatory strategies when subjects chose questions from Sackett's (1982) list of questions. Such results suggest that the requirement that subjects select questions from lists may limit confirmatory questioning.

In summary, although previous studies have provided mixed findings, preinterview impressions appear to influence interviewers' questioning strategies when interviewers generate their own questions. However, the previous studies all included certain limitations. First, applicant favorability has been manipulated, as opposed to naturally generated. Second, in some studies interviewers selected questions from a list rather than freely generating their own questions. Third, studies have examined the effects of preinterview impressions on only the verbal content of questions but not on other aspects of interviewer behavior. Finally, no research has examined expectancy confirmation in actual interview settings, although researchers have called for such research (Binning et al., 1988). Nonetheless, based on previous evidence, we expected that interviewers' preinterview impressions would be positively related to the amount of positive regard shown to applicants.

Research on confirmatory strategies would be enhanced by measuring additional variables likely to be influenced by preinterview impressions. For example, interviewers may focus more on providing information and "selling" the job and company to applicants receiving a favorable initial evaluation, while asking fewer evaluative questions (Phillips & Dipboye, 1989; Sydiaha, 1961). Therefore, we expect that interviewers with positive preinterview impressions will be more likely to sell the company and the job, will provide more job information, and will be less likely to thoroughly examine applicants' qualifications. Additionally, evidence suggests that interviewers spend more time talking with applicants for whom they have favorable impressions (Phillips & Dipboye, 1989; Tullar, 1989). Therefore, we expect interviewers with positive first impressions to spend more time talking. Finally, we expect that interviewers' first impressions will be negatively related to objective measures of information gathering, because interviewers with positive first impressions have already made up their minds and will therefore gather less information for evaluating applicants (Dipboye, Fontenelle, & Garner, 1984).

Dipboye's (1982, 1992) model of self-fulfilling prophecy also suggested that applicants may respond in a manner consistent with interviewers' behavior, such that positive interviewer behavior might result in higher levels of rapport and more positive interactions between the interviewer and applicant. Thus, we also expect interviewers' first impressions to result in differences in applicant behavior.

In summary, we examined influences of interviewers' preinterview impressions on their behaviors in the context of actual interviews in a corporate setting. We extended earlier research by capturing naturally formed first impressions of interviewers

who examined and rated applicants' test scores and application blanks prior to interviews. Second, interviewers were free to ask any questions they wished and to conduct interviews using any format, for any length of time. Third, we expanded the types of measures used by analyzing both interviewer and applicant behavior. Finally, we included individual analysis of interviewer behavior, which has recently been demonstrated as a useful approach for providing clarity in analyzing interviewers as decision makers (Dougherty, Ebert, & Callender, 1986).

The following specific hypotheses were investigated:

*Hypothesis 1:* Interviewer first impressions are positively related to positive regard shown to applicants.

*Hypothesis 2:* Interviewer first impressions are related to interviewer focus, such that interviewers with positive impressions engage in more selling of the company and job to applicants, do more recruiting and provide more job information to applicants, and examine applicant qualifications less.

*Hypothesis 3:* Interviewer first impressions are positively related to time spent with applicants.

*Hypothesis 4:* Favorable interviewer first impressions are related to information-gathering strategies and include fewer total questions, fewer open-ended and closed questions, fewer initial and follow-up/probing questions, and fewer interruptions.

*Hypothesis 5:* Favorable interviewer first impressions are related to applicants' communication style and level of applicants' rapport with the interviewer.

## Method

### Setting

We used data from three interviewers in the headquarters employment center of a large energy corporation. Audiotape recordings were made of their interviews with applicants across 8 months. These employment interviews were the company's initial screening for all clerk, secretary, typist, lab technician, drafting, and computer operator positions at the company headquarters. The company's procedure involved randomly assigning applicants to interviewers. Ratings of applicants in these interviews were previously studied using a policy-capturing approach (Dougherty et al., 1986).

### Subjects

The interviewers were a White female, a Black female, and a White male with 26, 6, and 10 years, respectively, of interviewing experience. The interviewers had each received some out-of-house interview training in different programs on past occasions. Additionally, in the middle of the 8 months of taping interviews, the company provided a 1-week interview training program to the interviewers. They were trained to conduct semi-structured interviews oriented toward questioning applicants in major topic areas but not including any specific sequences of questions in a highly structured format (see Dougherty et al., 1986). The training was also intended to increase the impact of interview-based information beyond the firm's highly regarded, validated tests. For the current study 79 interview tapes were available, with 26 contributed by the first interviewer, 28 by the second, and 25 by the third.

### Procedure

*Ratings of application blanks and test scores.* In preparation for each interview, interviewers examined the application blank and test scores

(six possible tests, based on the job) and then rated the applicant on qualifications based on the application blank and on test scores on a 9-point scale, from *very low* to *very high*. The interviewer then conducted the interview and completed additional ratings of the applicant. There was no assessment of test scores or application information by anyone else or in any context other than the interview. The application blank contained information about work history and educational background, which were investigated fully in the interview. However, no formal instructions were given to interviewers as to how to use the preinterview information. Validation studies performed by the firm's personnel research unit demonstrated that interviewers' ratings of test scores and application blanks showed the highest predictive validities among interview ratings and that the application blank ratings were the most consistently valid.

**Measures and coding.** We trained three undergraduate coders to listen to interview tapes and tally numbers of different types of questions and behaviors on a coding form. Coders received approximately 8 hr of training in which they discussed coding instructions and question definitions, practiced coding a number of tapes, and discussed sources of disagreement. For the actual data analysis, each coder independently listened to and coded all 79 interviews, with no knowledge of interviewers' initial ratings of applicants. Coders tallied interviewers' information-gathering strategies and behaviors and rated their conduct and focus.

To determine the reliability of the coder ratings we calculated Shrout and Fleiss's (1979) intraclass correlation coefficient (3, *k*), which estimates the reliability of the mean ratings and is equivalent to Cronbach's alpha (using raters as items). The intraclass coefficients ranged from .60 to .97 for all measures except interviewer interruptions and interviewer "recruitment" of an applicant. These ratings were excluded from subsequent analyses. We also did not use interviewers' disapproving behavior and disagreeing with applicants because they were so infrequent.

**Positive regard.** Positive regard was measured using coders' tallies of supportive questions, incidents of agreeing with an applicant, laughter in the interview, and verbal encouragers ("um-hm"). In addition, because frequency counts of behaviors may not be the most accurate measure of approval-related behaviors (Godfrey, Jones, & Lord, 1986; Rosenfeld, 1966), coders also used a rating scale to provide overall perceptions of interviewers' use of a "positive style." This involved completing a 7-point semantic differential scale of these nine items: warm-cold, not understanding-understanding, sensitive-insensitive, empathetic-unempathetic, considerate-inconsiderate, nice-nasty, encouraging-discouraging, approving-disapproving, and friendly-unfriendly ( $\alpha = .94$ ). In addition, coders completed a 7-point rating scale for an item measuring whether an interviewer displayed a favorable orientation toward offering employment.

Finally, at a separate time from the rest of the coding, three coders rated the interviewers' vocal style by completing a 7-point scale indicating how accurately nine descriptors applied to the interviewer ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Examples of descriptors were *cold*, *outgoing*, *cheerful*, and *condescending*. Higher scores indicate a more positive vocal style.

**Interview focus.** Coders measured interview focus by rating (on a 7-point scale) items indicating the extent to which interviewers had (a) sold the job/company to the applicant, (b) provided job information, and (c) examined applicant qualifications.

**Time spent.** Measures of time spent (in seconds) included the amount of applicant speaking time, the amount of interviewer speaking time, and the total interview time.

**Information-gathering strategies.** Information-gathering strategies were measured using coders' tallies of the total numbers of questions, open-ended questions ("Tell me about . . ."), closed (yes-no) questions, initial questions introducing a topic, and follow-up/probing questions. These measures are similar to measures used by Dipboye et al. (1984),

who noted that these strategies reflect the conventional wisdom about effective styles of questioning applicants.

**Applicant behavior.** We measured applicant behavior using coders' ratings of four items ( $\alpha = .95$ ) tapping applicant communication (e.g., "The applicant presented himself [herself] as well as possible . . ."). Similarly, three items ( $\alpha = .94$ ) measured applicants' rapport with interviewers (e.g., "The interviewer and the applicant 'meshed' well . . .").

## Results

We examined the correlations of first impression ratings with interviewers' behavior separately for interviews conducted before and after the training program. Because we observed only one significant difference (of 40) for pre- and posttraining interviews, we combined all interviews for our analyses.

Results indicate some support for corporate interviewers' use of confirmatory questions and behavior (see Table 1). We analyzed the data using both overall variables collapsed across interviewers and individual analyses for the three interviewers.

### Hypothesis 1: Positive Regard Shown to Applicants

Overall results indicate that first impressions from both the application blank and test scores were correlated with (a) interviewers' use of a positive style, (b) interviewers' showing an orientation toward extending an offer, and (c) interviewers' use of a positive vocal style. Results for individual interviewers reveal that application blank ratings were correlated with a positive style for Interviewer 1 only. Additionally, first impressions from application blanks were related to displaying orientations toward extending a job offer and a positive vocal style for Interviewers 1 and 3. Interestingly, there was a significant difference among the interviewers in use of verbal encouragers, with Interviewer 1 using fewer encouragers the more positive the first impression.

Finally, first impressions from test scores were related to use of a positive style for Interviewer 1, to favorable job-offer orientation for Interviewers 1 and 2, and to positive vocal style for Interviewer 1 only.

### Hypothesis 2: Interview Focus

Overall correlations indicate that positive first impressions from application blanks were related to interviewers' engaging in more "selling" of the company and job. The individual correlations between application blank ratings and selling were significant for Interviewers 1 and 3. Further, these correlations were significantly different among all interviewers, and Interviewers 1 and 3 were both different from Interviewer 2.

The overall correlation of application blank ratings with the providing of job information was also significant. The individual correlation was significant, however, only for Interviewer 1. Finally, application blank ratings were unrelated to the extent to which interviewers examined applicant qualifications. Similarly, first impressions based on test scores were unrelated to any of the indicators of interview focus.

### Hypothesis 3: Time Spent With Applicants

We found little support for the prediction that interviewers would spend more time with applicants for whom they had pos-

Table 1

*Correlations of Interviewer First Impressions (Interviewers 1–3) With Interviewer and Applicant Behavior*

Interviewer/applicant behavior	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Application blank				Test score			
			Overall ( <i>n</i> = 79)	1 ( <i>n</i> = 26)	2 ( <i>n</i> = 28)	3 ( <i>n</i> = 25)	Overall ( <i>n</i> = 73)	1 ( <i>n</i> = 26)	2 ( <i>n</i> = 28)	3 ( <i>n</i> = 19)
Positive regard										
Supportive questions	1.23	1.18	.13	.31	.07	-.15	.09	.22	-.04	-.06
Agreeing with applicant	1.11	1.17	.14	.18	.04	.06	.18	.31	.06	.06
Laughter	3.38	3.14	-.03	-.06	.15	-.04	.16	.34	.06	.33
Verbal encouragers <sup>a</sup>	24.73	31.69	.00	-.32 <sub>b</sub>	.36 <sub>a</sub>	.16 <sub>a</sub>	.19	-.13	.36	-.12
Positive style	5.07	0.47	.43**	.68**	.18	.34	.38**	.56**	.06	.27
Favorable orientation toward offer	4.85	0.86	.49**	.70**	.22	.54**	.44**	.51**	.43*	.44
Vocal style	5.48	0.49	.29**	.41*	.18	.46*	.35**	.41*	.20	.20
Interview focus										
“Selling” company/job <sup>a</sup>	4.18	0.96	.44**	.63** <sub>a</sub>	-.08 <sub>b</sub>	.57** <sub>a</sub>	.18	.27	-.03	.38
Providing job information	4.56	1.07	.32**	.52**	-.10	.38	.11	-.12	-.02	.30
Examining qualifications	5.32	0.77	-.15	-.34	.21	.02	-.14	-.21	.06	-.04
Time spent										
Total interview time	23.42	10.78	.10	-.15	.32	.17	.10	-.07	.38*	.26
Interviewer speaking time	11.07	4.90	.21	.35	.17	.03	.14	.20	.33	.28
Applicant speaking time <sup>a</sup>	12.36	7.98	.01	-.39* <sub>a</sub>	.36 <sub>b</sub>	.23 <sub>b</sub>	.05	-.21	.36	.19
Information-gathering strategies										
Total questions	51.16	24.80	-.28**	-.39*	.17	-.41*	-.08	-.30	.29	-.02
Open-ended questions	18.71	11.33	-.20	-.32	.19	-.30	-.04	-.23	.25	.02
Closed questions <sup>b</sup>	32.88	15.16	-.31**	-.42*	.13	-.46*	-.09	-.32 <sub>b</sub>	.28 <sub>a</sub>	.09 <sub>a</sub>
Initial questions <sup>a,b</sup>	34.03	16.52	-.27*	-.41* <sub>a</sub>	.26 <sub>b</sub>	-.45* <sub>a</sub>	-.09	-.38 <sub>b</sub>	.38* <sub>a</sub>	.08 <sub>a</sub>
Follow-up/probing questions	17.56	11.81	-.23*	-.28	-.02	-.27	-.04	-.16	.09	.03
Applicant communication style	5.21	0.86	.48**	.49**	.41*	.69*	.34**	.42*	.37*	.23
Applicant rapport with interviewer	4.90	0.70	.34**	.33	.21	.65**	.30**	.41*	.17	.16

Note. Application blank, *M* = 5.42, *SD* = 1.22; test score, *M* = 6.26, *SD* = 1.62. Interviewer correlations with different subscripts are significantly different from one another.

<sup>a</sup> Significant difference among all interviewers for application blank correlations. <sup>b</sup> Significant difference among all interviewers for test score correlations.

\* *p* < .05. \*\* *p* < .01.

itive first impressions. The composite measure across all interviewers indicated no significant correlations of application blank or test score ratings with total interview time, interviewer speaking time, or applicant speaking time.

#### *Hypothesis 4: Use of Information-Gathering Strategies*

Overall, results indicate that first impressions from application blanks were related to four of the five information-gathering strategies. Specifically, positive application blank ratings were related to fewer total, closed, initial, and follow-up/probing questions. The individual analysis indicated that positive ratings were related to fewer total, closed, and initial questions for Interviewers 1 and 3 only. In addition, for initial questions there was a significant difference among the three interviewers, with Interviewer 2 differing from Interviewers 1 and 3. In contrast, first impressions from test scores were not related to use of information-gathering strategies.

#### *Hypothesis 5: Applicant Behavior*

First impressions (application blank and test scores) were correlated with both a positive applicant communication style and applicants' rapport with interviewers. The individual application blank correlations for communication style were signifi-

cant for all three interviewers, whereas for applicant-interviewer rapport only Interviewer 3's correlation was significant. Individual test score correlations for communication style were significant for Interviewers 1 and 2, whereas only Interviewer 1's correlation was significant for rapport.

#### *Individual Differences Among Interviewers*

We reported some of the differences among individual interviewers' correlations in presenting the results for Hypotheses 1–5. For a more systematic observation of individual differences, we examined the data several ways. First, examining the correlations displayed in Table 1, we found that 4 of the 20 variables showed significant differences in the application blank correlations among the three interviewers. Two of the 20 variables showed differences among interviewers for test score correlations. Next, examining the 20 application blank correlations, we found that Interviewer 1 has 10, Interviewer 2 has 1, and Interviewer 3 has 8 significant correlations, suggesting that Interviewer 2 was the least likely to engage in expectancy-confirming behavior. For the 20 test score correlations, however, Interviewers 1, 2, and 3 had 5, 4 and 0 significant correlations, respectively.

Finally, we examined each interviewer's susceptibility to first impressions from application blanks by computing the mean

(absolute values) correlation across the 20 interview behavior variables. These mean correlations were .38, .19, and .32 for Interviewers 1, 2, and 3, respectively, again suggesting the least susceptibility by Interviewer 2 and the most susceptibility by Interviewer 1. For test score correlations this susceptibility index was .29, .21, and .18 for Interviewers 1, 2, and 3, respectively, again suggesting more expectancy confirmation by Interviewer 1, with somewhat lower levels by Interviewers 2 and 3.

### *Correlations of Interviewer Behavior With Applicant Behavior*

We also examined the relationship of interviewers' behavior with applicant behavior in the interview (see Table 2). The set of interviewer behaviors (overall) was correlated with both applicant communication style and applicant rapport with the interviewer. Results indicated that six of seven interviewer behaviors showing positive regard were positively related to applicant communication style, and all seven positive regard behaviors were related to applicant rapport with the interviewer. Additionally, the interviewer's selling the company and job, the total amount of time spent in the interview, and interviewer speaking time were also positively related to applicant communication style.

In a previous article using the same data set, interviewer first impressions were found to be related to final (overall rating) candidate evaluations, although these relationships were lower after training (Dougherty et al., 1986). In the present study we found that both interviewer and applicant behavior also were related to these final evaluations. Specifically, final evaluations

were correlated with interviewer supportive questions, laughter, verbal encouragers, positive style, favorable orientation toward an offer, vocal style, total interview time, applicant speaking time, applicant communication style, and applicant rapport with the interviewer.

To summarize key findings: (a) Interviewers' first impressions from examining application blanks and test scores tended to be positively linked to use of a positive interview style, vocal style, and a favorable orientation toward extending a job offer; (b) interviewers' first impressions from application blanks (but not test scores) tended to be positively related to selling the company and job and providing job information to applicants; (c) interviewers' first impressions showed no relationships to indicators of time spent in interviews; (d) interviewers' favorable first impressions from application blanks (but not test scores) tended to be followed by fewer total questions asked and fewer closed questions, initial questions, and follow-up/probing questions; (e) first impressions from application blanks and test scores were related to applicants' communication styles and rapport with interviewers; (f) several significant differences emerged among individual interviewers in their use of expectancy-confirming behaviors and styles; and (g) a number of interviewer behaviors, especially the showing of positive regard, were related to applicant communication style and rapport with interviewers.

### Discussion

We extended research on expectancy confirmation to actual interviews and found that favorable first impressions were followed by interviewers' use of confirmatory behavior and styles, including a positive style of interviewing, selling the company, providing job information to applicants, less information-gathering from applicants, more confident and effective applicant behavior, and more rapport of applicants with interviewers. Such results suggest the generalizability of the confirmatory bias and suggest that earlier studies that manipulated impressions and asked subjects to select questions from a list may have limited the opportunity to observe confirmatory processes. In addition, our evidence that interviewer and applicant behavior are related to final applicant evaluations and that interviewer behavior is related to applicant behavior in interviews supports the notion of a process of self-fulfilling prophecy in interviews (Dipboye, 1982, 1992).

These results provide some support for the prediction that positive first impressions of applicants are followed by interviewers' displaying more positive regard for applicants. Although interviewers' first impressions were not related to behaviors such as the number of supportive questions, agreeing with applicants, laughter, or verbal encouragers, initial first impressions were related positively to interview style, vocal style, and a favorable orientation toward job offers. Such results suggest that initial impressions of applicants may not influence interviewers' verbal behaviors as much as paralinguistic behaviors (e.g., vocal style). Similarly, our study confirms that interviewers may provide more job information and selling to applicants for whom there are favorable first impressions, issues receiving little previous research attention (Phillips & Dipboye, 1989). Finally, interviewers gathered less information from applicants

Table 2  
*Correlations of Interviewer Behavior With Applicant Behavior*

Interviewer behavior	Applicant communication style	Applicant rapport with interviewer
Positive regard		
Supportive questions	.18	.27*
Agreeing with applicant	.23*	.39**
Laughter	.34**	.57**
Verbal encouragers	.25*	.33**
Positive style	.42**	.58**
Favorable orientation toward offer	.58**	.43**
Vocal style	.46**	.83**
Interview focus		
"Selling" company/job	.25*	.12
Providing job information	.16	.11
Examining qualifications	.14	-.03
Time spent		
Total interview time	.30**	.22
Interviewer speaking time	.31**	.06
Applicant speaking time	.21	.19
Information-gathering strategies		
Total questions	.02	-.13
Open-ended questions	.03	-.14
Closed questions	.01	-.11
Initial questions	-.03	-.22
Follow-up/probing questions	.08	.05

Note.  $n = 79$ .

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

for whom there were more favorable first impressions, which supports the findings of earlier studies (Dipboye, 1982; Phillips & Dipboye, 1989).

We analyzed interviewer confirmatory behaviors subsequent to first impressions formed from application blank and test score information. Results provided a clear trend of more relationships for application blank ratings than for test score ratings. Interviewers may have more confidence in their first impressions from application blanks compared with test scores, perhaps because test scores are seen as providing information from relatively narrow domains (e.g., cognitive ability), whereas application blanks cover more dimensions of applicant qualifications. We are unable, however, to determine which aspects of the application blank influenced the ratings. Further research should clarify sources of interviewers' first impressions and how different sources influence confirmatory behavior.

We also acknowledge that the use of formal ratings of preinterview information is a possible boundary condition of our study. Our results may be limited to situations in which formal preinterview evaluations are made, in that these evaluations may encourage the forming of, or make more salient, first impressions, which then bias the conduct of the interview.

Our results suggest that a potential value of highly structured interviews is that interviewers cannot deviate from predetermined questions. However, although structured interviews would not allow for different expectancy-confirming questioning strategies, interviewers would still have flexibility in the use of positive vocal styles and positive regard toward applicants. Further, there could be a number of disadvantages of taking all flexibility away from interviewers, such as the lack of ability to pose follow-up and probing questions.

One distinctive feature of our research was the individual analysis of interviewer behavior. Results indicated, however, that only 4 of 20 application blank correlations were significantly different among interviewers, and only 2 of 20 test score correlations. However, because sample sizes for individual analyses ranged from only 19 to 28, we had limited statistical power to detect differences among interviewers for individual variables and also across variables, suggesting caution in drawing conclusions. Nonetheless, our findings suggest that interviewers can be characterized as to their level of susceptibility to first impressions. For example, our exploratory assessment suggested that Interviewer 1 may have been more susceptible to first impressions. Susceptibility to first impressions should be considered a potentially serious biasing characteristic of interviewers. This particular interviewer bias is somewhat unique because it can be measured only by the correlations of first impressions with interviewer behavior. We found, in general, no differences in expectancy-confirming behavior in pre- versus posttraining interviews. Whether or not these biases can be diminished by focusing on them in interviewer training remains to be studied.

A provocative question with serious practical implications is, What is the correct or optimal correlation of first impressions with interviewer behavior? The previous analysis of the validity of these interviewers indicated that only Interviewer 3 made decisions that were highly valid predictors of job success (Dougherty et al., 1986). The present results suggest that Interviewer 3 was in the middle on susceptibility, suggesting there may be some optimal level of confirmatory behavior on the part of in-

terviewers for accurate prediction. Further research should test this proposition.

The use of three interviewers from one corporation could limit the generalizability of our results. These interviewers, however, handled all interviews in the corporation across a variety of secretarial, clerical, and technical positions and thus adequately represented the firm's selection system for many jobs. We also acknowledge that we were not able to assess differences in job applicant quality that may have affected interviewer behavior. Better qualified candidates, for example, may ask more questions, resulting in more opportunities for interviewers to provide job information or sell the company and job.

A notable difference of our findings from previous laboratory studies pertains to the use of negatively oriented confirmatory strategies. Our analyses revealed that incidents of disapproving behavior and disagreeing with applicants were very rare. Although these behaviors do not represent the only avenues for confirming negative first impressions, our results suggest that in actual interview settings there may be little use of overtly negative confirmatory strategies.

Our study examined how interviewers' behavior was affected by first impressions and also how applicants' behavior differed in response to confirmatory behavior from interviewers. Other aspects of the self-fulfilling prophecy process to pursue would be interviewers' use of cognitive distortion, including selective attention and recall of information and selective interpretation of applicant behavior (Dipboye, 1982, 1992).

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**P&C Board Appoints Editor for New Journal:  
*Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied***

In 1995, APA will begin publishing a new journal, the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied*. Raymond S. Nickerson, PhD, has been appointed as editor. Starting immediately, manuscripts should be submitted to

Raymond S. Nickerson, PhD  
Editor, *JEP: Applied*  
Department of Psychology  
Tufts University  
Medford, MA 02155

The *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* will publish original empirical investigations in experimental psychology that bridge practically oriented problems and psychological theory. The journal also will publish research aimed at developing and testing of models of cognitive processing or behavior in applied situations, including laboratory and field settings. Review articles will be considered for publication if they contribute significantly to important topics within applied experimental psychology.

Areas of interest include applications of perception, attention, decision making, reasoning, information processing, learning, and performance. Settings may be industrial (such as human-computer interface design), academic (such as intelligent computer-aided instruction), or consumer oriented (such as applications of text comprehension theory to the development or evaluation of product instructions).