

What You See May Not Be What You Get: Relationships Among Self-Presentation Tactics and Ratings of Interview and Job Performance

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The image candidates portray in the interview, via appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior, has been hypothesized to influence interviewer ratings. Through the lenses of social influence and interdependence theories, this meta-analysis investigated (a) the magnitude of the relationship between these 3 self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings, (b) whether these tactics also are correlated with later job performance, and (c) whether important theoretical moderators (e.g., the level of interview structure, the rating source, the use of field or experimental designs) affect these relationships. Results reveal that what you see in the interview may not be what you get on the job and that the unstructured interview is particularly impacted by these self-presentation tactics. Additionally and surprisingly, moderator analyses of these relationships found that the type of research design (experimental vs. field) does not moderate these findings.

Keywords: employment interview, self-presentation, meta-analysis, job performance, impression management

In almost every area of our lives, we strive to present ourselves in a favorable light, such that others around us will think highly of us or like us. We see this in young adults who engage in dating relationships but never disclose their bad habits; in the car salesperson who conveniently omits the fact that the SUV has a dangerous design flaw; and, finally, in job applicants who fail to divulge that they were fired from their last job. All of these tactics are efforts to sell a product, whether it be a mate, a car, or an employee. The last example is the focus of the current study. Job candidates engage in “self-presentation tactics or attempts to influence self-relevant images” (Gilmore, Stevens, Harrell-Cook, & Ferris, 1999, p. 322) with the goal of selling themselves to the interviewer and gaining employment. Research indicates that such attempts meet with at least some success and that their impact may be especially exaggerated in the employment interview (Levashina & Campion, 2007; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002). Thus, the image a candidate portrays in the job interview may not accurately reflect the candidate’s true self, and, as some employers ultimately discover, what they see in the interview may not be what they get on the job.

Past research has focused on the attempts of individuals to control images they project at work and the relationship those

self-presentation tactics may have with job satisfaction and career success. A few researchers have meta-analyzed this literature to summarize the findings in the field (Higgins, Judge, & Ferris, 2003; Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003), but they either have focused on a narrow set of self-presentation tactics (e.g., just physical appearance or impression management) or have examined a broad range of work outcomes (hiring decisions, performance ratings, helping behaviors, compensation levels, even choice of business partner) and have limited their analyses to experimental studies (Hosoda et al., 2003). Such studies have certainly informed our understanding of the effects of self-presentation tactics on organizational outcomes, but that understanding is still incomplete, particularly as these tactics apply to the interview. Similarly, comprehensive reviews of the employment interview (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Harris, 1989; Posthuma et al., 2002; Schmitt, 1976) have not presented a definitive conclusion about the influence of managing one’s portrayal in the interview process, perhaps due to the fact that, as noted by Schmidt (1996), narrative reviews are simply not sufficient to permit such conclusions to be drawn. Although qualitative reviews are of much value to researchers, it is imperative that we also have robust, empirical data. The paucity of efforts to synthesize research on self-presentation tactics is especially apparent in the area of the employment interview. This is somewhat ironic, given the effects that self-presentation tactics potentially may have on what is essentially a high-stakes selection test administered in the context of a social exchange, often among strangers. It is in just such contexts that self-presentation is thought to be particularly influential (Gilmore et al., 1999).

Because the interview relies so heavily on agenda-driven interpersonal interactions, it is important that we determine the extent to which job candidate behaviors, such as self-presentation tactics,

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are related to interview outcomes. Thus, our first goal in the current study was to conduct a meta-analysis to estimate the magnitude of the relationships among the self-presentation tactics projected by the candidate on the interviewer's decision processes. The second goal was to assess the impact these self-presentation tactics have not only on performance in the interview but also on later job performance. Comparing the relative impact of the self-presentation tactics on interview and on job performance allows us to begin to understand in which context self-presentation tactics have more impact. Furthermore, for the first time, we examined potential moderators of the relationship between self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings. For example, the degree of structure in the interview has been posited to be an important moderator of self-presentation tactics (e.g., Tsai, Chen, & Chiu, 2005; Van Iddekinge, McFarland, & Raymark, 2007), such that unstructured interviews are proposed to be particularly susceptible to the influence of these tactics (Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002). Yet no prior meta-analysis has examined the moderating effects of interview structure. In conducting the current study, we sought to extend previous meta-analytic research by focusing exclusively on the interview, by determining the magnitude of the relationships among several self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings, by testing important theoretical moderators of those relationships, and by examining the impact these tactics have on actual job performance. In the following sections, we review two theories relevant to our study, briefly review and define the self-presentation tactics examined in this study, and present our hypotheses.

Theoretical Background

Two theories from the field of social psychology illustrate the importance of self-presentation tactics in the interview: social influence theory and interdependence theory. Social influence theory proposes that practically every interpersonal relationship involves social influence of some form or another; people aim to influence and are also being influenced (Cialdini & Trost, 1998; Levy, Collins, & Nail, 1998). This "infinite cycle" of communication and exchange of information often leads individuals in the presence of others to express themselves in a manner that will evoke a certain desired reaction from the target (Goffman, 2006). Thus, social influence processes are those tactics utilized by individuals to maximize the desired rewards and minimize the potential negative repercussions associated with a given interpersonal interaction (Ferris et al., 2002). Although the process of social influence is rich and complex (as are most processes that involve people relating to one another), it is fairly simple at its core in that throughout a social interaction, the influencer uses relevant tactics at his or her disposal in order to influence the influencee in the desired direction.

In the context of generating an offer during the employment interview, the influencee is the interviewer and the influencer is the candidate. During the interview, a myriad of pieces of applicant information are received, interpreted, and evaluated by the interviewer in an attempt to "score" the applicant and ultimately make an accept-or-reject decision (Hazer & Jacobson, 2003). A fundamental attribute of social influence theory is whether the social influence leads to a positive or negative change (Levy et al., 1998) in the influencee's evaluation of the influencer. Another characteristic of social influence theory is level of cognitive processing,

which refers to the influencee's conscious or unconscious awareness of influence mechanisms being utilized on the influencee. Because the interviewer may not even be aware of the self-presentation tactics utilized by the candidate, the effects of such tactics on hiring decisions may be larger than we realize (Levy et al., 1998). Two unconscious processes that are particularly relevant to the interview have been shown to have a significant impact on decision-maker evaluations (Goffman, 2006; Levy et al., 1998). The first is norm activation, or the social triggering of an interviewer's cognitive structures, including associations, beliefs, and values about the "right type" of candidate (Judge & Cable, 1997). The second process, affective evaluation, reflects an emotion-based reaction or response to a candidate. For example, social norms influence every aspect of the interview; even something as simple as the initial handshake has been shown to affect interviewer ratings (Stewart, Dustin, Barrick, & Darnold, 2008). Job applicants can engage in self-presentation tactics throughout the process of the interview to elicit affective and normative evaluations from the interviewer. Social influence theory would predict that a candidate's self-presentation skills can be effectively used to gain a more favorable recommendation from the interviewer (Baron, 1989; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Higgins et al., 2003; Nickson, Warhurst, & Dutton, 2005; Wayne & Kacmar, 1991).

Interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003) is the second theory from social psychology that can be used to highlight the importance of self-presentation tactics in the interview. This theory emphasizes the role of the situation and contends that the social context itself can exert strong effects on behavior. The theory highlights a number of structural dimensions that define the situation, each of which underscores a job candidate's likely usage of self-presentation tactics. First, the candidate's job prospects are governed by the interviewer's decision. This creates a situation in which the job candidate is, to some extent, reliant or dependent on the interviewer. Research shows that, in order to reduce the vulnerability associated with such contexts, people often attempt to generate positive illusions with which to manage their image (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Second, the interests of the candidate, who wants a job offer, conflict with those of the interviewer, who wants to get the most accurate information in order to hire the best candidate. Interpersonal settings with conflicting interests invariably activate the increased use of self-presentation tactics (Arriaga & Rusbult, 1998; Fiske, 1993; Van Lange, 2000). More important, research shows that when both of these structural elements are involved in the defining properties of the social setting, this invariably leads the person in the position of extreme dependence with conflicting interests (i.e., the job candidate) to adopt a "rule" to maximize his or her own outcomes irrespective of the other person's (i.e., the interviewer's) outcomes during the interaction (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Adoption of this rule explains why candidates may engage in intentional misrepresentation in an interview setting (Levashina & Campion, 2007).

The likelihood that job candidates will engage in the use of self-presentation tactics during the interview is further increased by two other defining properties of interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003): that the interaction involves strangers and that it is characterized by the presence of inadequate information. Given this, what the interviewer "knows" about the candidate depends on the type and amount of self-relevant information the candidate decides to disclose during the brief interaction charac-

teristic of a job interview. Such interpersonal settings encourage, even demand, that the candidate manage the image he or she conveys.

When viewed through the lenses of social influence theory and interdependence theory, the employment interview is a situation that may, in large part, be driven by the use of self-presentation tactics. This perspective contrasts with the dominant paradigm in interview research, which focuses on ways to improve the validity and reliability of the interview (Anderson, 1992; Posthuma et al., 2002). Thus, rather than emphasize an approach that strives to mold the interview into nothing more than an oral administration of an employment test, we wish to draw attention to the nature of the social exchange that emerges during the course of the interview (Anderson, 1992). The approach adopted in this study recognizes that both factual information and socially constructed information are exchanged during the interview, and that both types of information impact the interviewer's decision. Although we agree there is value in standardizing the interview to increase the amount of job-relevant information available to an interviewer, it is also important to examine the influence that the "agenda-driven social process" inherent in the interview has on the interviewer's final assessment ratings (Anderson, 1992; Keenan, 1978; Schein, 1980).

Once one considers the potential influence of the social exchange throughout the interview, it becomes obvious that it is in the best interest of candidates to utilize positive self-presentation tactics in order to place themselves in the most favorable light (Hazer & Jacobson, 2003). To some extent, it is conceivable that the information conveyed via self-presentation may impact the interview performance of a candidate more than does the actual content of his or her interview responses. This follows from the assumption that the time an interviewer devotes to asking questions related to some of the most commonly assessed constructs—general mental ability, conscientiousness, job knowledge and experience (Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001)—may be limited, whereas a candidate's use of self-presentation tactics can permeate the entire interview. On the basis of this reasoning, we posited not only that self-presentation tactics would have a meaningful impact on interview performance ratings, but also that the magnitude of the effect of such tactics would be larger than currently recognized in the field (Posthuma et al., 2002).

Review of Self-Presentation Tactics and Hypotheses

Before we move on to a discussion of the specific self-presentation tactics examined in this study, it is important for us to clarify that we acknowledge the view of Ferris et al. (2002). That is, the terms *interpersonal influence*, *self-presentation*, *influence tactics*, and *organizational politics* are more alike than different, as they all reflect the same ultimate goal: to describe the behaviors in which individuals engage in order to influence the influencee in such a way as to benefit themselves. After a review of the literature and key terms, however, we decided that self-presentation was the most appropriate term to use in the current research, as it reflects the core of social influence theory and interdependence theory: to purposefully and strategically present positive information about the self (candidate) in order to obtain a favorable evaluation from the interviewer.

Even though self-presentation tactics are utilized in many ways and in many areas of our lives, three such tactics are particularly

relevant to the interview and thus are the focus of the current research: appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior. Although these three tactics are not inherently interrelated, the relevance of each is highlighted by considering the unique social context of the employment interview. As previously noted, the candidate often is a stranger to the interviewer and, though self-interested, is a provider (even the sole provider) of information about the self to the interviewer (Eder & Ferris, 1989). Thus, candidates attempt to influence the interviewer's decision beyond the content of their answers in different ways, particularly in terms of their professional appearance, how actively they manage their impression through, for example, self-promotion and ingratiation behaviors, and even how they articulate their interview responses.

We realize that the social process throughout the interview is actually more complex than this, as the interviewer's behavior also affects the candidate's behavior (Anderson, 1992). This, in turn, further influences the candidate's behavior, which affects the interviewer's decisions, and so forth. However, we focus on the candidate's behavior because of the unique "demands" of the interview context, which include the asymmetric dependence or reliance of the candidate upon the interviewer so as to obtain a job offer coupled with the opportunity to decide how much self-relevant information to disclose to a relative stranger (i.e., the interviewer). We also recognize that applicants probably rely on more than just these three tactics to manage their image. Nevertheless, these are three separate tactics that are likely elicited by the context of the interview and that have been identified in the literature as being relevant to the interview process. Further, the correct execution of all three tactics can be learned and, as with any skill set, purposefully applied by candidates to their own benefit. This makes these tactics even more salient to employment interviews.

In light of the various definitions used to describe these three terms in the literature, we now define our use of them before continuing. The first variable of interest, and perhaps the most straightforward, is appearance. Appearance can be categorized as physical or professional. Physical appearance refers to the beauty and physical appeal of an individual, and professional appearance refers to the level of hygiene, personal grooming, and appropriate dress of an individual. Although there may be limits to how much a candidate can improve his or her physical attractiveness, professional attire, level of hygiene, and personal grooming are largely under the candidate's control and consequently warrant consideration as self-presentation tactics to be employed during the interview.

The distinction between impression management and verbal and nonverbal behaviors is historically less clear, as some researchers have theoretically included verbal and nonverbal behaviors as a subset of impression management behaviors (i.e., Ellis et al., 2002; Gilmore et al., 1999). In the current study, however, following much of the empirical research in this area, we differentiate between impression management and verbal and nonverbal behaviors and consider them separate variables. Impression management generally is grouped into two categories: self-promotion and other enhancement (Kacmar, Delery, & Ferris, 1992; Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). In the context of the interview, the applicant uses self-promotion to describe his or her past experience and accomplishments positively in order to elicit a perception of competence

from the interviewer (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Self-promotional tactics include exemplification (convincing the target that one's behavior is good enough to use as a model for others), entitlements (taking major responsibility for positive events in one's background), enhancements (attempting to increase the value of an event), and self-promotion (describing qualities that one possesses; Kacmar et al., 1992). The second category of impression management tactics is other enhancement. These tactics are directed at the target individual (e.g., the interviewer), with the goal of inspiring liking for the actor on behalf of the target. Other-enhancement tactics include ingratiation (directly or indirectly flattering the target), opinion conformity (agreement with comments made by the target), favor doing, and feigned helplessness.

In defining verbal and nonverbal behavior, one should note that verbal behavior does not include the actual verbal content of the applicant's responses. Instead, it reflects both spontaneous and consciously controlled expressions of thoughts and emotions (DePaulo, 1992). Thus, verbal behavior includes the candidate's style of delivery (e.g., speech rate and pitch) and verbal fluency (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999). Nonverbal cues describe actions such as smiling, making eye contact, nodding, leaning forward, and making hand gestures (Gifford, Ng, & Wilkinson, 1985; Rasmussen, 1984). In social interactions such as the interview, candidates purposely try and can be trained to exert control over their verbal and nonverbal behavior. Prior research in all three areas (appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior) has found these variables to be correlated with the interview rating (Boor, Wartman, & Reuben, 1983; Goldberg & Cohen, 2004; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). In the following section, we outline the previous research on self-presentation tactics and interview outcomes and propose conducting a meta-analysis so as to fully understand their impact.

Role of Appearance

Research outside the interview context, particularly experimental studies from the field of social psychology, clearly indicates that when strangers meet, they form reactions based on very little information about one another (Asch, 1946; Kenny & Albright, 1987; Zajonc, 1980, 1984). Research on appearance shows there is a widely shared belief that "what-is-beautiful-is-good" (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991; Feingold, 1992) and that this belief influences stranger perceptions of the focal person's social and intellectual competence, personality, even general mental health. Likewise, interviewers may be influenced by appearance during decision making, and candidates may use appearance as a tactic with which to positively influence the interviewer. As suggested by social influence theory (Levy et al., 1998), appearance is part of the affective evaluation and norm activation processes.

Studies of candidate appearance rely on measures of either physical or professional appearance to show the effects this information has on the interviewer (Motowidlo & Burnett, 1995). Physical appearance refers to the beauty and physical appeal of an individual. The interviewee's physical appearance can present an unconscious appeal to the "emotion-based response" of a person and can influence interviewers through the affective evaluation of the applicant. Hosoda et al.'s (2003) meta-analysis of experimental studies, which manipulated physical appearance in various work

contexts (performance appraisal, compensation levels, choice of business partner, ranking of employees, and helping behavior), suggests that physically attractive employees obtain more positive outcomes on job-related criteria than do those who are less attractive.

Professional appearance, on the other hand, refers to the level of hygiene, personal grooming, and appropriate dress of an individual and has also been correlated with interview outcomes (Kinicki & Lockwood, 1985; Mack & Rainey 1990). Professional appearance also appeals to the norm activation of the interviewer. That is, there are certain norms of professional dress and level of cleanliness that are generally expected during an interview, among them, appropriate business attire and properly combed hair. Anything too far outside of these norms (e.g., wearing jeans or having an unnatural hair color) would trigger norm activation in the interviewer and might hurt the applicant's ability to successfully influence the interviewer. Because job candidates are largely in control of their own hygiene and dress, professional appearance may reflect deliberate attempts to regulate appearance for self-presentation purposes even better than does physical attractiveness. Therefore, professional appearance should be a particularly salient norm activator. In addition, as interdependence theory suggests, these "strangers" are picking up cues from each other, and appropriate professional appearance is one of the first things an interviewer will likely notice (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). Thus, appearance should enhance the favorability of interviewer inferences about the candidate, which should be associated with a more favorable interviewer rating.

Hypothesis 1: Candidate appearance (both physical and professional) will be positively related to interviewer ratings.

Role of Impression Management

Impression management is a tactic individuals use in order to manipulate the opinion or affective evaluation others have of them (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, & Riordan, 1995). In theory, the applicant who is talented in this area should be able to participate in an interview and engage in these tactics without the interviewer even recognizing that he or she is being influenced in any particular way. Candidates may choose from a variety of impression management tactics in order to exert social influence over the interviewer (Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Shaw, 2007). Several studies have focused on the consequences of impression management behaviors in the interview setting (McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 2003), and they have in general concluded that impression management, whether in the form of self-promotion or ingratiation, does indeed influence hiring decisions (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Kacmar & Carlson, 1999; Kacmar et al., 1992; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). This conclusion is supported in a recent meta-analysis of self-promotion and of other enhancement, as the results suggest that these tactics positively affect supervisor and interviewer evaluations of individuals in work contexts (Higgins et al., 2003). Interdependence theory also supports the use of impression management during the interview. In response to the setting, applicants can use several tactics that reveal only positive information about themselves or can shift the focus from themselves to the interviewer (which results in inadequate information).

Hypothesis 2: Impression management behaviors (overall, plus other and self-focused) will be positively related to interviewer ratings.

Role of Verbal and Nonverbal Behavior

Verbal and nonverbal behaviors are some of the most common forms of communication in which individuals engage and can therefore be an important form of social influence (Ferris et al., 2002). Candidates are expected to exert some control over their verbal and nonverbal behavior (e.g., avoid talking too fast, in a high-pitched “squeaky” voice, or exhibiting nervous gestures). Interviewing advice routinely underscores the import of managing one’s verbal and nonverbal presentation (Bolles, 2008).

Applicants who can effectively engage in verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as smiling and eye contact, can trigger an emotionally driven, affective evaluation of themselves from the interviewer. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors tend to have effects that extend below the level of consciousness (Neu & Graham, 1994) and have been shown to influence interviewer ratings (Burnett & Motowidlo, 1998; Posthuma et al., 2002). The proper use of verbal and nonverbal cues can fulfill the interviewer’s expectations of interview norms and signal attributions associated with greater perceived trust, liking, and credibility (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999; Nighswonger & Martin, 1981). Additionally, proper use of this tactic may alleviate some of the “stranger” context associated with interdependence theory by making the interviewer feel more comfortable and friendly with the applicant. Thus, the favorability of perceptions formed by interviewers listening to and watching the candidate should influence the interviewer rating.

Hypothesis 3: Verbal and nonverbal behavior by the candidate will be positively correlated with interviewer ratings.

Moderators

We expected that several important moderators would influence the magnitude of the relationship between self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings. For example, one critical question is, do these tactics have less effect on interviewer decisions as the structure of the interview increases? A structured interview is designed to measure specific, job-related constructs. To the extent that these constructs are unrelated to the self-presentation tactics, and because the interviewer is focused on evaluating the answers to structured questions pertaining to these constructs, the impact these tactics have on the interviewer’s ratings should be concomitantly diminished. In theory, structured interviews simply give job applicants fewer opportunities to distract the interviewer with information that may be peripheral to the construct being assessed. Other moderators of interest are whether candidate self-presentation tactics have a greater impact when the interviewer serves as the source for both sets of ratings and whether the study is conducted in the field or in the lab, with actual interviewers or with other participants (e.g., students).

Prior meta-analytic research of the employment interview has shown that degree of interview structure is an important moderator of the reliability and predictive validity of the employment interview (Conway, Jako, & Goodman, 1995; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; Huffcutt & Woehr, 1999). Increasing the standardization or struc-

ture of the interview is designed to focus the interviewer’s evaluation on a few specific, job-related constructs and thus to reduce the opportunity to use and influence of the candidate’s self-presentation tactics. Structuring the interview “convert[s] the interview from a conversation into a scientific measurement” (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997, p. 663). Thus, the degree of structure in the interview should moderate the influence of these tactics, with weaker relationships between self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings emerging when the interview is highly structured. Prior research supports this contention. For example, the degree of bias against overweight candidates (Kutcher & Bragger, 2004) and pregnant candidates (Bragger, Kutcher, Morgan, & Firth, 2002) has been shown to be lessened by structured interviews. Similarly, the use of impression management behavior (Stevens & Kristof, 1995) or nonverbal behaviors (McShane, 1993) has been found to be reduced with the use of structured interviews.

Structured interviews are also likely to reduce the influence that candidate self-presentation tactics have on the interviewer, because a highly structured interview adheres to a standardized set of questions and this may decrease a candidate’s opportunities to engage in self-presentation tactics. Ellis et al. (2002) reported that applicants used particular impression management tactics less frequently when interviews were structured. Furthermore, employees are less likely to engage in impression management tactics if they feel performance is more objectively measured, as they recognize that such behaviors will not exert as much influence over the rater (Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004). Thus, the more the interview is structured to focus the interviewer on responses to job-related questions, the less the self-presentation tactics studied here should be related to interviewer ratings.

Hypothesis 4: Candidate appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior will be more strongly related to interviewer ratings when the interview is less structured rather than more highly structured.

The source of the self-presentation tactics evaluation is also likely to moderate the magnitude of the relationship. In particular, if the interviewer provides ratings of both the self-presentation tactic and the end-of-interview rating, the magnitude of the relationship should be stronger. For example, if candidate appearance is evaluated by the interviewer prior to the interview, this predictor should have a stronger relationship with the interviewer’s end-of-interview rating of candidate responses than if appearance is objectively rated by a third party or is manipulated in an experimental study.

The usual interpretation of effect sizes derived from data in which the interviewer has provided ratings of both the independent and dependent variable is that the estimate has been artificially inflated due to common method variance (Jelf, 1999; Posthuma et al., 2002). Indeed, one of the advantages of experimentally manipulating an independent variable is that this allows one to more confidently assess the real effects of changes in levels of that variable. The issue of common method variance becomes particularly intriguing in the context of employment interviews, because, although the effects of self-presentation tactics can be experimentally manipulated and thus separated from other effects, the job interview may present a context in which the standard conceptu-

alization of common method variance may be more difficult to apply—at least in practice. Job interviews are usually conducted by a single interviewer in a context in which experimental manipulation is not possible. Thus, the magnitude of the correlation between interviewer judgments of a given self-presentation tactic (e.g., interviewer perceptions of candidate appearance) and the final interview rating may be a meaningful indicator of the influence a given self-presentation tactic has on an interviewer's decisions. After all, beauty is in the eye of the beholder. If one wants to determine how candidate attributes influence the interviewer, one must ask the interviewer. On the basis of this reasoning, we expected the following moderator effects:

Hypothesis 5: Candidate appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior will be more strongly related to interviewer ratings when both the predictor and the criterion are rated by the interviewer than when the predictor is rated by a third party or is objectively manipulated or measured.

The final moderator is related to research design. It is crucial to determine whether results of lab studies differ from those of field studies and whether mock interviews differ meaningfully from actual employment interviews. The research in this area has found mixed results. In a large-scale meta-analysis, Anderson, Lindsay, and Bushman (1999) found that the effect size reported in experimental studies is actually quite similar to that reported in field studies across a number of research domains in psychology, including (but not limited to) leadership style, social loafing, self-efficacy, and memory. However, Anderson et al. did not include interview research in their analysis, and, in contrast, Jelf (1999) and Posthuma et al. (2002) strongly advocated conducting interview research in the field rather than in the lab. The question here is one of generalizability. Is it at all possible for researchers to draw reasonable conclusions about “high-stakes” job interviews from studies conducted in mock interviews or laboratory settings? The close correspondence between lab and field effect sizes reported by Anderson et al. (1999) suggests we should be able to generalize from the effects found in the mock interview or experimental lab to employment interviews and implies that the magnitude of the effects between self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings would not differ between field and experimental settings.

The alternative perspective proposes that decisions made in high-stakes settings do differ meaningfully from those made by undergraduate students or in settings where the interviewer's rating does not have any bearing on who is actually selected (Gorman, Clover, & Doherty, 1978). The Jelf (1999) and Posthuma et al. (2002) reviews adopted this view by proposing that these results have questionable external validity because of differences in consequences of decisions and the richer social context existing in actual employment interviews. It is interesting that neither of these reviews (Jelf, 1999; Posthuma et al., 2002) spelled out whether self-presentation tactics would have more or less effect in experimental settings; instead, they simply stated that findings from experimental settings were likely to be “uninformative.” However, no meta-analytic evidence exists to support or refute such a claim.

Research on accountability (Lerner & Tetlock, 1999) suggests that information peripheral to the specific question being asked

should have a larger effect in the lab and a smaller effect in the field. In an experiment, the respondent is expected to assume that all information provided is relevant to the decision. Hence, if information about impression management varies across paper-people candidates, the decision maker, wanting to avoid appearing foolish, will use this information. In contrast, when the decision maker is accountable for outcomes, research shows there is more consideration of often overlooked situational attributions and greater use of effortful, systematic judgment strategies (Ashton, 1992; Brtek & Motowidlo, 2002; Lerner & Tetlock, 1999; Mero & Motowidlo, 1995).

Prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1990) also demonstrates that how a decision is framed matters and that a negative frame matters more. If the purpose of the interview is to make actual hiring decisions, it may well be that interviewers enter an interview with a negative frame (Stevens, 1998) and that this leads them to be more critical and to evaluate applicants less positively. In contrast, if there are no consequences from the interviewer's recommendation, professional appearance may be as “useful” as information obtained from the structured component of the interview. For this reason, when the interviewer is accountable and actually hires someone, there should be a weaker relationship between self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings than in those studies where the interviewer is not held accountable for his or her evaluations.

Hypothesis 6: Candidate appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior will be more strongly related to interviewer ratings in experimental settings than in field settings.

Self Presentation and Job Performance

We have argued above that interviewer decisions or preferences for candidates will be affected by the candidate's self-presentation tactics. In an ideal world, that which advances a candidate's career would also make an organization effective. Thus, the influence that candidate appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behaviors have on the interviewer would also lead to success on the job. In fact, some authors make this exact argument and suggest that appearance and impression management matter in jobs where image is vital (Groschl, 2007; Nickson et al., 2005), such as those found in the service-related industries. However, the world is not ideal, and others have argued that at least some of the impact of self-presentation tactics (e.g., physical appearance) is not job relevant (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991; Zivnuska et al., 2004). Interviewers have been shown to give a “good-looking” candidate a higher job knowledge rating, even when they know it is against their better judgment (Boor et al., 1983). Levashina and Campion (2007) recently found that over 90% of undergraduates fake or misrepresent job-related information during employment interviews, although outright lying seemed less frequent. For these reasons, researchers have warned against rewarding self-presentation tactics such as impression management in their human relations practices (including selection) over more important, job-related criteria (Harris et al., 2007).

That said, there are theoretical reasons to expect that the relationship between self-presentation tactics and job performance is positive, even if not as strong as the relationship between self-

presentation and interview performance. After all, people are expected to and do manage their images both in the interview and at work. Consequently, if these tactics influence interviewers, they are also expected to influence others at work, including supervisors, coworkers, even customers, and this could lead to increases in performance. One explanation for such a relationship could be the influence of stable individual differences, such as personality and general mental ability. These traits impact the self-presentation tactics the candidate relies on both during the interview and on the job. Researchers have found conscientiousness and emotional stability to be positively related to job performance (Barrick, Mount, & Judge, 2001). Highly conscientious individuals are more dependable, careful, and well organized than are those low in conscientiousness (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Thus, it is plausible that those high in conscientiousness may be more likely, for example, to dress in a professional manner both in an interview and on the job. Next, individuals high in emotional stability are described as calm, relaxed, and secure (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Therefore, individuals high in emotional stability may be more likely to exhibit positive verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as making eye contact, speaking more clearly, and refraining from nervous shifting and fidgeting in the interview and the work setting. Similarly, general mental ability is correlated with job performance (Hunter & Hunter, 1984). In the interview, individuals high in general mental ability may process information more quickly (Jensen, 1998) and show higher levels of verbal fluency. Such traits allow them to inject fewer “ums” and “ahs” into their interview responses and lead to better interview performance. To the extent that these self-presentation tactics are significantly influenced by the candidate’s personality and general mental ability, they are also likely to be related to future job performance (Posthuma et al., 2002).

Nevertheless, the influence of these tactics on job performance is not expected to be as large as it is on interviewer ratings. As noted previously, the predictive validity of this information is reduced to the extent that candidates present misleading or inaccurate information while managing their image during the interview (Levashina & Campion, 2007). This misinformation may even be trait based. For example, previous research demonstrates that extraversion is moderately correlated with the use of impression management (Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Franke, 2002) and lying in the interview (Weiss & Feldman, 2006). Although the candidate may also try to mislead the supervisor later, on the job, through these self-presentation tactics, the supervisor should become more familiar with the employee over the course of time. This would attenuate the relationship between self-presentation tactics and job performance ratings (McFarland et al., 2003). In contrast, because the candidate is a stranger during the interview, the interviewer is more dependent on the candidate for information. Because the interviewer will not have the opportunity to observe the person in different situations, the interviewer will not get to know the “real” candidate as the supervisor may. In addition, it may be the case that self-presentation tactics are more difficult to express consistently over longer periods of time or across different contexts (McFarland et al., 2003). Individuals may find that maintaining an unchanging self-presentation image is easier to project in the short time span of the interview than in the months (or even a full year) that can elapse between formal job perfor-

mance evaluations. On the basis of this reasoning, we hypothesized as follows:

Hypothesis 7: Candidate appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior will be more strongly related to interviewer ratings than to later job performance.

Method

Literature Search

We reviewed both published and unpublished literature from 1929 to 2008 for articles on candidate appearance, impression management techniques, and verbal and nonverbal behavior in order to locate as many articles and book chapters as possible for this analysis. The search for articles included a search of Web of Knowledge, EBSCO, PsycINFO, ABIInform, and Google scholar. The electronic literature search included, but was not limited to, the following keywords: *employment interview, appearance, physical attractiveness, impression management, influence tactics, verbal behavior, and nonverbal behavior*. In addition, we reviewed the 2001–2008 programs from the Academy of Management and Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychologists for conference papers and presentations related to the interview. We also searched for dissertations and theses in *Dissertation Abstracts International*. Finally, we reviewed the reference sections of several major reviews and meta-analyses of the interview to locate any studies that might have been overlooked in the above searches (e.g., Anderson, 1992; Jelf, 1999; McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994; Posthuma et al., 2002).

Inclusion Criteria

After acquiring all promising studies, we read the abstracts and scanned the results to determine the relevance of each study for our purposes. We used several decision rules in order to determine if the study should be included in the present analysis. First, the study had to be empirical in nature. Second, the study had to include some measure of the variables included in the hypotheses. Third, the study had to report sample sizes and correlations or enough information so the reported statistics (univariate *F* values, *t* values, chi-square values, differences scores, or means and standard deviations) could be converted into usable effect sizes. Fourth, the study had to include an interviewer rating of applicant suitability at the end of the interview.

Description of Variables

Interviewer rating. Interview performance was operationalized as ratings by the interviewer assessing applicant suitability, interview score or rank, intent to hire, or recommendation for a second interview. The majority of the studies in the current data set included an overall interview score; all effect sizes were converted to depict continuous scales.

Job performance. We included studies that made use of supervisory ratings of job performance criteria. Experimental studies were excluded, as were studies that reported sales volume, earnings, income, or job status.

Appearance. Two types of appearance measures were coded: physical attractiveness and professional appearance. Physical attractiveness measures included basic ratings of overall beauty and attractiveness. The professional appearance measures, on the other hand, were characterized by ratings of appropriate professional demeanor, personal grooming, and dress. To have been included in the present analysis, a study must have provided a clear indication of the nature of its appearance measure. Thus, studies that contained undefined “appearance” or “attractiveness” measures were excluded from our final data set.

Impression management behavior. Three types of impression management behavior were coded: (just) impression management and two specific types, self-promotion and other enhancement. Measures of self-promotion included measures of exemplification, entitlements, enhancements, and self-promotion. Other enhancements included ingratiation, opinion conformity, favor doing, and feigned helplessness.

Verbal and nonverbal behavior. Verbal and nonverbal behaviors were divided into three categories: (a) verbal behavior, (b) nonverbal behavior, and (c) verbal and nonverbal behavior. Coded verbal behaviors included applicant speech attributes (e.g., articulation, pitch, fluency). Nonverbal behaviors included smiles and eye contact, as well as leaning forward, using hand gestures, and exhibiting poise. Primary studies that did not distinguish between verbal and nonverbal behaviors were placed in the “verbal and nonverbal behavior” category.

Interview structure. Three levels of interview structure—low, medium, and high—were considered in this study. Interview structure was coded according to the information presented in each primary study in the basis of the three factors identified by Chapman and Zwiig (2005) for categorizing structure: the interviewer used standardized and numeric scoring procedures (evaluation standardization), used job-related behavioral or situational questions (question sophistication), and asked the same questions, in the same order, of all applicants (question consistency). We combined scores across these categories in order to determine if interview structure was low, medium, or high. Low-structure interviews had no limits on questions used and relied on general summary responses; medium-structure interviews had some formal structure in the content of the questions asked and/or evaluated responses with somewhat differentiated ratings scales. In high-structure interviews, all candidates were asked the same job-related questions and predetermined standards were used to score each response.

Rating source. We separated studies according to whether ratings of the self-presentation tactics and the interview rating were provided by the same source (i.e., only the interviewer) or by independent sources.

Research design. Design categories included field and lab studies. We coded interviews as field studies when the interview was conducted by hiring managers or recruiters and was used in the context of an actual selection process. We coded interviews as lab studies when there was no actual job at stake. Mock interviews, experiments, and simulations were labeled as lab studies.

Description of Coding Procedures

Coding accuracy and interrater agreement. Three coders utilized coding instructions and a coding sheet of interview charac-

teristics developed by Murray R. Barrick. The coding instructions provided detailed explanations and a scoring procedure to use during the coding process. All of the primary studies used in the meta-analyses were coded by at least two coders and were periodically cross-checked. We held meetings to discuss problems with the coding instructions and coding sheet and implemented changes as needed. Any disagreements were discussed and resolved. Interrater reliability was .97, and interrater agreement on coding objective and continuous variables exceeded 96%. We computed a series of interrater agreement index kappas for categorical variables (Landis & Koch, 1977); kappa values ranged from .89 to .96, indicating very good interrater agreement levels.

Nonindependence of data. We recorded the uncorrected observed correlations and sample sizes as listed in the studies and converted univariate test statistics into correlations when possible. In cases where multiple effect sizes were reported for the same study, we employed three main decision rules to determine which coefficient to retain. First, some studies reported correlations between multiple measures of the same independent variable and the interview outcome. In these cases, we selected the correlation that best represented the variable of interest. In some cases, that represented a single variable of interest to our analysis. In these cases, we computed a composite correlation for the variable of interest. In cases where a single study contained several measures of a single variable but computing a composite correlation was not possible, we averaged the correlations for the individual measures. Second, some studies reported correlations between the self-presentation tactic and multiple interview outcome measures. In these cases, we selected the correlation that best represented an overall measure of the interview score; otherwise, we averaged the correlations across multiple criteria because single-item scales generally have low reliability and, subsequently, low construct validity. Finally, a few studies reported correlations between a single self-presentation tactic and several hiring recommendations from different interviewers or a group of interviewers. For example, an interview may have been conducted by a panel, but each panel member made an independent rating of the interviewee. In these cases, we averaged the resulting correlations.

Meta-Analytic Procedure and Artifact Corrections

We analyzed our data using the Schmidt and Le (2004) software. This program computes the sample-weighted mean of the observed correlations and observed standard deviations from the original studies and then corrects them for statistical artifacts. We corrected only for criterion unreliability in this analysis in order to produce comparable estimates of the validity of predicting interview performance and job performance from the self-presentation tactics in a selection setting. That is, we wanted to be able to compare the operational validity of the self-presentation tactics for predicting interview scores to that for predicting job performance. Because artifact information was not available in the majority of the studies included in this analysis, we used artifact distributions to correct for artifacts. To correct for criterion unreliability in the meta-analyses, we relied on Conway et al.'s (1995) meta-analysis of interrater and internal consistency reliabilities of the structured interview. Studies in the low-structure category had a weighted mean interrater reliability of .34 with a variance of .038, moderate-structure interviews had weighted mean reliability of .56 with a

variance of .034, and high-structure interviews had a weighted mean reliability of .67 with a variance of .002. If the study did not specify the structure used in the interview, we used a weighted mean reliability of .53 with a variance of .038 (Conway et al., 1995). Using these reliability estimates, we corrected for criterion unreliability individually in each study on the basis of the level of structure used in the study. This procedure was used in all but two cases, as explained below, and the average distribution created in this manner had a mean criterion reliability of .47 ($SD = .031$). For the moderator analysis pertaining to interview structure, we used the appropriate reliability from Conway et al. for the corresponding level of structure in the analysis (.34 for low structure, .56 for medium structure, .67 for high structure). Studies in which the level of interview structure could not be determined were excluded from this moderator analysis. Finally, in order to correct for unreliability in job performance ratings, we used the reliability estimate of .52 reported by Viswesvaran, Ones, and Schmidt (1996) for supervisor ratings of job performance.

Results

Tables 1, 2, and 3 give the meta-analytic results for the three candidate self-presentation tactics with interviewer ratings across three levels of interview structure, rating source, and research design. The first row of each table shows the overall mean observed correlation and corrected correlation of the self-presentation tactics with interviewer ratings. Appearance had the strongest relationship with interviewer ratings ($r_c = .53$), followed by impression management ($r_c = .47$) and verbal and nonverbal cues ($r_c = .40$). None of the credibility intervals or confidence intervals for the main effects for the overall analyses contained zero; this indicates that we can be reasonably assured that each of the self-presentation tactics is meaningfully associated with interviewer ratings.¹ These results support Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 and show that candidates do manage their images in the interview and that this affects the interviewer's decision process.

Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 focus on moderators of the relationship between the self-presentation tactics and interview performance. Therefore, all moderator analyses pertain only to interview ratings. Hypothesis 4 posited that as interview structure increased, the effects of the self-presentation tactics would decrease. This was indeed the case for all three tactics. The correlation between each tactic and interviewer ratings was lower in high-structure interviews than in low-structure interviews (increasing from .18 to .88 for appearance, from .21 to .46 for impression management, and from .37 to .69 for verbal or nonverbal behavior) with no overlap in confidence intervals between high- and low-structure interviews. Additionally, correlations for interviews with medium structure were larger than those for high-structure interviews and smaller than those for low-structure interviews. These results suggest strong support for Hypothesis 4.

As seen in Tables 1 to 3, when candidate self-presentation tactics were assessed with a different source rather than the same source (the interviewer), the correlations between each tactic and interviewer ratings were lower, as hypothesized (increasing from .33 to .68 for appearance, from .31 to .80 for impression management, and from .39 to only .41 for verbal and nonverbal behaviors), and the confidence intervals did not overlap for any but verbal and nonverbal behavior. Thus, not surprisingly, when as-

sessments of self-presentation tactics came from a source external to the interview process, as compared to when ratings of both the independent and dependent variable were assessed by the interviewer, the magnitude of the relationships was substantially smaller for two of three self-presentation tactics. This partially supports Hypothesis 5. When the interviewer both rated the self-presentation tactics and provided an end-of-interview rating, the influence of self-presentation tactics was larger. Although these results were expected, the magnitude of the relationships when the interviewer rated both variables was greater than anticipated.

Hypothesis 6 proposed that self-presentation tactics would have a stronger relationship with interviewer ratings in experimental settings than in field settings. Experimental settings include experiments in which mock interviews are used, those in which the self-presentation is defined or manipulated by the researcher, those in which there is no accountability for an actual selection decision, and those in which undergraduate students are the decision makers. To rule out the effects of common method bias when testing Hypothesis 6, we focused on the results in cases where self-presentation tactics were assessed from a different source. We also compared studies in which interviewers made real hiring recommendations with those in which interviews were not for actual selection purposes. Contrary to our expectations, the relationships between self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings were comparable in two of three cases when the research design included experimental data rather than actual selection data. For appearance, the corrected correlation was .34 in actual selection interviews and .32 in simulated or experimental interviews, though we note that the number of field studies included in this comparison is small ($k = 3$). For impression management, the correlation was .36 in actual interviews and .30 in simulated interviews. Finally, for verbal and nonverbal behavior, the correlations differed somewhat, with those in actual interviews being somewhat smaller (.32 vs. .41) than those in simulated interviews. Taken as a whole, these results do not support Hypothesis 6, as the relationships found for two of three types of self-presentation tactics are comparable in field and experimental settings.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the relationship between self-presentation tactics and interview ratings would be stronger than that between self-presentation and job performance. As can be seen by comparing Tables 1 and 2 with Table 4, the correlation between appearance and impression management with interviewer ratings (.53 and .47, respectively) is larger than that with job performance (overall mean observed $r_c = .14$ and .15, respectively). Furthermore, the 95% confidence interval of the correlation with interviewer ratings does not include the mean observed correlation with job performance; this indicates that these two self-presentation tactics have a stronger relationship with interviewer ratings than they do with measures of job performance.

¹ The 80% credibility interval indicates that 80% of the parameter values in the distribution of the validity estimate lie between the lower and upper bounds of this interval. The 95% confidence interval indicates that there is a 95% probability that the actual population mean is captured by the confidence interval. As noted by Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002), confidence intervals "estimate variability in the estimated mean correlation whereas credibility intervals estimate variability of the individual correlations in the population of studies" (p. 770).

Table 1
Effects of Appearance on Interview Ratings

Analysis	k	n	Mean correlations				% var	80% CV		95% CI	
			obs-r	SDr	r _c	SDr _c		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
On interviewer ratings											
Overall	26	3,333	.37	.14	.53	.19	29	0.28	0.77	0.45	0.61
Professional appearance	8	967	.36	.03	.48	.04	90	0.43	0.52	0.45	0.51
Physical attractiveness	17	2,054	.37	.18	.54	.25	23	0.22	0.86	0.41	0.67
Moderators of effects of appearance on interview scores											
Interview structure											
Low	6	872	.51	.16	.88	.26	14	0.01	1.00	0.64	1.00
Medium	7	711	.39	.00	.52	.00	100	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52
High	6	579	.15	.00	.18	.00	100	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18
Rating source											
Independent source	15	1,522	.25	.08	.33	.11	59	0.19	0.46	0.27	0.39
Field data	3	165	.18	.00	.34	.00	100	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34
Experimental data	11	1,214	.24	.09	.32	.11	54	0.18	0.47	0.25	0.39
Same source	12	1,954	.47	.08	.68	.09	64	0.56	0.80	0.61	0.75
Field data	10	1,543	.44	.08	.65	.09	60	0.53	0.76	0.57	0.73
Experimental data											

Note. k = number of correlations; n = number of subjects; obs-r = observed sample-weighted mean correlation; SDr = observed sample-weighted mean standard deviation; r_c = sample-weighted mean correlation corrected for criterion unreliability; SDr_c = sample-weighted mean standard deviation corrected for criterion unreliability; % var = percent variance explained by artifacts; CV = credibility value; CI = confidence interval.

Comparison of Table 3 with Table 4 shows the same general pattern, although the difference in the correlations between verbal and nonverbal behavior and interview ratings (.40) and job performance (.23) is not as pronounced. Taken together, these results support Hypothesis 7 and show that self-presentation tactics may have a greater impact on interview ratings than they do on job performance.

Discussion

Our purpose in the current meta-analysis was to determine the extent to which a savvy applicant, who alters the image he or she presents, favorably influences the interviewer and gets hired and to examine under what conditions those self-presentation tactics influence the interviewer's decision processes. The results reveal

Table 2
Effects of Impression Management on Interview Ratings

Analysis	k	n	Mean correlations				% var	80% CV		95% CI	
			obs-r	SDr	r _c	SDr _c		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
On interviewer ratings											
Overall	37	4,542	.34	.19	.47	.25	19	0.15	0.79	0.38	0.56
Impression management	22	3,035	.38	.20	.55	.28	16	0.19	0.90	0.43	0.67
Self-promotion	18	1,945	.24	.13	.32	.18	33	0.09	0.54	0.32	0.32
Other enhancement	15	1,497	.20	.17	.26	.21	26	-0.01	0.54	0.14	0.38
Moderators of effects of impression management on interview scores											
Interview structure											
Low	7	856	.27	.00	.46	.00	100	0.46	0.46	0.46	1.00
Medium	8	971	.26	.08	.34	.10	55	0.21	0.47	0.26	0.42
High	7	753	.17	.07	.21	.09	63	0.09	0.32	0.14	0.28
Rating source											
Different source	28	3,066	.22	.08	.31	.10	64	0.19	0.44	0.27	0.35
Field data	7	778	.26	.12	.36	.15	41	0.17	0.55	0.23	0.49
Experimental data	21	2,288	.21	.05	.30	.06	83	0.22	0.38	0.27	0.33
Same source	9	1,476	.58	.10	.80	.14	20	0.61	0.97	0.70	0.90
Field data	6	1,089	.57	.11	.78	.15	18	0.60	0.97	0.65	0.91
Experimental data	3	387	.60	.09	.82	.13	27	0.65	0.98	0.65	0.99

Note. k = number of correlations; n = number of subjects; obs-r = observed sample-weighted mean correlation; SDr = observed sample-weighted mean standard deviation; r_c = sample-weighted mean correlation corrected for criterion unreliability; SDr_c = sample-weighted mean standard deviation corrected for criterion unreliability; % var = percent variance explained by artifacts; CV = credibility value; CI = confidence interval.

Table 3
Effects of Verbal and Nonverbal Behaviors on Interview Ratings

Analysis	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean correlations				% var	80% CV		95% CI	
			<i>obs-r</i>	<i>SDr</i>	<i>r_c</i>	<i>SDr_c</i>		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
On interviewer ratings											
Overall	26	3,458	.30	.15	.40	.19	25	0.15	0.64	0.32	0.48
Verbal	7	1,185	.26	.14	.34	.18	21	0.11	0.57	0.19	0.49
Nonverbal	20	2,499	.29	.11	.40	.14	40	0.21	0.58	0.33	0.47
Moderators of verbal and nonverbal behaviors on interview scores											
Interview structure											
Low	3	301	.40	.04	.69	.00	100	0.61	0.76	0.59	0.79
Medium	9	949	.35	.14	.47	.18	27	0.23	0.71	0.34	0.60
High	9	1,238	.30	.15	.37	.19	21	0.13	0.61	0.24	0.50
Rating source											
Different source	23	2,698	.30	.17	.39	.22	23	0.12	0.67	0.30	0.48
Field data	6	655	.23	.05	.32	.06	82	0.24	0.40	0.26	0.38
Experimental data	17	2,043	.32	.19	.41	.24	18	0.11	0.72	0.29	0.53
Same source	3	760	.30	.00	.41	.00	100	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41
Field data	3	760	.30	.00	.41	.00	100	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41
Experimental data											

Note. *k* = number of correlations; *n* = number of subjects; *obs-r* = observed sample-weighted mean correlation; *SDr* = observed sample-weighted mean standard deviation; *r_c* = sample-weighted mean correlation corrected for criterion unreliability; *SDr_c* = sample-weighted mean standard deviation corrected for criterion unreliability; % var = percent variance explained by artifacts; CV = credibility value; CI = confidence interval.

that candidates' use of self-presentation tactics has a meaningful influence on interviewer ratings and that this influence is stronger when the interview is unstructured than when it is structured. Additionally, when the relationships are examined solely from the perspective of the interviewer—that is, when both the self-presentation tactics and the interview scores are rated by a single individual—we find even stronger relationships. Although we acknowledge that common method bias is at work in such estimates, we point out that, in practice, interviews often are conducted by a single interviewer. Thus, interviewer reactions to self-presentation tactics may be the most useful indicator of their impact on subsequent ratings of candidate performance during the interview. In the case of job interviews, beauty may indeed be in the eye of the beholder.

That said, the results obtained from those studies with no common method bias (those in which different people provide ratings or the self-presentation tactics are experimentally manipulated) offer a conservative estimate of the relationship between self-presentation and interview ratings. Although fewer studies are

included in these analyses, the results supply an estimate of the effects of self-presentation tactics without any undue influence that may come from an interviewer's more general impression of a candidate. It is worth noting that in the absence of common method bias, our results still demonstrate a moderately strong relationship between the self-presentation tactics and interview ratings.

Our findings also reveal that self-presentation tactics have stronger relationships with interview ratings than they do with job performance ratings. This seems to be especially the case when the interview is relatively unstructured. In such circumstances, self-presentation tactics may have a superfluous influence on unstructured interview ratings. When studies with common method bias are excluded from the analyses, self-presentation tactics still have a significantly greater impact on both unstructured and structured interview ratings than they do on job performance. It is interesting to note that, in these analyses, the magnitude of the relationship between self-presentation tactics and interview ratings is similar to that between decidedly valid constructs (e.g., general mental ability, conscientiousness, job experience) and structured interview

Table 4
Effects of Self-Presentation Tactics on Job Performance

Analysis	<i>k</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean correlations				% var	80% CV		95% CI	
			<i>obs-r</i>	<i>SDr</i>	<i>r_c</i>	<i>SDr_c</i>		Lower	Upper	<i>obs-r</i>	<i>SDr</i>
Physical appearance	5	741	.10	.17	.14	.23	19	-0.08	0.28	-0.09	0.37
Impression management	19	2,851	.11	.17	.15	.23	18	-0.14	0.45	0.04	0.26
Verbal and nonverbal behaviors	7	580	.17	.00	.23	.00	100	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23

Note. *k* = number of correlations; *n* = number of subjects; *obs-r* = observed sample-weighted mean correlation; *SDr* = observed sample-weighted mean standard deviation; *r_c* = sample-weighted mean correlation corrected for criterion unreliability; *SDr_c* = sample-weighted mean standard deviation corrected for criterion unreliability; % var = percent variance explained by artifacts; CV = credibility value; CI = confidence interval.

scores (see Salgado & Moscoso, 2002). This comparison suggests that self-presentation tactics, which were only modestly correlated to job performance, may impact interviewer ratings just as much as or even more than do clearly valid predictors of later job performance.

Our findings do not mean that self-presentation tactics are insignificant on the job. In fact, we believe that self-presentation tactics may improve employee performance. The employee–employer relationship is another essential interpersonal relationship suffused with communication and information exchange (i.e., social influence) demands. Thus, according to interdependence theory, the employee is often heavily reliant on and vulnerable to the manager for important factors (e.g., pay, promotion, relocation), and the applicant is heavily reliant on the interviewer in a similar fashion. Additionally, the employee and employer may have conflicting interests (just as in the interview). In performance ratings, the employee probably wants to receive the highest rating, and the employer is interested in gaining the most accurate information with which to rank several employees. As in an interview, the employee will want to increase rewards and decrease punishments on the job, so self-presentation tactics may play a role in subjectively rated performance ratings. In addition, there is an element of asymmetric information in the interview and the performance ratings. Savvy employees (like savvy interviewees) will try to frame their performance in such a way as to influence the employer, making sure they convey they are a valuable employee (i.e., pointing out money they saved the company or how they contributed to a team project). Finally, as noted earlier, candidate traits may serve as antecedents to some of the self-presentation tactics, and this suggests they are relatively stable across situations (i.e., during the interview and on the job). For example, although appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors can be trained, some individuals who are high in emotional stability (a stable personality trait) may be less likely to shift in their seat, fidget, or act nervous during the interview as well as while on the job. This traitlike component of verbal and nonverbal behavior offers additional explanation for the consistency across the interview and job performance; if the candidate used these tactics successfully in the interview, he or she is more likely to continue to use them effectively in the employment setting.

The interview and performance evaluation have many similarities, but they also have several noteworthy differences that could help explain why self-presentation tactics have more influence in the interview than in the performance rating. Two major differences between the initial interview and job performance ratings are time and access to information. In the interview, time is short and the hiring decision must be made on the basis of a limited amount of information. Unlike the interviewer, the supervisor is not dependent on the employee for all performance information because performance ratings are generally made over a longer period of time, with more opportunities for observation. First impressions can be wrong, and such errors are usually discovered over time and through experiences with the employee. The quality of the information depends, in part, on the amount of information exchange characteristic of the employee–employer relationship. For example, how many opportunities does the employer have to observe the employee's performance? Unfortunately, we do not have the data to test many of these assertions, and thus, this topic presents an area for future research.

Several findings from this study have important implications for future research. First, one moderator that we examined was research design. Two recent large-scale qualitative reviews of the interview (Jelf, 1999; Posthuma et al., 2002) questioned whether researchers can draw reasonable conclusions about “high-stakes” job interviews from studies conducted in mock interviews or laboratory studies. In the interviewing literature, there is a widely held assumption that experimental settings are likely to be “uninformative,” as results will not generalize to actual employment interviews (Gorman et al., 1978). However, no meta-analytic evidence has previously existed to support or refute such a claim. In all three of our analyses, when self-presentation tactics were assessed from different sources, the relationships between candidate self-presentation tactics and interviewer ratings were comparable whether the interviewers made real selection decisions or the interviewer had no accountability. These results suggest that high-fidelity mock interviews may in fact be a useful method for learning about the nature of the effect that self-presentation tactics have on the interviewer. Again, this implication is the exact opposite of findings by those who have criticized the use of mock interviews or experimental studies (Jelf, 1999; Posthuma et al., 2002). At the same time, we must caution readers that the results obtained in this study apply only to self-presentation tactics. If our findings can be replicated in other interview domains, then perhaps mock interviews can be used to pave the way for studies of areas of interviewing that have been historically difficult to explore, such as the effects of interviewer personality on interview outcomes.

Second, we found that physical appearance had a larger effect on interviewer ratings than did impression management or verbal and nonverbal behavior. This finding raises the intriguing possibility that self-presentation tactics may affect interviewer decisions through quick, intuitive, and unreflective processes (Kruglanski & Orehek, 2007). Although we do not have direct evidence that interview decisions were made quickly in the studies included in our analyses, experimental work in social psychology raises the possibility that individuals use facial appearance as a basis for interpersonal judgments after as little as 100 ms of exposure (Willis & Todorov, 2006). For decades, it has been suggested that the primacy effect—the tendency to give undue consideration to the earliest known information in a decision-making situation—strongly influences individuals' judgments of other people (Asch, 1946). Thus, it may be that physical appearance has an impact on interview ratings because it is one of the first pieces of “information” that the interviewer receives about a job candidate and that information gained later in the interview is unable to help interviewers overcome the biases generated by primacy effects. An important goal of research is to determine the extent to which primacy affects impact interview outcomes. If interviewers are highly influenced by information that is received early in the interview, then, from the perspective of the job candidate, a good first impression may be the key to success in the interview.

This study also has several implications for practitioners. First and foremost, interviewers should continue to use structured interviews whenever possible. Although this advice is not new, both job candidates and interviewers still may prefer unstructured interviews for a variety of reasons (Kohn & Dipboye, 1998; Posthuma et al., 2002; Ryan & Ployhart, 2000). As a result, unstructured interviews are still used in practice, and even though the vast

majority of hiring managers are aware of the evidence that has been amassed in favor of structured interviews (Rynes, Colbert, & Brown, 2002), many managers still doubt their usefulness (Terpstra & Rozel, 1997). Second, when conducting interview training, organizations should make interviewers aware of the influence of self-presentation tactics on interview ratings. Interview training should include explanations of self-presentation tactics so that interviewers can more consciously manage the process of interview evaluations. Third, hiring managers should reevaluate alternative interviewing methods, as these methods may reduce the effects of self-presentation tactics on interview outcomes. For example, structured interviews conducted by phone will reduce the impact of physical attractiveness on interview scores and simultaneously reduce the monetary expenses associated with physically interviewing job candidates (Schmidt & Rader, 1999).

Of course, our study is not without limitations. First, several of the meta-analyses that we conducted were based on a small number of primary studies. This limitation is most relevant to the relationship between the three self-presentation tactics and job performance and the comparisons between field and experimental studies. As such, conclusions drawn from these results should be interpreted with caution until more primary studies are available with which to determine whether our results will hold across a greater number of studies.

Second, a reviewer suggested that we bring attention to the fact that the credibility intervals were quite wide in the main analyses (Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3), as this indicates that there is a somewhat wide distribution of parameter values across studies. In addition, the percent variance explained by study artifacts is small for these analyses. Taken together, these facts may limit the generalizability of our main findings. However, at the same time, they highlight the importance of our moderator analyses (Hypotheses 4, 5, and 6) to any interpretation of our findings. Nevertheless, it is possible that there are other moderators of the relationship between self-presentation tactics and interview ratings that we failed to identify. Although there are several exploratory methods for detecting moderators in meta-analysis (e.g., Q test), as recommended by Hunter and Schmidt (2004) we have examined only those moderators for which a priori hypotheses based on theory could be advanced. Indeed, Hunter and Schmidt (2004) stated that this approach "is much more effective in identifying moderators than operating without a priori moderator hypotheses and attempting to assess the presence of moderators by testing for heterogeneity in observed d or r values" (p. 402). Thus, though it might be argued that a limitation of our analysis is that we conducted no tests designed to detect moderators, we believe that a moderator search based on theoretical considerations is most appropriate.

This brings us to the final limitation of our paper: There was an insufficient number of studies available with which to examine moderators that are likely to be important in the context of this study, most notably the moderating role of the interpersonal demands of the job. We expect that in jobs where interpersonal skill is highly related to performance, the self-presentation tactics we studied would be likely to convey information that indicates how skilled the candidate is socially and interpersonally. Therefore, the skill required to project an effective image in the interview could be associated with success in other socially demanding settings (e.g., dealing with a walk-in customer). We attempted to evaluate the interpersonal demands of the job as a potential moderator of

the relationship between these tactics and interviewer ratings. However, meaningful examination of the level of interpersonal demands inherent in the job itself as a moderator was limited by the fact that enough studies were available for just one of the three tactics (impression management). We found that for jobs with low social demands, the correlation between impression management and interviewer ratings was .28 ($k = 7, n = 997$); for jobs with high interpersonal demands the correlation was .65 ($k = 9, n = 1,095$). These results give some indication that the interpersonal demands of jobs may moderate the influence of self-presentation tactics on interview ratings, but our results are preliminary and should be interpreted with caution, at least until additional studies regarding the other tactics and jobs low in social demands become available. Consequently, future research should assess when the predictive validity of these tactics is enhanced.

Also absent from this study is information regarding other variables that have been found to be critical in prior interview research (i.e., fit and perceived liking), as well as information about which job-related constructs were assessed in the interview (e.g., the candidate's basic personality tendencies, mental ability, or interpersonal skills; Huffcutt et al., 2001), as few studies reported such data. Researchers should strive to identify additional stimuli to which interviewers are attuned and why these stimuli affect interviewers' decisions. Future research must also examine the degree of bias that self-presentation tactics introduce when interviewers rate specific constructs. Do attractive, ingratiating candidates with high nonverbal skills receive higher ratings on job knowledge? On interpersonal skills? If the effects of self-presentation tactics on interview ratings are strong, we should examine their effects on specific interview dimensions, particularly during the structured interview.

At its core, the interview is a social exchange between the interviewer and candidate. Social influence theory and interdependence theory predict that as long as the interview remains an avenue of social exchange, the candidate's use of appearance, impression management, and verbal and nonverbal behavior will have a disproportionate impact on interview scores. Thus, to fully understand the information that influences interviewer decisions, we must consider the role these self-presentation tactics have during the interview. Though the need to study the effect of self-presentation tactics on interview decisions has been mentioned before (Dipboye, 1982; Herriot, 1984; Schein, 1970), current research on the employment interview has focused instead on questions concerning how to structure information (Campion et al., 1997; Chapman & Zweig, 2005) or what constructs or stable characteristics are being assessed (Huffcutt et al., 2001). Thus, we have learned much about how and what we should measure but little about the stimulus information to which interviewers actually respond.

Our intent is not to suggest that research that has focused mainly on the psychometric approach has not improved the predictive validity of the interview. As our results suggest, unstructured interview scores may be so saturated by the effects of self-presentation tactics as to lower their predictive validity. Although structured interview scores were still subject to attempts by candidates to manage their portrayal, the scores became significantly less so as structure increased. Further, the magnitude of the influence these tactics have on the interview corresponds more closely to that found for job performance. Thus, our results add to an

impressive body of empirical evidence that supports the need to structure or standardize the interview in order to improve interviewer decisions (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; Huffcutt, Roth, & McDaniel, 1996; McDaniel et al., 1994; Posthuma et al., 2002). However, we wish to emphasize the need to integrate the psychometric and social influence research streams. Results from this study clearly show that the psychometric approach, social influence theory, and interdependence theory all play important roles in affecting interviewer decisions.

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References marked with an asterisk indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.

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