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The Effect of the Interview Structure on the Physical Attractiveness Bias

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A Thesis

in

The John Molson School of Business

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## ABSTRACT

### The Effect of the Interview Structure on the Physical Attractiveness Bias

Khalil Jabbour

This study investigated interview structure as a moderator of the relationship between the physical attractiveness of job candidates and two interview outcomes (suitability ratings and hiring recommendations). The sample for this study was composed of 32 Concordia University students. Each participant interviewed the same two job candidates. 16 participants performed face-to-face structured interviews and 16 participants performed face-to-face unstructured interviews. Interview structure was manipulated by randomly providing participants with either the structured interview handout (which included the employment interview with eight questions, a job description, the scoring criteria with possible answers, benchmark responses and the candidate rating scale) or the unstructured interview handout (which included the six topics to be covered, a job description and the candidate rating scale). The physical attractiveness of both candidates was based on perceptions of participants, with respect to facial features, body proportions and weight, posture and general appearance. The findings did show an interaction between physical attractiveness and interview structure. The more attractive candidate was perceived as more suitable in the unstructured interview condition than in the structured interview. However, the less physically attractive candidate was perceived as equally suitable in the structured and the unstructured interview. On the other hand, no relations were found for hiring recommendations. Also, more job relevant information was provided by both candidates in the structured interview. The study's contributions and limitations, along with directions for future research, are discussed.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my father, Elias, in loving memory.

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## **The Effect of the Interview Structure on the Physical Attractiveness Bias**

Beauty affects the life chances and the well-being of individuals. Research on physically attractive people has shown that beautiful individuals are generally more happy, satisfied and successful in their lives (Dion, Berscheid, & Walster, 1972). They are more accepting of their age, of their income, and their employment status (Umberson & Hughes, 1987). Morrow (1990) characterized physical attractiveness as the “degree to which one’s facial image elicits favorable reactions from others” (p.47); however, in this study, physical attractiveness not only focuses on facial features but also on body proportions and weight, posture and general appearance as defined in Dipboye, Arvey, and Terpstra (1977).

Usually, people assume that the purpose of the job selection interview is ideally to distinguish the candidate with the highest combination of education standards, appropriate job experience and suitable skills and abilities; this is not always the case. Aspects of personal appearance have powerful effects on multiple job interview outcomes. The Implicit Personality theory suggests that once an individual is categorized as physically attractive or unattractive, the recruiter will link numerous personality characteristics related with that social category, to that particular individual (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1979). Physical attractiveness of a job applicant seems to be beneficial during the employment application process. Job candidates, who were viewed as physically attractive, received better suitability ratings, better hiring recommendations and had higher chances of being promoted than their equally qualified unattractive peers (Baron, 1983; Cash & Trimer, 1984; Cox & Glick, 1986; Dipboye et al., 1977; Forsythe, Drake,

& Cox, 1985; Jackson, Hunter, & Hodge, 1995; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Marlowe, Schneider, & Nelson, 1996). Furthermore, if only one candidate had to be selected for a particular position, the highly attractive male always had the highest chance of being selected (Dipboye et al., 1977).

Schmitt (1976) suggested that to improve the reliability and validity of job interviews, it is important to use a structured interview format. Also, having a detailed job description of the position will help interviewers know what the exact job requirements are and hence they will be able to focus on relevant information only. Generally the purpose of using the structured interview is to improve the quality and job-relatedness of the information the evaluator obtains from the job applicant, and to make sure the employment decision will be made only based on relevant information.

In their historical review of the research related to the selection interview over the past 100 years, Buckley, Norris, and Wiese (2000) recognized that using a highly structured interview model would increase reliability, validity and inter-rater agreement of the interview as a selection tool. Furthermore, Marchese and Muchinsky (1993) found that the higher the structure of the interview, the higher the validity of the interview will be; hence, when using an interview to select job applicants, there will be a strong positive correlation between structure and validity. Therefore, using a structured interview format will yield a more accurate assessment of the candidate than using an unstructured interview format. Moreover, the information gathered in an unstructured interview was less job-related than when a structured interview was used (Hayes, Wendt, & Craighead, 1990).

The current study contributes to the literature on both the physical attractiveness bias and selection interviews. It seeks to understand whether the physical attractiveness bias that tends to be a prominent factor in the interview process can be reduced through a formal structuring process of the interview. Physically attractive candidates tend to be evaluated as more suitable for a job and are privileged in hiring recommendations when an unstructured interview is employed. Furthermore, the use of a structured interview as a selection tool should reduce different stereotypes, prejudices and biases that evaluators might possess. Hence, it is supposed that the interview structure will have a moderating effect on the physical attractiveness bias; where it is presumed that the relation between physical attractiveness and interview outcomes will be weaker in a structured interview context.

Furthermore, while the physical attractiveness stereotype has been very well documented and acknowledged in the literature for more than thirty years, all studies have used similar methodologies. In these studies, the evaluators' ratings of candidate qualifications, the recommendations for hiring, the starting salaries, and so on, was based on photographs of candidates attached to resumes or videotapes of candidates (Baron, 1983; Cash & Trimer, 1984; Cox & Glick, 1986; Dipboye et al., 1977; Forsythe et al., 1985; Jackson et al., 1995; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Marlowe et al., 1996). The current study is, to this author's knowledge, the first to actually use direct, face-to-face interviews to rate candidates while focusing mainly on studying the physical attractiveness bias.

## **The Physical Attractiveness Bias**

*What is beautiful is good.* Research has indicated a “what is beautiful is good” phenomenon (Dion et al., 1972) which holds that individuals with physical beauty are associated with positive characteristics such as likeability, agreeableness, intelligence, success, and competence, which in turn affect, how that person is treated (Heilman & Stopeck, 1985; Riggio & Woll, 1984). A meta-analysis by Feingold (1992), which examined the relationship between an individual’s physical attractiveness and a range of individual characteristics, established that physically attractive people were perceived as being more sociable, more dominant and as having a more positive general mental health. Physically unattractive individuals, on the other hand, were perceived to be lonelier and more socially anxious.

Riggio and Woll (1984) found that physical attractiveness and person likeability were correlated; the candidates who were rated the highest on physical attractiveness were also rated as the most likeable. These individuals were most often selected as potential dating partners. Furthermore, highly attractive applicants were perceived as more sociable and friendly than unattractive applicants. Also, attractive people were perceived as more masculine or feminine depending on their gender (Cash & Kilcullen, 1985; Gillen, 1981).

Beautiful individuals were seen as being more capable of attaining a prestigious occupation (Dion et al., 1972). Physically attractive candidates were usually perceived as more self confident (Forgas, 1988) and as being more socially competent and popular (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988). Cash, Kehr, Polyson, and Freeman (1977) found that unattractive candidates were attributed a

higher level of psychological disturbance. Also, Forgas (1988) found that physically attractive candidates were usually perceived by raters as less likely to cheat.

A study conducted by Webster and Driskell (1983) found that individuals who are beautiful generally have a 'better life' than the 'ugly'. Moreover these individuals who are highly attractive are expected to also have other positive qualifications; for example, be more competent to pilot a plane (Webster & Driskell, 1983).

*Gender and beauty.* Most often, studies found no gender differences in the importance of attractiveness; hence physical beauty is equally important for both women and men (Dion et al., 1972; Eagly et al., 1991; Hosoda, Stone-Romero, & Coats, 2003; Langlois, Kalakanis, Rubenstein, Larson, Hallam, & Smoot, 2000). Also, there was a substantial agreement or consensus between raters of who is and who is not considered physically attractive both within and across cultures. Furthermore, Langlois et al. (2000) found that physical attractiveness was significantly advantageous for children and adults in most domains of judgment (academic, interpersonal, occupational competence), treatment (attention, care giving, cooperation, reward) and behavior (popularity, intelligence, performance). Moreover, since the attractiveness bias was equally present for male and female raters towards male and female applicants, Webster and Driskell (1983) thought it is acceptable to address candidate attractiveness without specifying the sex of the candidate or that of the rater. Therefore the physical attractiveness bias is present in everyone. Children and adults, males and females and people from different cultural backgrounds stereotype others based on their appearance. Beauty is equally appreciated by everyone universally. Physical attractive individuals are better treated and judged in everyday life.

*Beauty is talent in the workplace.* A substantial amount of research demonstrates that this beauty bias can exert powerful effects on how physically attractive individuals are treated in the workplace (Cash & Kehr, 1978; Cash & Salzbach, 1978; Cash & Trimer, 1984; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999; Forgas, 1988; Frieze, Olson, & Russell, 1991; Hosoda et al., 2003; Roszell, Kennedy, & Grabb, 1989). The term *beautyism* refers to a prejudice through which physically attractive people are awarded better career options and income opportunities than the average individual.

Good looks were uniformly advantageous to men and women, hence the saying “beauty is talent” (Cash & Trimer, 1984; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999; Forgas, 1988). Beautiful people were perceived as having a more appropriate personality that better fits the job (Gilmore, Beehr, & Love, 1982). Physical attractiveness of candidates was significantly correlated with ratings on traits that are directly related to the job, such as leadership skills, teamwork, drive to excel and planning and organizing of projects and assignments (Burnett & Motowildo, 1998). In their meta-analysis, Hosoda et al. (2003) examined the relationship between the physical attractiveness of individuals and its effect on job-related outcomes. The authors found that on job related outcomes like ranking, hiring, promotion, predicted success, suitability performance evaluation and candidate choice, attractive candidates always fared better than their less attractive peers.

Moreover, physical attractiveness can have a significant effect on economic success; according to Canadian data, physically attractive people tend to earn a higher annual salary than less physically attractive people (Roszell et al., 1989). Furthermore, Frieze et al. (1991) found that on a 10-point facial attractiveness scale, each extra point

was worth an additional \$2,000 in annual salary. Moreover, higher salaries were always recommended to highly and moderately attractive candidates (Dipboye et al., 1977).

Attractiveness has been studied across a variety of work disciplines. Cash and Kehr (1978) and Cash and Salzbach (1978) studied the effect of physical attractiveness of counselors and how it might affect their work and their patients. It was found that the physical attractiveness of the counselor had a significant positive effect on the perceived expertness of the counselor, the social attractiveness of the counselor, the trust in the counselor, the regard and empathy towards the counselor and the genuineness of the counselor. Also, the physically attractive counselors were expected to be more helpful in resolving the client's problems and the patient was more willing to return for a second visit. Landy and Sigall (1974) studied how physical attractiveness of female writers affected evaluations of their essays. It was found that writers who were physically attractive received more favorable performance evaluations, based on characteristics such as creativity, ideas, style and general quality. The physical attractiveness bias had a higher effect when the essay was of poor quality. The physically unattractive writers were rated very negatively. The writers were evaluated as having low intelligence, low sensitivity, low talent and overall low ability. Finally, Heilman and Stopeck (1985) studied the effect of the physical attractiveness of an assistant vice president on the way they are perceived. It was found that an attractive assistant vice president compared to an unattractive assistant vice president was viewed as being more capable, more likable and as having better interpersonal skills.

***Weight and height.*** Since weight and height are both components of physical attractiveness, they will also be discussed. Being tall is a physically attractive trait (Judge

& Cable, 2004) and being overweight is a physically unattractive trait (Larkin & Pines, 1979). First, overweight applicants received significantly lower rating scores when compared to normal-weight applicants (Kutcher & Bragger, 2004), were recommended for employment significantly less (Larkin & Pines, 1979; O'Brien, Latner, Halberstadt, Hunter, Anderson, & Caputi, 2008; Pingitore, Dugoni, Tindale, & Spring, 1994) and earned on average \$4,000 less than their standard weight peers (Frieze et al., 1991). Furthermore, they were perceived as having more negative personalities (Pingitore et al., 1994). Overweight applicants were perceived and rated as significantly less competent, neat, ambitious, attractive and productive; furthermore they were seen as being disorganized, inactive, and indecisive and less successful (Larkin & Pines, 1979). Overweight applicants were perceived as having less leadership potential, as less likely to succeed and were recommended a lower starting salary (O'Brien et al., 2008) and lower predicted future earnings (Judge & Cable, 2004). This discrimination against overweight applicants was present for positions requiring minimal public contact as well as for positions requiring extensive public contact (Pingitore et al., 1994).

Second, Judge and Cable (2004) found that candidate height was a positive indicator of earnings, social esteem (perceived status, potential, and esteem), leader emergence (election, nomination, ranking in leadership position) and performance (job, academic, athletic performance). Furthermore, Frieze et al. (1991) found that an extra inch in height was worth around \$600 in additional yearly salary.

*Physical attractiveness bias - myth or reality.* The question arises whether this physical attractiveness stereotype is warranted. Kanazawa and Kovar (2004) hypothesized that beautiful people are in fact more intelligent based on a four point

logical argumentation. First, they stated that evidence shows that men who occupy higher-status job positions are in fact intellectually brighter and more intelligent (Jensen, 1980). Second, they stated that it is a known fact that men prefer to mate with beautiful women and women prefer to mate with socially dominant and powerful men (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, Todd, & Finch, 1997). Third, behavior genetics proved that general intelligence is heritable (Wang & Oakland, 1995). Finally, physical attractiveness is heritable (Moller & Thornhill, 1997). Based on the evidence provided by the previously stated four points, Kanazawa and Kovar (2004) felt confident that beautiful people are not only perceived as more intelligent but actually are more intelligent. However this author still believes in the physical attractiveness bias. Hence, beautiful people will be given preferential treatment in the job interview process.

*The qualification factor.* Other studies found that only when the candidate's qualifications were mediocre, did the physical attractiveness come to play, and the physically attractive would be privileged over the unattractive candidates. For example, Watkins and Johnston (2000) found that only when the applicant had a mediocre (as opposed to a high quality) resume, did physical attractiveness play a role in giving the physically attractive candidate a better quality rating. Chung and Leung (2001) found that when the candidate's performance was high, the candidate's physical attractiveness had no impact on perceived competence and likability and his or her chances of getting a promotion. However when the candidate's performance was mediocre, the more physically attractive the candidate was, the higher his or her chance of being perceived as likable and competent and of getting a promotion was.

***Tie-breaker effect.*** In some cases, the physical attractiveness of a candidate was the deciding factor. If the raters found more than one candidate who have very similar levels of skills or qualifications, candidate physical attractiveness, in these particular cases, might become the deciding factor (Hosoda et al., 2003). Here the physical attractiveness of the candidate is said to have a tie-breaking influence in the interview.

Thus, based on the above studies, it seems that the physical attractiveness bias does in fact exist and that physically attractive candidates are most often privileged over physically unattractive candidates in the interview process.

### **Other Appearance Biases in Selection**

Empirical work has indicated that beyond physical beauty, an interviewer's decision-making process can be biased by job applicant details such as clothing, scent, cosmetic use and nonverbal behavior.

***Clothing, cosmetics and scent.*** Dress, cosmetic use and artificial scent can be important factors influencing the selection decision process. First, subjects' clothing had a strong positive influence on the judges' ratings of performance in the interview (Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988). Moreover, applicants' clothing affected the interviewer's selection decision (Forsythe et al., 1985). Clothing masculinity influenced the perception of forcefulness, self reliance, dynamism, aggressiveness, decisiveness on evaluations and hiring recommendations of women for management position (Forsythe, 1990). Also, the more masculine and dark the costume was, the more favorable the hiring recommendation for the female applicant was (Forsythe et al., 1985). Moreover, being dressed appropriately for an interview did significantly increase one's chance of being hired (Bardack & McAndrew, 1985). Furthermore, applicants were rated as having better

social skills when they dressed formally (Gifford, Fan Ng, & Wilkinson, 1985). Sometimes the physically attractive and unattractive candidates are more physically similar than one would expect. Webster and Driskell (1983) proved that minor changes in clothing can be enough to make an unattractive candidate more attractive and hence better evaluated. Second, it appears that women were able to manage their image through the use of cosmetics. Cosmetic use was shown to increase perceived attractiveness, femininity, and sexiness for gender-typed positions. However, having no makeup, moderate makeup or heavy makeup had no effect on a women's evaluation for a non gender typed position (Cox & Glick, 1986). Third, Baron (1993) found that a job applicant's scent appeared to influence the rater in a job interview context on different measures such as qualification for the job, intelligence, friendliness, potential for future success and hiring recommendation. Male interviewers assigned lower ratings to candidates who wore perfume than to candidates who did not, while female interviewers assigned lower ratings to candidates who did not wear perfume (Baron, 1983).

*Applicant's nonverbal behavior.* Applicants are perceived as more qualified for a certain position when they exhibit positive nonverbal behavior. Different nonverbal behaviors like frequent eye contact, head movements and smiling influenced the overall impression and qualification assessment (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999) and the hiring recommendations (Parsons & Liden, 1984) made by the evaluator. Candidate frequent eye contact influenced perceived competence and strength of character, while positive facial expressions like smiling increased likability (Anderson, 1991). Also interviewees displaying frequent positive nonverbal behavior were rated significantly higher on enthusiasm, motivation, confidence, persuasiveness and pleasant

personality (McGovern & Tinsley, 1978); they received better leadership and teamwork ratings (Burnett & Motowildo, 1998) and were perceived as having a higher competence level (Howard & Ferris, 1996). They also had a significantly higher chance of being invited for a second interview (McGovern & Tinsley, 1978). Furthermore, Forgas (1988) found that when an unattractive candidate smiled, this showed submissiveness and a lack of self confidence. Also, in a non-work context, candidates who smiled more had a higher chance of being selected as dating partners (Riggio & Woll, 1984).

Forbes and Jackson (1980) differentiated between the nonverbal behavior variables that positively affect the rater's evaluation and the nonverbal behavior variables that negatively affected the rater's evaluation. The positive nonverbal behavior variables led to the acceptance (hiring) of the job applicant and the negative nonverbal behavior variables led to the rejection (non-hiring) of the job candidate. Based on an extensive literature review and on the nonverbal behavior items present in the interviews of job candidates who received positive evaluations and were accepted for the position; Forbes and Jackson (1980) computed a three item nonverbal behavior scale. The nonverbal behavior items were (a) direct eye contact with the interviewer, (b) smiling and, (c) head nodding.

Hence, based on the extensive literature review related to physical attractiveness stereotypes, it would be assumed that in a job interview, candidates who are physically attractive would have a higher chance of receiving high suitability ratings and hiring recommendations, compared to their equally qualified physically unattractive peers. Furthermore, clothing, cosmetics and scent of applicants as well as their nonverbal behaviors might affect the final interview outcome. Hence, these variables should be

taken into account as well when evaluating a job applicant. However, since these factors are not the main focus of the study, the researcher will attempt to control their effects by making the job applicants as similar as possible in terms of what to wear, what cosmetics to use, how to smell and how to behave 'nonverbally'.

Consequently, the independent variable in this study will be the physical attractiveness of candidates. Furthermore, the dependent variables will be first the candidate suitability ratings and second the hiring recommendations in the selection interview.

### **The Selection Interview**

The literature on hiring decisions is one of the oldest research focuses in the management discipline. As early as the 1950's, results of a survey of 852 firms by Spriegel and James (1958) showed that 99% of firms used the interview process as a selection device for hiring. Since then, the prominence of interviews during the hiring process has not decreased (Ulrich & Trumbo, 1965). By 2000, Buckley et al. (2000) stated that the interview as a selection tool has been analyzed, criticized, tested, and changed by a myriad of different researchers; still, it remains the most widely used selection tool by firms.

Wiesner and Cronshaw (1988) described the employment interview as "an interpersonal interaction of limited duration between one [...] interviewer and a job-seeker for the purpose of identifying interviewee knowledge, skills, abilities and behaviors that may be predictive of success in subsequent employment. The operational indicators of this success include criteria of job performance, training success, promotion and tenure." (p. 276). The selection interview provides a personalized, face-to-face

interaction that humans prefer in their decision-making. Different types of interviews exist, such as screening interviews, longer second or third interviews, telephone interviews and video conferencing interviews (Crosby, 2000). The typical interview formats are the structured and the unstructured interview (McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994). These two processes are characteristically and significantly different.

### **The Structuring Process of the Interview**

The term 'structured interview' can be generally defined as "any enhancement of the interview that is intended to increase the psychometric properties by increasing standardization or otherwise assisting the interviewer in determining what questions to ask or how to evaluate responses" (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997; p. 656).

Campion, Pursell and Brown (1988) suggested different techniques for structuring the interview. Some of the steps were that (a) all questions should be based on a developed job analysis, (b) the same questions should be asked to all job applicants and that (c) each answer should have an anchored scoring scale. Furthermore, Campion et al. (1997) concluded that interviews can improve validity (job relatedness, reduced deficiency and reduced contamination) and reliability (test-retest reliability, inter-rater reliability, candidate consistency, interviewer-candidate interaction, internal consistency and inter-rater agreement) based on many components. First, basing questions on a job analysis that was prepared before the interview should enhance the quantity and the quality of the job-related information brought into the interview. This, in turn, will decrease deficiency and contamination of the information from the interview. Second, asking the same questions and in the same order to all job applicants, will increase both inter-rater and test-retest reliability, improve validity and consistency and will reduce

contamination of the job information. Third, the four best types of questions are situational (hypothetical), background (work experience or education), past behavior and job knowledge questions. Fourth, it will increase test-retest and inter-rater reliability to have ratings for each response. Finally, the last component of structure is training the interviewers. This will improve the interview outcome. Training the interviewers involves describing the purpose of the interview, how to use the questions and how to follow the given handout. This should improve test-retest and inter-rater reliability and agreement and should also decrease deficiency and contamination of information (Campion et al., 1997).

Furthermore, Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) proposed standardizing interview questions with four different levels of structure.

Four levels of structure for the interview questions exist (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). The first level has the lowest level of standardization; that is, there are absolutely no restrictions on the interviewer. There are no questions or topics to choose from. The interviewer is free to choose whatever questions or topics he or she finds appropriate. The second level has some formal structure. These types of interviews don't have written questions but outlines of topics that should be covered. The third level represents a high level of structure but does allow the interviewer some flexibility. For example, if the interviewee discussed an interesting issue, the interviewer is allowed to pursue this line of discussion. These interviews might consist of initial questions or patterns of questions to pick from; also the interviewer does not have to choose the same questions during each interview. Finally, the fourth level represents the highest level of structure. The interviewer is supposed to ask all the job candidates the exact same questions and in the

exact same order without adding any extra information that is not in the predetermined interview.

Moreover, three levels of structure for scoring the answers exist (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). Level 1 scoring is a global assessment of the interview, it is a single overall evaluation based on the totality of the information gathered during the interview. Level 2 scoring is assessed based on established criteria, for example, what candidate traits are important for a certain job or what different job dimensions are required to effectively perform a task. Finally, Level 3 response scoring consists of evaluating each answer based on pre-established answers, without any divergences and scoring each candidate based on the predetermined benchmark answers for each individual question.

Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) then decided to merge the structure available for the questions and for the answers into four combination of interview structure. First, *structure 1* which is the combination of level 1 questioning with level 1 scoring consisted of absolutely no constraints for the interviewer on the questions. He or she will ask about whatever topic they see appropriate and only one overall evaluation will be done for the interview as whole. Second, *structure 2* is a combination of level 1 or level 2 or level 3 questioning with level 1 or level 2 or level 3 scoring, where the total of both the level of questioning and the level of scoring would be either 3 or 4. So in the case of structure 2, some minimal form of structure is present. Third, *structure 3* requires a high level of structure but not the highest, where some degree of variability might be present. Structure 3 is a combination of level 3 or level 4 questioning with level 2 or level 3 scoring, where the total of both level of questioning and level of scoring would be either 5 or 6. Fourth and finally, *structure 4* has the highest level of standardization for both the questions and

the scoring of answers. All interviewers are supposed to ask the exact same questions in the same order to all job candidates and rate each response based on the predetermined available benchmark answers. The Structure 4 is a combination of level 4 questioning with level 3 scoring. The results of Huffcutt and Arthur's (1994) tests demonstrated that the structure of the interview is a major moderator of interview validity, and that the validity of the interview will increase as structure increases.

***Validity and reliability.*** In the unstructured interview, the gathering of information about the candidates is unsystematic and unstandardized. This lack of standardization makes the unstructured interview less reliable, less consistent and harder for the interviewer to obtain a wide range of job related information about the candidate.

There is a general agreement in research that structured interviews have greater validity and reliability than unstructured interviews in the employment selection process (McDaniel et al., 1994). Structured interviews were found to be a significantly better predictor of job performance and future job success, yielding higher validities (Schmidt & Zimmerman, 2004; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). Highly structured interviews contribute substantially to the prediction of a candidate's cognitive ability and conscientiousness which, in turn, contribute to the prediction of candidate job performance (Cortina, Goldstein, Payne, Davison, & Gilliland, 2000). Interview scores contribute to the prediction of job performance proportionally to the degree that they are structured (Cortina et al., 2000). Furthermore, mean validity increased with increased levels of interview structure (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994).

Consequently, performing a highly structured interview should improve validity, reliability and consistency of the job-related information. Furthermore, it should decrease

contaminated, deficient and unrelated information that is not related to the prediction of future job performance of the applicant but that might negatively affect the evaluator.

*Discrimination and fairness.* Research has also shown that structured interviews are generally fairer and less discriminatory across a variety of demographics (Bragger, Bragger, & Kutcher, 2006). A survey of human resources professionals shows that there was a tendency for structured interviews to be ranked highly for fairness as a pre-employment selection technique for applicants with disabilities (Hayes et al., 1993). A leniency bias, which is as damaging as a discrimination bias, was found towards individuals with physical disabilities when using an unstructured interview model. The physically disabled job applicants were better evaluated and more likely to get hired than the equally qualified non-disabled job applicants. In another example, the scores attributed to pregnant women were lower than the scores attributed to non-pregnant women when the unstructured interview was used; pregnant job applicants had a significantly lower chance of being recommended for hiring. However when the structured condition was used, there was no significant difference between the pregnant and non-pregnant women's scores and hiring recommendations (Bragger, Kutcher, Morgan, & Firth, 2002). Furthermore, using a structured interview format did in fact decrease the bias against overweight applicants. Unlike in the unstructured interview, in the structured condition, both the average weight and overweight applicants received the same scores (Kutcher & Bragger, 1993).

Additionally, legally speaking, the unstructured interview was the selection device (personality tests, work samples, assessment centers, etc.) with the highest negative legal consequences (i.e. discrimination legal litigation against the firm). The

unstructured interview has survived legal challenges only 59% of the time; the structured interview, on the other hand, survived legal challenges 100% of the time (Terpstra, Mohamed, & Kethley, 1999).

Thus, research has shown that using a structured interview brings a lot of benefits to the selection process, since it is a better predictor of candidate predictive job success, and it is better at forming consistent evaluations of candidates, while also reducing discrimination and increasing fairness of the selection process.

### **The Interview Structure in the Current Study**

In the present study, and for the structured interviews, the questions and appropriate answers were specified in advance and the answers were rated for suitability of content. Also, structured interviews may be increasing the chances of obtaining a wider range of applicant information that is job-related and job relevant. Hence, for the structured interviews, this researcher used Huffcutt and Arthur's (1994) Structure 4 with level 4 questioning and level 3 scoring. The interviewers had eight questions to ask the candidates and a benchmark for responses to be able to rate applicants' answers. In unstructured interviews, Huffcutt and Arthur's (1994) Structure 2 with level 2 questioning and level 2 scoring was implemented. Interviewers collected applicants' information in a less methodical way, not asking all applicants the same questions, and without having a formal scoring guide. The interviewers had a list of six topics to discuss with the interviewees and a job description to be knowledgeable about the requirements for the job position and be able to judge and evaluate the interviewees properly. It was assumed that the interview evaluation will be affected by the interview structure. Because of the lack of standardization, the unstructured interviews might be less reliable.

## **Hypothesis Generation**

In the following section, the major research hypothesis is proposed. The hypothesis proposes a moderating effect of the interview structure on the physical attractiveness bias. It is believed that the relation between the physical attractiveness of the candidate and the suitability ratings and hiring recommendation will be weaker in a structured interview condition.

*Moderating effect of the interview structure on (a) candidate suitability ratings and (b) hiring recommendation.* As previously mentioned, a number of studies have investigated the effect of the physical attractiveness of candidates during the interview process and how physically attractive candidates tend to receive better ratings on different personal and professional characteristics like social skills, likeability, job suitability, intellectual competence, etc. (Cash & Kilcullen, 1985; Cash & Trimer, 1984; Dion et al., 1972; Eagly et al., 1991; Feingold, 1992; Gilmore et al., 1982; Heilman & Stopeck, 1985; Jackson et al., 1995; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988; Riggio & Woll, 1984). Furthermore, it was found that physically attractive candidates always had a better chance of being recommended for hiring as compared to their equally qualified but unattractive peers (Dipboye et al., 1977; Hosada et al., 2003; Jawahar & Mattson, 2005). In conclusion, it seems that physically attractive job applicants will receive higher suitability ratings and a better hiring recommendation, than their equally qualified physically unattractive peers.

Furthermore, studies have found that using a structured interview in the selection process as opposed to an unstructured interview will increase validity, reliability and predictive quality of the selection process (Buckley et al., 2000; Campion et al., 1997;

Cortina et al., 2000; Hayes et al., 1990; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; McDaniel et al., 1994; Schmidt & Zimmerman, 2004), will increase fairness and minimize or eliminate different stereotypes interviewers might possess (Bragger et al., 2002; Brecher et al., 2006; Hayes et al., 1993; Kutcher & Bragger, 1993). The major interviewer stereotype in this study is the physical attractiveness bias that evaluators might possess. Therefore it is believed that when using a structured interview, the suitability rating and the hiring recommendation should be the same for both the equally qualified physically attractive and physically unattractive candidates. Hence, the overall purpose of the present research will be to examine whether or not the effect of the physical attractiveness of candidates on the interview outcomes could be moderated by the interview structure, whereby adding structure to the interview would weaken the beauty stereotype.

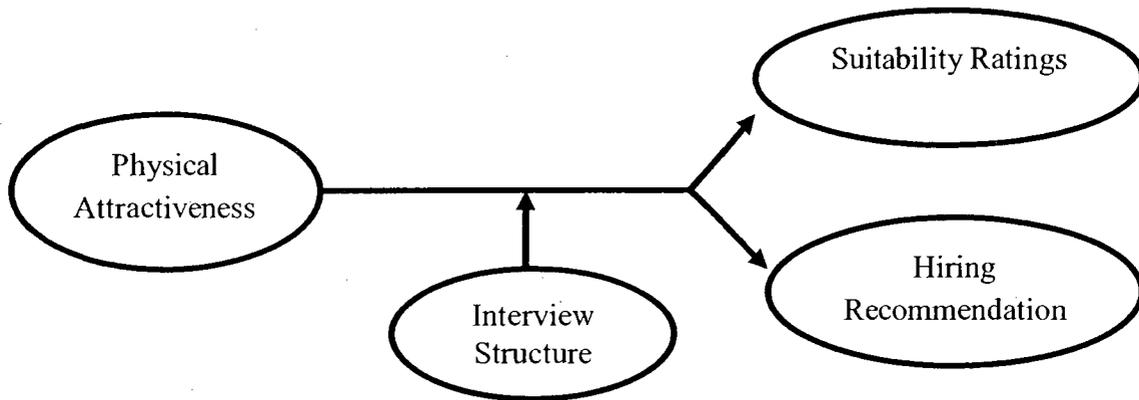
The study examines the moderating effect of structuring the interview the following hypothesis will be tested:

H1: The interview structure will moderate the relation between the candidate's physical attractiveness and (a) suitability rating and (b) hiring recommendation; whereby the relation will be weaker in a structured interview condition.

A Diagram of the research study is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1

*Diagram of the Proposed Hypothesis*



## METHOD

### Sample

The sample was constituted of 32 participants (interviewers;  $N=32$ ). To recruit these participants, the researcher placed posters in the downtown campus of Concordia University. The poster stated that Concordia University students were being sought to participate in a study about interviewing and recruitment that would take about two hours. Finally the poster noted a \$30 compensation for participating in the experiment (please refer to Appendix T). Also, one participant was recruited from the subject pool at the John Molson School of Business. The participant's involvement in the experiment was voluntary, but counted as an extra 1.5 percent credit in an organizational behavior introductory course.

The sample of 32 "Interviewers" was almost equally divided by gender, with 17 female (53.12%) and 15 male (46.88%) participants. The sample of interviewers was formed of both undergraduate (65.62%) and graduate (34.37%) students at Concordia

University. The average age of participants was 24.19 years ( $SD = 3.51$ ). They reported their native language to be English (18.75%), Mandarin (18.75%), French (15.62%), Arabic (15.62%), Spanish (9.37%) or other (21.87%). More than half the participants (56.25%) had Canadian citizenship. The sample included interviewers from different nationalities and ethnicities; participants reported Canada (21.87%), the Middle East (25%), Asia (25%), Europe (12.5%), and others (15.63%) as birth countries. The majority of participants (81.25%) had never performed an interview before and 37.5% of the participants were currently employed. The physical attractiveness of the rater was not taken into consideration because the Dipboye et al. (1977) study found no effect between the raters' physical attractiveness and their evaluation and selection of job candidates. Each participant was randomly assigned to either the structured or the unstructured condition.

### **Experimental Design**

*Confederates.* To identify candidates to be interviewed, the researcher contacted the drama department at Concordia University. The researcher was looking to recruit 2 candidates from a pool of actresses with somewhat similar backgrounds who might be interested in participating in an experiment. Two candidates with similar characteristics and backgrounds were chosen. A big difference in their attractiveness was avoided, because it would have been unethical to tell someone that they were selected to be in this study because they were physically unattractive. These 2 candidates served as job applicants in the study, playing the role of the interviewees; they were unaware of the study's hypothesis but were given a sense of what the study was about in general terms (i.e. different interviewee characteristics and their effect on different interview

structures). They each received two hours of training on how to act and behave during the interview process before actually performing the task of being an interviewee.

Because factors like clothing (Bardack & McAndrew, 1985; Forsythe, 1990; Forsythe et al., 1985; Gifford et al., 1985; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988), cosmetics (Cox & Glick, 1986) and scent (Baron, 1993) were found to influence the evaluator's decision making process, both candidates were asked to wear a black or grey suit with a white shirt, not to wear makeup and not to wear any perfume. Furthermore, since the nonverbal behaviors of job applicants were found to influence rater's evaluation process (Anderson, 1991; Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Burnett & Motowildo, 1998; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999; Forbes & Jackson, 1980; Forgas, 1988; Howard & Ferris, 1996; McGovern & Tinsley, 1978; Parsons & Liden, 1984; Riggio & Woll, 1984), both candidates were asked to make frequent eye contact, nod their heads frequently and smile often. Essentially, both candidates were trained on how to act, how to present themselves, how to answer each of the questions, what tone to use, where to pause, how to look, how to sit, what to wear, not to wear etc... Basically they were actresses and they had to learn a script and re-enact it several times in front of all the participants (interviewers).

The interviewees were given the answers to the structured interview questions and potential answers to unstructured interview topics in order for them to be able to respond in a similar way and therefore be perceived as having the same qualifications for the position. Both candidate A (please refer to Appendix C) and candidate B (please refer to Appendix D) received different scripts for the structured interview. For the unstructured interview, candidate A and B received scripts that touched all six topics that interviewers were instructed to discuss (please refer to Appendices E and F respectively). Both

candidates' scripts for the structured and unstructured interview were similar in quality but different in content. Obviously both candidates could not say exactly the same script; this would have made the participants doubt the study and its purpose and would have made the whole process unrealistic.

The responses were not identical for both job applicants but had the same value, meaning that even though the responses were not exactly the same; the interviewees should have been considered equally qualified and should have received the same assessments. Therefore, all else equal, both applicants should have received the same overall evaluation and hiring recommendation. Candidate A and candidate B were also provided with curriculum vitas (please refer respectively to Appendices G and H). The curriculum vitas of both candidates were given to each interviewer in the study.

The position of a social science research assistant was selected for this study. This position is viewed as a gender-free position and as a low contact with the public position. Hence the candidate, physically attractive or not, should be able to complete all the essential functions of this particular job. It was essential for the position to be non-gender-typed since Cash, Gillen, and Burns (1977) found that the type of job position does influence rater perception, evaluation and fit of the candidate being rated. For example, for masculine jobs (automobile salesperson and wholesale hardware shipping and receiving clerk), males were perceived as more favorable and qualified for the position; for feminine jobs (telephone operator and office receptionist), females elicited more favorable evaluative decisions; and for neutral jobs (motel desk clerk and photographic darkroom assistant), both males and females applicants received equal

evaluations (Cash et al., 1977). Hence in order for sex role stereotyping not to influence the evaluator's ratings, a non gender typed position was selected.

***Interview conditions.*** The first interview condition was the unstructured interview. The unstructured interview was composed of 6 topics/issues to be discussed or covered by the interviewer. The participants were asked to discuss the exact same thing (cover the same topics) with both candidates in order to give the job applicants an equal chance of responding and giving the same quality reply.

The second interview condition was the structured interview. Interviewers were supposed to ask eight predetermined questions in the structured interview that were based on the key aspects a social science research assistant needs to succeed. The eight questions forming the structured interview were mainly based on past behavior and experiences.

## **Procedure**

***Research sessions.*** The two interviews were filmed on a DVD camcorder for coding purposes. Overall, 64 interviews were filmed with 32 participants interviewing the 2 candidates for about 10 minutes each. 16 of the participants performed two structured interviews and 16 performed two unstructured interviews. The same two actresses appeared in front of the participants for both conditions.

Each research session started with the participants being greeted by the researcher and seated in a classroom. The experimenter explained that they were part of a study and would have to assume the role of an interviewer and perform 2 interviews of about ten minutes each. Each participant was randomly assigned to either the structured or the unstructured condition. The participants in the structured interview (please refer to

Appendix I) were given a different introduction than the ones in the unstructured interview (please refer to Appendix J). They were first given the consent sheet to read and sign (please refer to Appendix A). The participant recruited from the subject pool at the John Molson School of Business had a different consent sheet to read and sign (please refer to Appendix B). They were then given the Handout Package and given five minutes to look over it with the researcher, then ten minutes to re-read it and ask questions. Next the first interviewee would come in and introduce herself and the interview process would take about ten minutes. The camcorder only focused on the interviewee and not the interviewer. Afterwards the participants would have eight minutes to fill out the 'Candidate Rating Scale' (please refer to Appendix K). Then the second interviewee would come in and introduce herself and the interview process would start. Then the participants would have thirteen minutes to fill out the second 'Candidate Rating Scale'; pick their favorite candidate (please refer to Appendix L) and fill out the demographic questionnaire (please refer to Appendix M). Finally the participants were given the \$30 for participation in the experiment and had to sign the 'receipt form' sheet (please refer to Appendix N).

To control for additional stimulus variables, the overall environment (setting) was very similar during all interviews. A similar room setting was used, with the same class, desk, and chair position and color pattern. The order of "presentation" of the different interviewees was varied, meaning that, during both structured and unstructured interviews, sometimes candidate A was the first interviewee to be interviewed and sometimes candidate B was the first interviewee to be interviewed.

When all the participants (interviewers) were done with performing their interviews, the experimenter debriefed everyone by email including the two candidates that were playing the role of job applicants. The experimenter explained that they were part of a study looking into the different physical characteristics that affect interviewers while performing structured and unstructured interviews (please refer to Appendix O).

Table 1 represents a Step-by-step procedure for each research session.

Table 1

*Agenda for Research Sessions*

Part of the session	Details
Introduction (15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participant comes into the reserved classroom</li> <li>- Researcher introduces himself</li> <li>- Hands out the Informed Consent sheet to be signed</li> <li>- Hands out the Interview Handout Package</li> <li>- Researcher reviews the handout with the participant describing briefly each step</li> <li>- Researcher gives the participant ten minutes to go over the interview handout</li> <li>- Researcher re-explains the process briefly and answers questions</li> <li>- Researcher leaves the room</li> </ul>
Interview Part 1 (18 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researcher turns on the camcorder</li> <li>- The first Candidate/Interviewee enters</li> <li>- The interview process starts</li> <li>- The interview process ends</li> <li>- The interviewee leaves the room</li> <li>- Researcher turns off the camcorder</li> <li>- The participant is given 8 minutes to rate the first candidate on the rating scale</li> </ul>
Interview Part 2 (23 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researcher turns on the camcorder</li> <li>- The second Candidate/Interviewee enters</li> <li>- The second interview process starts</li> <li>- The second interview process ends</li> </ul>

Part of the session	Details
Conclusion (5minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Researcher turns off the camcorder</li> <li>- The interviewer has 8 minutes to rate the second candidate on the rating scale</li> <li>- The interviewer is given 5 minutes to fill the comparison scale and the demographic questionnaire</li> <li>- The researcher checks if all scales and the demographic questionnaires were filled properly</li> <li>- The participant fills the \$30 receipt sheet and receives their compensation</li> </ul>

## Measures

*Physical attractiveness.* The independent variable was ‘physical attractiveness’ that was evaluated based on the participants’ ratings of the candidates. The physical attractiveness scale was taken from Dipboye et al., (1977). The following six items tested physical attractiveness in the ‘Candidate Rating Scale’; (a) Had positive facial features, (b) Had positive body proportions, (c) Had a positive general appearance, (d) Had a standard weight, (e) Had a good posture during the interview, (f) Was physically attractive overall/Had a pleasant appearance. Participants had to rate candidates using a 5-point scale. The responses were: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Not Sure, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was reliable for candidate A (.71) and acceptable for candidate B (.69).

*Nonverbal behavior.* Previous literature showed that nonverbal behavior of the candidate being evaluated in a job interview context did in fact affect the evaluator’s general ratings (Anderson, 1991; Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Burnett & Motowildo, 1998; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999; Forbes & Jackson, 1980; Forgas, 1988; Howard &

Ferris, 1996; McGovern & Tinsley, 1978) and their hiring recommendations (Parsons & Liden, 1984). Since nonverbal behavior affects evaluators' decisions, both candidates should be rated equally on nonverbal behavior. Hence the nonverbal behavior variable was added to ensure that both candidates were rated equally on nonverbal behavior before rating them on suitability and hiring recommendation. The 'nonverbal behavior' variable was taken from Harris and Ferris (1996). The three statements that were used to measure this variable were (a) Made direct eye contact with the interviewer often, (b) Nodded her head on average every two minutes and (c) Smiled enough during the interview process. Participants had to rate candidates using a 5-point scale. The responses were: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Not Sure, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. Cronbach's alpha for this scale were not reliable for both candidate A (.53) and candidate B (.42); thus, each item was examined separately.

***Candidate suitability.*** The first dependent variable was 'candidate suitability' that was based on the four-item scale from Stevens and Kristof (1995, p.592). The candidate suitability scale included: (a) Is highly qualified for the job, (b) Is highly attractive as a potential future employee, (c) Is highly regarded for the position and (d) Did very well in this interview. Participants had to rate candidates using a 5-point scale. The responses were: (1) Very Inaccurate, (2) Moderately Inaccurate, (3) Not Sure, (4) Moderately Accurate, (5) Very Accurate. Cronbach's alphas for this scale were reliable for both candidate A (.82) and for candidate B (.79).

***Hiring recommendation.*** The second dependent variable was the candidate 'hiring recommendation'. At the end of the 'Candidate Scoring Sheet', participants were asked to choose, on a 1 item scale, a hiring recommendation for each candidate. The scale

ranged from 5 (Strongly Recommend to Hire), 4 (Recommend to Hire), 3 (Indifferent about Recommendation), 2 (Recommend to Reject) to 1 (Strongly Recommend to Reject).

**Candidate pick.** The participants were also asked to choose one of the two candidates with the question, “If you had to pick only one candidate, which candidate would it be?” The responses were either the (1) First candidate or the (2) Second candidate (please refer to Appendix L).

**Filler questions.** The twenty filler questions in the ‘candidate qualification’ section were provided from the IPIP website (<http://ipip.ori.org/newIndexofScaleLabels.htm>) and were related to achievement-striving, initiative, resourcefulness and integrity, honesty and authenticity. Examples of the twenty filler questions about the candidate were (a) Replied to answers quickly, (b) Will stay true to her own values, and (c) Will be able to handle complex problems. The different filler questions were scored using a 5-point scale. The responses could vary between 1 and 5 with (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Not Sure, (4) Agree, and (5) Strongly Agree. These filler questions were unrelated to the study but included in the questionnaire to obscure the participants from the true purpose of the study.

## **Materials**

**Job description.** The study focused on the hiring of a social science research assistant. The Occupational Information Network website (O\*Net) was used as a basis to write the job description. This included the main duties and responsibilities that a social science research assistant usually performs, the skills, qualifications and personal characteristics they should possess, the requisite level of education and experience the

research assistant needs to effectively and efficiently perform the job and the usual working conditions and hourly wages (please refer to Appendix P). The job description was given to the interviewers in order for them to be knowledgeable about the job position for which they were interviewing and the characteristics to look for in a candidate.

***Structured interview.*** In the structured interview condition, the interview handout included a general introduction to the experiment (please refer to Appendix I), the employment interview which included the eight questions to be asked (please refer to Appendix Q), a job description (please refer to Appendix P), the two candidates' CVs (which were matched for equivalence of abilities and qualifications; please refer to Appendices G and H), 2 blank pages for general note taking, the scoring criteria (including the interview questions, the possible answers, how to benchmark responses and the individual question ratings; please refer to Appendix S), the candidate rating scale (including 'candidate qualification' questions and 'candidate suitability' questions, the overall evaluation over 31 and the hiring recommendation; please refer to Appendix K), the 'Choice of Candidate' question (please refer to Appendix L) and the demographic information (please refer to Appendix M). The eight questions in the structured interview were based on the key aspects a social science research assistant need to succeed. Based on the job analysis performed on the Occupational Information Network website (O\*Net), a 'possible answers' scale was designed for the interviewers to be able to judge the potential of each candidate that was being interviewed. Then two 'benchmark responses' scales were created for interviewers to rate the candidates on a scale from 1 to 5 with the following rating labels: 1-2 (Poor), 4-3 (Average), 5 (Excellent); or on a scale

from 0.5 to 2 with the following rating labels: 0.5 (Limited), 1 (Average), 2 (Above Average). Questions 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 were rated on 5 point scales; and questions 3, 4 and 5 were rated on 2 point scales. The eight questions forming the structured interview were mainly based on past behavior and experiences (e.g.: (a) 'Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it' or (b) 'What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS').

***Unstructured interview.*** In the unstructured interview condition, the handout included a general introduction about the experiment (please refer to Appendix J), the six topics that should be covered during the interview (please refer to Appendix R), a job description, the two candidates' CVs, 2 blank pages for general note taking, the candidate rating scale which included the 'candidate qualification' questions and the 'candidate suitability' questions, the 'choice of candidate pick' question and the demographic information. The unstructured interview was composed of 6 topics/issues to be discussed by the interviewer. These six topics were (A) Interest in research assistant position, (B) Education and Experience, (C) Knowledge about research assistant position and different asks required, (D) Prior research experience, (E) Software usually used and (F) Strengths and Weaknesses. The information provided by the interviewees in this condition should therefore almost be the same as for the structured condition since the 6 topics were based on the 8 questions of the structured interview. The participants were asked to discuss the exact same thing (cover the same topics) with both candidates, in order to give the job applicants an equal chance of responding and giving the same quality reply. Please refer to Appendices C and D respectively for the script for candidate A and the Script for

candidate B for the structured interview and Appendices E and F for the unstructured interview.

Every question in the structured interview had an equivalent topic in the unstructured interview, except for question 6 (“Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe this situation and how you handled it.”).

Table 2 represents each question in the structured interview, and its equivalent topic in the unstructured interview.

Table 2

*Equivalent of the Different Questions with the Different Topics*

Structured Interview Questions	Unstructured Interview Topics
(1) Why are you interested in this position?	(A) Interest in RA position
(2) Can you tell me about your education and experience? How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?	(B) Education and Experience (D) Prior research experience
(3) How would you assess yourself as a Literature reviewer?	(C) Knowledge about RA position (Different tasks required)
(4) How would you assess yourself as a Data collector?	
(5) How would you assess yourself as a Data analyst?	
(6) Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it.	

Structured Interview Questions	Unstructured Interview Topics
(7) What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.	→(E) Software usually used
(8) What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?	→(F) Strengths and Weaknesses

**Coding information quality.** During the interview process, each candidate was provided with a script on how to reply to the interviewer for each question in the structured interview (please refer to Appendix C and D) and for each topic in the unstructured interview (please refer to Appendix E and F). If both candidates followed perfectly their script and replied the way they should have, they both should have been considered equally qualified by the evaluators. Hence to test if the information provided to the interviewer by each candidate was equal in content and quality, two individual coders separately viewed the recordings of the interviews and rated the quality of the answers on a pre-determined coding scheme. Please see Appendix U for the coding scheme of candidate A and Appendix V for the coding scheme of candidate B. Basically if the candidates said everything they were supposed to in the interviews and if they followed the script perfectly, both candidate A and candidate B should have been considered equally qualified by their evaluators.

After both individual coders reviewed and rated the 64 interviews on tape based on the pre-determined coding schemes, they compared their results. The point was for both candidates to have given equally qualified answers to the participants and hence, all biases aside, being viewed and rated equally. A correlation analysis was conducted

between the results of both coders. The results showed a correlation of .97 ( $p = .00$ , 2-tailed). Thus, the results indicate that both raters agreed in their ratings of the candidates.

## RESULTS

### Checking Model Assumptions

*Assumption of normality.* In an effort to determine whether the various variables followed a normal distribution, the skewness of each was examined. Skewness was calculated by dividing each skewness statistic by its standard error (to derive the z-score). A variable is normally distributed if this z-score has an absolute value of less than 1.96. Two variables, physical attractiveness of candidate A and suitability of candidate A were found to have high levels of skewness.

The Kurtosis of each variable was also examined. Kurtosis was calculated by dividing the kurtosis statistic by its standard error in order to calculate a z-score. Similar to skewness, a variable is normal (not kurtotic) if this z-score has an absolute value of less than 1.96. Two variables, physical attractiveness of candidate A and suitability of candidate A were found to have high levels of kurtosis. However, this was not considered a significant problem since the candidates were not supposed to be rated as average; their qualifications were way above average standards.

*Physical Attractiveness.* For physical attractiveness, candidate B was rated higher on physical attractiveness (overall mean = 4.14,  $SD = .42$ ) than candidate A (overall mean = 3.89,  $SD = .45$ ) by participants. A t-test was conducted to test whether the mean difference between candidate A and candidate B for the physical attractiveness variable was significant. The t-test results indicated that the difference between the overall means

was marginally significant ( $t(31) = -2.04, p < .10, 2\text{-tailed}$ ). A summary of the means and standard deviations for candidates A and B are presented in Table 3. Furthermore, the results of the t-test are presented in Table 4.

Table 3

*Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations*

<b>Candidate A</b>										
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Eye Contact	Head Nodding	Smiling	Suitability	Hiring Recommendation	Job Relevant Information		
Eye Contact	4.34	.86	1.0	.17	.61**	.26	.05			
Head Nodding	3.31	.99	-	1.0	.10	.07	.17			.01
Smiling	4.03	.82	-	-	1.0	.60**	.23			-.10
Suitability	4.14	.54	-	-	-	1.0	.53**			.05
Hiring Recommendation	4.38	.60	-	-	-	-	1.0			.19
Recommendation										
Coding	24.20	4.82	-	-	-	-	-			1.0
<b>Candidate B</b>										
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Eye Contact	Head Nodding	Smiling	Suitability	Hiring Recommendation	Job Relevant Information		
Eye Contact	4.81	.47	1.0	.36*	.11	.22	.12			-.29
Head Nodding	3.03	.96	-	1.0	.23	.53**	.62**			-.26
Smiling	3.34	1.20	-	-	1.0	.10	.24			-.12
Suitability	4.18	.57	-	-	-	1.0	.72**			-.23
Hiring Recommendation	4.09	.85	-	-	-	-	1.0			-.25
Recommendation										
Coding	24.51	4.97	-	-	-	-	-			1.0

*Note.*  $N=32$ . \*\* $p < .01$ , \* $p < .05$ .

Table 4

*T-test Results for the Nonverbal Behavior, Physical Attractiveness, Suitability and Hiring Recommendation*

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2 – tailed)
Eye Contact	-2.61	31	.01
Head Nodding	1.12	31	.27
Smiling	2.37	31	.02
Physical Attractiveness	-2.04	31	.05
Candidate Suitability	-.31	31	.75
Hiring Recommendation	1.29	31	.20

*Note.*  $N = 32$

**Nonverbal Behavior.** Previous literature showed that nonverbal behaviors influenced the overall impression and qualification assessment of job candidates (Anderson, 1991; Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Burnett & Motowildo, 1998; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999; Forbes and Jackson, 1980; Forgas, 1988; Howard & Ferris, 1996; McGovern & Tinsley, 1978; Riggio & Woll, 1984) and the hiring recommendations (Parsons & Liden, 1984) made by evaluators. Hence, since the nonverbal behavior of candidates could influence the raters' opinions, this variable needed to be controlled.

For the first nonverbal behavior item of head nodding, no significant difference was found between candidates A and B ( $t(31) = 1.12, p > .05$ , 2-tailed). For the second nonverbal behavior item of smiling, a significant difference was found ( $t(31) = 2.37, p <$

.05, 2-tailed). Candidate A received a higher mean (overall mean = 4.03,  $SD = .82$ ) than candidate B (overall mean = 3.34,  $SD = 1.20$ ) on smiling. Finally, for the third nonverbal behavior item of direct eye contact, a significant difference was found between candidate A and candidate B ( $t(31) = -2.61, p < .05$ , 2-tailed). Candidate B received a higher mean (overall mean = 4.81,  $SD = .47$ ) than candidate A (overall mean = 4.34,  $SD = .86$ ) on frequency of eye contact.

### **Test of the Hypothesis**

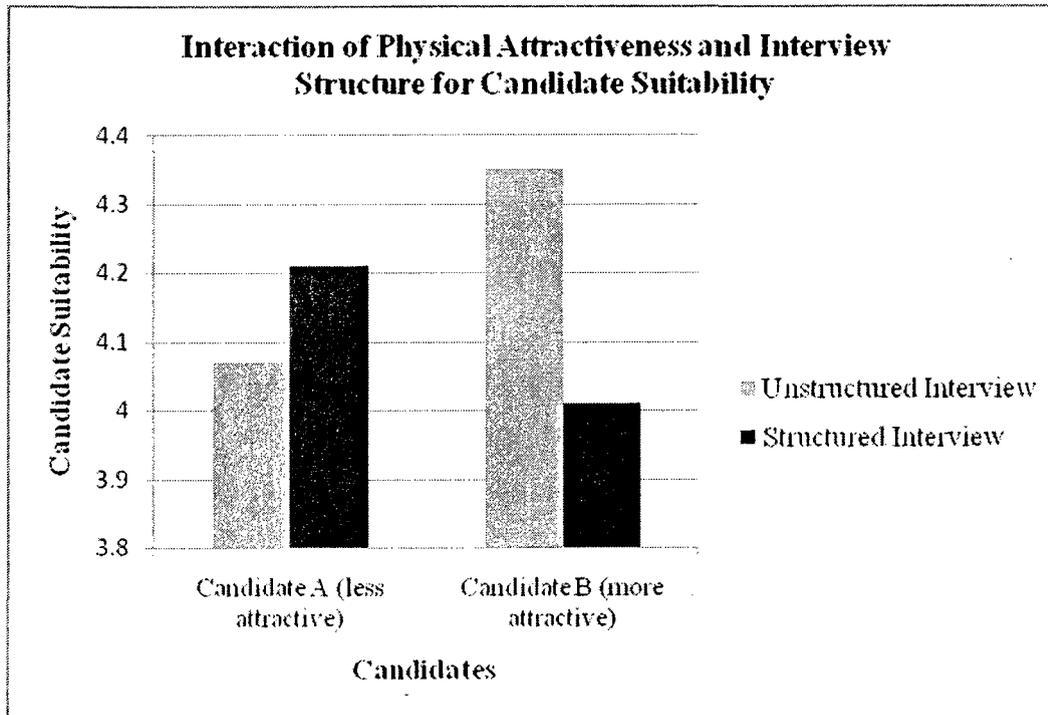
The hypothesis stated that the interview structure will moderate the relation between the candidate's physical attractiveness and (a) the suitability ratings and (b) the hiring recommendations. It is believed that the relation will be weaker when a structured interview, as opposed to an unstructured interview, is used.

As previously mentioned, based on the t-test, candidate B was rated as marginally more physically attractive than candidate A ( $t(31) = -2.04, p < .10$ , 2-tailed).

A MANOVA was conducted to test for combined effects of attractiveness and structure on the dependent variables; Wilk's Lambda was examined to determine if effects were significant (see Table 5). Looking at the main effect of the physical attractiveness of candidates; the results indicated that there was no main effect of physical attractiveness of candidates on their suitability ratings ( $F(1, 30) = .11, p > .05$ ). However when the interaction of condition (structure/unstructured) and the physical attractiveness of candidates was examined, a significant interaction effect was found on the candidate suitability variable ( $F(1, 30) = 4.28, p < .05$ ). Figure 2 presents a graph for the interaction of candidate physical attractiveness and interview structure for candidate suitability.

Figure 2

*Interaction of Physical Attractiveness and Interview Structure for Candidate Suitability*



Candidate A, who was considered less physically attractive by participants, received equal suitability ratings when the structured interview (overall mean = 4.21) was used and when the unstructured interview (overall mean = 4.07) was used. The independent samples t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the overall means in the two structure conditions for candidate A ( $t(30) = -.72, p > .05$ , 2-tailed). However, candidate B, who was considered more physically attractive by participants, received marginally higher suitability ratings when the unstructured interview (overall mean = 4.35), rather than the structured interview (overall mean = 4.01), was used. The independent samples t-test indicated that the difference between the

overall means of the two interview conditions for candidate B was marginally significant ( $t(30) = 1.73, p < .10$ , 2-tailed). This leniency in suitability ratings in the unstructured interview for the physically attractive candidate is not present for the unattractive candidate. This marginally significant difference between ratings for the physically attractive candidate in the structured versus the unstructured interview is consistent with the hypothesis which states that beautiful individuals get higher suitability ratings in unstructured interviews and furthermore, that the physical attractiveness bias is more likely to occur in the unstructured interview format.

For the second dependent variable of hiring recommendation, there was no main effect of physical attractiveness ( $F(1, 30) = 1.77, p > .05$ ). Moreover, when the interaction of condition (structure/unstructured) and the physical attractiveness of candidates was examined, no significant interaction effect was found on the hiring recommendation variable ( $F(1, 30) = 2.65, p > .05$ ). The findings did not provide support for the Hypothesis 1b.

Table 5

*Wilks' Lambda Statistic*

Effect	Wilks' Lambda	F	df	Sig.
Suitability	.996	.11	1	.74
Suitability * Structure	.875	4.28	1	.04
Hiring Recommendation	.944	1.77	1	.19
Hiring Recommendation * Structure	.919	2.65	1	.11

## Supplementary Analysis

In addition to the tests of the hypothesis, two supplementary analyses were conducted. The first supplementary analysis concerned rater's favorite candidate choice. A crosstabs analysis was performed to find if one of the candidates was favored over the other by the raters. No difference was found between candidate A and candidate B. Neither candidate was preferred over the other. In both the structured and the unstructured condition, both candidate A and candidate B had the same chance of being picked as the evaluators' favorite candidate. Table 7 presents the favorite candidate in each of the two conditions (structured and unstructured).

Table 7

*Favorite Candidate Pick for Structured and Unstructured Condition*

		If you had to pick one candidate which candidate would you choose?		
		Candidate A	Candidate B	Total
Condition	Unstructured	8	8	16
	Structured	9	7	16
Total		17	15	32

*Note.*  $N = 32$

The second supplementary analysis concerned the information provided by both candidates A and B to participants in the structured and the unstructured interviews. A t-test was performed to test if significantly more job relevant information was provided in either the structured or the unstructured condition. The t-test results indicated that the

information provided by candidates in the different structure conditions was significant ( $t(62) = -8.62, p < .05, 2\text{-tailed}$ ). It was found that more job relevant information was provided in the structured interview (overall mean = 22.75,  $SD = .65$ ) as compared to the unstructured interview (overall mean = 19.71,  $SD = 1.87$ ).

## DISCUSSION

In the following section, the results from the statistical tests, the main findings of the study and their interpretation are discussed in light of the extant literature. Then, the contributions of this study to the literature and its limitations are presented. Finally practical implications and directions for future research are highlighted.

This study investigated the moderating effect of the structure of the interview on the relationship between physical attractiveness and evaluators' suitability ratings and hiring decisions in the job selection process. The current study aimed to add to the literature on both the structure of selection interviews and on the physical attractiveness bias.

An interaction between physical attractiveness of candidates and interview structure was revealed. The less physically attractive candidate was perceived as equally suitable in both the structured and the unstructured condition. However, the more physically attractive candidate was perceived as more suitable in the unstructured interview condition. These findings are in accordance with the literature which states that physically attractive candidates will be rated better than their physically unattractive peers (Baron, 1983; Cash & Trimer, 1984; Cox & Glick, 1986; Dipboye et al., 1977; Forsythe et al., 1985; Jackson et al., 1995; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Marlowe et al.,

1996). They are also in accordance with the literature which suggests that the use of a structured interview in the selection process will decrease rater biases (Bragger et al., 2002; Brecher et al., 2006; Hayes et al., 1993; Kutcher & Bragger, 1993) which will lead to a fairer rating of job applicants. Furthermore, more job relevant information was provided by candidates to the interviewers in the structured interview condition than in the unstructured interview condition. These findings are in accordance with the literature which suggests that the use of a structured interview will increase the amount of the job related information gathered (Hayes et al., 1990).

In contrast to the results for suitability ratings, no interaction was found between interview structure and physical attractiveness of candidates on hiring recommendations. This finding is not in accordance with the literature which states that physically attractive candidates will be more likely to receive better hiring recommendations than their physically unattractive peers (Baron, 1983; Cash & Trimer, 1984; Cox & Glick, 1986; Dipboye et al., 1977; Forsythe et al., 1985; Jackson et al., 1995; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Marlowe et al., 1996). One possible explanation for these results is that the size of the sample of sixteen (N=16) for each interview condition was too small to find a significant difference between both candidates. A second possibility is that the appearance stereotype may have been weaker, because the difference in physical attractiveness of candidates was only marginally significant, and both candidates received considerably high scores on attractiveness. With a greater difference in candidate's physical attractiveness (either very physically attractive or very physically unattractive), the hiring recommendation variable might have been affected.

A post hoc analysis was conducted to compare the interviewers' choice of their favorite candidate. The results showed that in both conditions, neither candidate was preferred. For the unstructured interview condition, these results contradict the reviewed literature which states that the physically attractive candidate is always favored over the physically unattractive candidate (Dipboye et al., 1977).

Given that the nonverbal behavior of candidates has been shown to influence suitability ratings and hiring recommendations in past research (Anderson & Shackleton, 1990; Burnett & Motowildo, 1998; DeGroot & Motowildo, 1999; Forbes & Jackson, 1980; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Parsons & Liden, 1984), the three nonverbal behavior items were analyzed. For the head nodding, both candidates received similar ratings, for the smiling item, a significant difference was found and the less physically attractive candidate A was rated better. For the last item, eye contact, a significant difference was found and the more physically attractive candidate B was rated better. It is believed that the last two nonverbal behavior items balance each other out, and hence, are unlikely to explain differences in ratings of the candidates. However, if one candidate was rated significantly better on nonverbal behavior, this might have had an impact on the interpretation of the results. Since both physical attractiveness and nonverbal behavior of a candidate can influence their suitability ratings, it would have been hard to precisely confirm which of these variables affected the evaluator.

A second post hoc analysis was conducted to compare the information provided by candidates in both structured and unstructured interviews. The results showed a significant difference between the two interview structures. In the structured interview, significantly more job relevant information was provided by candidates to the

interviewers. In the unstructured interviews, less job relevant information was provided, leaving more room for irrelevant information which, in turn, might bias the evaluator. These results conform to previous research which stated that the use of structured interviews increases the amount of the job related information gathered by evaluators (Hayes et al., 1990). When more job relevant information is provided to interviewers, they should be able to make more efficient and appropriate evaluations. However, when there is more room for information that is not related to the job, evaluators may be affected by several characteristics that are not related to the actual suitability of those job applicants.

To summarize, it was found that the structure of the interview had a moderating effect on the relation between the physical attractiveness of candidates and their suitability ratings; however, it had no moderating effect on the relation between the physical attractiveness of candidates and hiring recommendations. Furthermore, in the structured interview, as compared to the unstructured interview, more job relevant information is provided by candidates to the evaluators.

### **Contributions**

This study contributes to both the physical attractiveness bias literature and the interview structure literature in many ways.

First, this study expands the literature through its novel design. Past studies on physical attractiveness stereotypes have used similar methodologies where evaluators had to rate identical resumes with different pictures (Bardack & McAndrew, 1985; Cash et al., 1977; Cash & Kilcullen, 1985; Heilman & Stopeck, 1985; Jawahar & Mattsson, 2005; Watkins & Johnston, 2000) or rate videotapes (Brecher et al., 2006; Bragger et al., 2002;

Kutcher & Bragger, 1993; Raines et al., 1990; Riggio & Woll, 1984) of physically attractive or unattractive candidates; the current study is, to this author's knowledge, the first to actually use direct, face-to-face interviews to rate candidates. Some implications come with using this new methodology for physical attractiveness research. Rating attractiveness of a candidate who is in front of the evaluator seems more relevant than rating the candidate based on a photograph or a videotape. In organizations, for the majority of job interviews, this is usually the case. The main advantage of performing a face-to-face interview is that it makes the interview and the ratings more realistic. The interviewer actually interacts in person with the job applicant. However, the strongest disadvantage is how complicated this methodology can be. One of the biggest challenges is controlling candidates' nonverbal behaviors, which should be done because the behaviors may affect evaluators' ratings of the candidates. Unfortunately, trying to explain to candidates which nonverbal behavior characteristics are crucial, what to focus on and how to act can be a real challenge. Even if candidates are specifically told how to act, it is hard to control everything they do. Furthermore, it can be a very expensive process since in most cases the participants have to be paid for their services. To sum up, making evaluations, judgments and decisions not on a hypothetical, absent applicant but rather on a real, face-to-face interaction with the job applicant present seems smarter.

Second, based on the results, a physical attractiveness bias was found in the unstructured interview. The attractive candidate was rated better in the unstructured condition as compared to the structured condition. This provides further evidence of a beauty leniency, in which beautiful people are rated better than their equally qualified but less attractive peers in an interview context. These results raise the question of why

physically attractive people are rated leniently in an unstructured interview context. In this study both the questions and the answers were highly structured in the structured interview process where no beauty leniency was found. It would be interesting to see what specifically decreased this leniency bias towards the beautiful people. Future research could test to see if structuring of questions only will keep the evaluator more focused and less biased. Furthermore future research could test if structuring the scoring of responses only could make the evaluator less affected by this physical attractiveness bias. For example, a study could be done in which the unstructured condition would be made of low levels of structure for questioning and scoring however, the structured condition would be made of high level of structuring for the questions only, but not the scoring; meaning that the interviewers would have to ask the same pre-determined questions in the same order to all candidates but only do one general evaluation.

Third, an important point in this study's methodology is that the ratings and recommendations of a same candidate with similar characteristics and qualifications were compared in both the structured and the unstructured condition to see how the level of structuring of an interview could affect a particular candidate's evaluation. This could never be done in a real world situation. By comparing ratings of the same candidate in different interview conditions the effect and consequences of using different levels of structure can be studied exclusively while everything else is being controlled. It was found that for physically attractive candidates, using an unstructured process as compared to a structured process, can help their evaluation and give them better suitability ratings. This could not have been discovered if it was different candidates for different

conditions, since other personal characteristics could have played an influential role in the evaluation.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

While the study presented interesting findings, it is not without limitations. First, the fact that the procedure relied on the ratings of students who had no recruitment or selection experience must be addressed. Some studies have found that students have little basis and experience to make such decisions and that raters' professional experience does play a role in stereotyping individuals based on their physical attractiveness (Marlowe et al., 1966); it should be noted, however, that other physical attractiveness studies have found no significant differences between students and professional raters (Bernstein, Hakel, & Harlan, 1975; Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Hosada et al., 2003). Furthermore, past research has found that during the interview decision process, ranking of candidates and suitability ratings produce similar results when made by either college students or employment interviewers (Bernstein et al., 1975; Dipboye et al., 1975). The only difference found between college students and professional interviewers was that college students tended to give slightly higher ratings than professional interviewers (Bernstein et al., 1975; Dipboye et al., 1975). Considering that the majority of the literature has not demonstrated a strong difference between students and professional raters, using college students as interviewers in the current study should not be considered a serious limitation. However, future research could attempt to use actual, real-life recruitment and selection professionals to test if the interview structure might affect the raters' physical attractiveness stereotype differently.

Second, the sample size of 16 participants for the structured condition and 16 participants for the unstructured condition is small. The moderating effect of interview structure might have been stronger if the sample had been larger. The significance of the difference in the rated attractiveness of the two candidates also might have been larger if the sample size had been bigger. With a larger difference in physical attractiveness ratings, the appearance bias and its effect on suitability ratings and hiring recommendations might have been more apparent.

Third, the fact that it was a laboratory experiment and that both the candidates and the participants were aware of this fact might have affected issues concerning the external validity of the study. The experiment attempted to represent a real life encounter between a job applicant and an interviewer in an organizational setting. However, some features of the situation might have been perceived as artificial by the participants. Hence some participants might not have taken the study seriously and, therefore, may have responded to the questionnaire with inattention.

Fourth, the candidates in the study were both white females of the same age and with similar backgrounds. This was decided in order to establish control; gender and ethnicity of both candidates were kept constant. Future research might want to examine this study's hypothesis while using male candidates instead or while using participants of other ethnicities. Would people from different ethnic backgrounds be more or less susceptible to the physical attractiveness bias? Future research should attempt to study how ethnic background affects attitudes.

Also, the position of social science research assistant was chosen for this study because it is free of gender stereotype and it does not require a lot of interaction or

contact with the public, such as a customer service position (where it is thought to be a big asset to be physically attractive). Hence, being physically attractive or not, should not be an enhancement to perform the job successfully. Future research could also investigate if the attractiveness bias is more present for different job positions, for example jobs where employees are required to have strong people skills and are frequently in contact with the public.

Additionally, we investigated the effects of the structured interview on decreasing the physical attractiveness bias in a low-level job position. Future research could explicitly manipulate the different effects of physical attractiveness for position at different levels; for example, research could examine if candidates for lower level, middle level or high level positions would be differently influenced by this physical attractiveness stereotype and which job candidates would be the most affected by this physical attractiveness bias.

Furthermore, in this study we examined three items related to nonverbal behavior. For head nodding, candidates A and B were not rated significantly differently. However, candidate A received a significantly higher rating for smiling and candidate B received a significantly higher rating for direct eye contact. Considering this, it is believed that they cancelled each other, and hence both candidates were not different on the nonverbal behavior overall. It would be interesting for future research to use a larger sample size and try to statistically control the nonverbal behavior of candidates. Also it would be interesting to examine simultaneously both the physical attractiveness of candidates and their nonverbal behaviors, and study which variable is more dominant over the other;

meaning which of nonverbal behavior or physical attractiveness of candidate will influence the rater more.

Despite the limitations discussed above, it is argued that the study's results provide support for the moderating effect of the interview structure.

### **Practical Implications**

Expanding the literature on both interview structure of and the physical attractiveness bias is essential, but the ultimate purpose of research is to ameliorate the state of practice and help organizations be more efficient. The study's results provide some practical implications for the selection process. First, organizations should consider structuring their interviews during the recruitment and selection process. Organizations should provide the interviewer with the questions, a scoring criteria sheet and a rating scale for interview answers. Past research has demonstrated that these methods for structuring interviews can add to the predictive validity of the interview process and decrease different interviewer biases (Bragger et al., 2002; Brecher et al., 2006; Buckley et al., 2000; Campion et al., 1997; Cortina et al., 2000; Hayes et al., 1990; Hayes et al., 1993; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; Kutcher & Bragger, 1993; McDaniel et al., Schmidt & Zimmerman, 2004). This study's findings paralleled the literature in the case of the unstructured interview condition where discriminatory behavior was found towards the less physically attractive candidate. The more physically attractive candidate received a marginally significantly better rating in the unstructured condition as compared to the structured condition. Hence, the results of this study support the superior validity and reliability of the structured interview format. Furthermore, in the structured condition, more job relevant information was provided to the interviewers as compared to the

unstructured condition. Moreover, with more job related information, firstly, there is less room for unrelated information that might bias the evaluator and secondly, the interviewer should be able to properly assess the candidate on a more relevant basis.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the structured interview practice might have some drawbacks. The considerable time and financial resources tied to creating the structured employment interview are issues to be considered. Also, some interviewers or interviewees might be dissatisfied with the highly structured interview process and see it as an inflexible or unfriendly method of selection (Simons, 1995). Furthermore, employers will likely reject the idea of a decrease in control and authority over the decision-making process. Managers' individual differences, like their personalities or their job tenure, might affect their resistance to the structured interview. It would be expected that the more rigid and the higher the manager's status is, the stronger his or her resistance to adhering to this new interview format will be. Moreover, it would seem logical that investing in structured interview forms is most suitable when hiring is relatively frequent, and therefore the same structured interview form could be used more than once. In conclusion, even though it would appear logical that the benefits of using a structured interview for selection purposes would compensate these barriers, it would be interesting to further investigate this issue from an interviewer's perspective.

## **CONCLUSION**

This experimental study examined the effects of the structured interview on reducing the physical attractiveness bias that evaluators might possess in the interview process. The outcomes investigated in this study were the suitability ratings, and hiring

recommendations the job candidates received. The main finding of the study was a significant moderating effect of the interview structure on the relation between the physical attractiveness of candidates and their suitability ratings. The physically attractive candidate received better ratings in the unstructured job interview as compared to the structured job interview, whereas the less physically attractive candidate received the same suitability ratings in the both job interview conditions. Furthermore, the structured interview was found to be more efficient and effective at providing interviewers with job relevant information.

It is expected of organizations to exercise fairness and justice for all in their human resources systems when selecting job applicants. The finest selection practices are the ones that decrease job-irrelevant factors, such as the appearance stereotype, and focus solely on job-related knowledge, skills and abilities. However, the unstructured interview, which is still the most widely used selection process, is clearly not the most accurate, fair and unbiased recruitment tool.

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#### Internet Sites

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<http://www.online.onetcenter.org/link/summary/19-4061.00>
- IPIP website  
(<http://ipip.ori.org/newIndexofScaleLabels.htm>)

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Informed Consent Sheet for On-campus Recruitment

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH ON EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by *Khalil Jabbour*, under the supervision of *Dr. Kathleen Boies*, in the Management Department, John Molson School of Business, Concordia University, [Contact information].

#### A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to study the employment interview.

#### B. PROCEDURES

Your participation will involve interviewing 2 candidates for the position of research assistant in the Department of Management, John Molson School of Business. You will be asked to review the job requirements, and will then be instructed on how to conduct the interview. You will then complete the 2 interviews and provide ratings on both candidates as to their suitability for the position. This will take no longer than 2 hours to complete. In exchange for your participation, you will receive \$30.

#### C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no known risks to participating in this study, nor will there be any discomfort or inconvenience aside from the time taken to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires will be kept locked in the principal researcher's office. The data will be maintained on a password protected computer and will be destroyed no later than five years after the last article is published from the research. Only the researcher listed above will have access to the data. No one in your university or elsewhere will have access to this information. In this way, confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

#### D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is:  
CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity)
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I understand that I will be filmed during the interview process.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.  
I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, [Contact information].

## **Appendix B: Informed Consent Sheet for Research Participation Pool**

### **CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH ON EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW**

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by *Khalil Jabbour*, under the supervision of *Dr. Kathleen Boies*, in the Management Department, John Molson School of Business, Concordia University, [Contact information].

#### **A. PURPOSE**

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to study the employment interview.

#### **B. PROCEDURES**

Your participation will involve interviewing 2 candidates for the position of research assistant in the Department of Management, John Molson School of Business. You will be asked to review the job requirements, and will then be instructed on how to conduct the interview. You will then complete the 2 interviews and provide ratings on both candidates as to their suitability for the position. This will take no longer than 2 hours to complete. In exchange for your participation, you will receive 1.5% that will count toward your final grade in COMM222.

#### **C. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

There are no known risks to participating in this study, nor will there be any discomfort or inconvenience aside from the time taken to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaires will be kept locked in the principal researcher's office. The data will be maintained on a password protected computer and will be destroyed no later than five years after the last article is published from the research. Only the researcher listed above will have access to the data. No one in your university or elsewhere will have access to this information. In this way, confidentiality of your responses is guaranteed.

#### **D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

- I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.
- I understand that my participation in this study is:  
CONFIDENTIAL (i.e., the researcher will know, but will not disclose my identity)
- I understand that the data from this study may be published.
- I understand that I will be filmed during the interview process.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT.  
I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, [Contact information].

## **Appendix C: Script of Answers for Candidate A (for the Structured Interview)**

### **SCRIPT FOR CANDIDATE A (STRUCTURED)**

#### **(1) Why are you interested in this position?**

- I know how effective being a research assistant is because the work that will be required of me will help me for my thesis and will also be useful on the long term since I am planning on doing more research in different fields in the future.
- As I just mentioned, when I finish my thesis I want to apply for a PhD. Of course with the experience I gain from all the research assistant work, it'll be easier for me to complete my PhD.
- Also I heard the pay is good.

#### **(2) Can you tell me about your education and experience? How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?**

- I studied at the University of Western Ontario in business management.
- I am currently finishing my masters in the psychology of language at Concordia University
- Currently working on my thesis
- I will be using the knowledge I acquired (i.e. research methods) while doing my bachelor in management and my masters to the job which will make it easier for me and will improve my job performance
- During my first year at Concordia I worked as a research assistant on a topic related to children's psychology
- Back in Ontario, I worked as a teacher's assistant for a public management's class
- All this prior experience puts me at an advantage because I am aware of the expectations and the requirements of being a research assistant. I am also used to dealing with academics and know how to interact with them, since it might be a bit different than dealing with corporate people.

#### **(3) How would you assess yourself as a literature reviewer?**

**(limited - average - above average)**

- I would assess myself as above average since I have to do (am doing) a lot of research for my thesis.

#### **(4) How would you assess yourself as a data collector?**

**(limited - average - above average)**

- I would assess myself as average because I only did some data collection for my professor back in Ontario.

#### **(5) How would you assess yourself as a data analyst?**

**(limited - average - above average)**

- I would assess myself as above average because for my statistics projects, I was the one in charge of analyzing the data that was collected and make different types of assessments.

**(6) Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe this situation and how you handled it.**

- Uncertainty is always part of a research project. Most of the ideas evolve and become clearer as the project goes on.
- While I was still in the beginning stages of my thesis, I remember having a lot of doubts on what to focus, what could be more interesting, what materials would be easier to find and understand. In my mind, my topic wasn't clear. But the more research I did and with the help of my supervisor's guidance, I was able to narrow my topic and focus on a subject that was innovative and interesting.
- Based on my experience with previous professors, when starting a project with a supervisor, the topic is usually never clear. Also the outcome of the whole project and its purpose is never obvious either.
- So basically you will never have an apparent path while doing academic research and the expectations are never going to be known and predictable at first. So in my opinion the more you research your topic (especially at first), the better and smoother the process will be.

**(7) What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.**

- I took a linear statistics class a year ago. Used SPSS for our final project.
- Also using SPSS for my thesis.
- During my linear statistics' class I was very interested in mastering the SPSS software because I knew the importance of it for my final paper and for my thesis.
- Our project for my stats class was related to examining the nature and significance of the 360 degree training process in organizations and its short versus long term dynamics on the organization and the employees' satisfaction.

**(8) What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?**

*Strengths:*

I think I would fit well with the job position you are interviewing me for because:

- First I have already worked as a research assistant and as a teacher's assistant hence I'm well experienced for this position and know the requirements. I know what type of problems might arise and I know how to solve them efficiently.
- Secondly, I am very rigorous and accurate in my work. When I work on something I work very precisely and meticulously. Usually my professors are very satisfied with my assignments, projects and papers.
- Third, since I've been doing research for years now, I became very familiar with the different databases used to find good quality academic paper. I find that ProQuest business database and PsyInfo or PsyArticles are the most accurate in my field.
- Fourth, I am by nature a very ethical person; I never cheat, always follow the rules and I always do everything according to the right principles.

*Weaknesses:*

- Saying your weaknesses is always hard because you're usually never ready to admit them. But if I must come up with at least one, concerning this job, maybe it'll be the fact that I'm working on a different topic for my thesis than the one being studied in this case. I'm not sure if you can consider that as a weakness, but it might be since research can sometimes be intense.

## Appendix D: Script of Answers for Candidate B (for the Structured Interview)

### SCRIPT FOR CANDIDATE B (STRUCTURED)

**(1) Why are you interested in this position?**

- Working as a research assistant will enable me to gain experience first as a researcher and second as a student working on my thesis.
- I really like helping people so helping out a professor and their research could be great for me.
- Very interesting to work on something that might someday be published and that people might learn or gain knowledge from.
- And since I am planning on doing a PhD after my masters, I think that working as a research assistant will make my PhD track easier and smoother.

**(2) Can you tell me about your education and experience? How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?**

- I did a bachelor in psychology at Concordia University
- Now I'm in my third year of my masters in human relations at McGill University
- I already finished all my classes and am currently working on my thesis
- Educational background can help me succeed in this position since I will be putting my research methodology and other related classes to use.
- Already worked as a research assistant with two professors during my first and second year at McGill; both of them were working on topics related to social sciences
- Prior research assistant experience gives me an advantage since I already know what to expect as a research assistant and am already used to doing a lot of research and interacting with academics to help them as efficiently as possible with their work.
- Currently working on my thesis and I am on the final stage which is basically reviewing everything before I submit it, so I can comfortably say that my schedule is very flexible and will be able to work whenever I am needed.

**(3) How would you assess yourself as a literature reviewer?**

**(limited - average - above average)**

- I would assess myself as above average since I am doing a masters degree and am working on my thesis now and already worked as a research assistant to two professors.

**(4) How would you assess yourself as a data collector?**

**(limited - average - above average)**

- I would assess myself as above average also because for both professors I had to work with, I had to go out and collect data for their research. I also collected data while working on my project for my linear statistics class.

**(5) How would you assess yourself as a data analyst?**

**(limited - average - above average)**

- When I was working on my stats project, I had to analyze some of the data collected but as a research assistant, I never had to analyze the data because I couldn't really analyze it and draw any conclusions; hence, in this case I would consider myself as average.

**(6) Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe this situation and how you handled it.**

- Usually the more research I did and with the help of my supervisor's guidance, I was able to narrow my topic and focus on a subject that was innovative and interesting.
- Also when I was working with one of my professor as a research assistant, sometimes I had doubts about what was expected of me, sometimes, the professor wasn't very clear and even sometimes he wasn't 100% sure about what to focus on or what to expect of his research.
- So I really think that when you do research, your work will never be crystal clear and you will never be sure of what to expect; so in my opinion you should read and research the topic as much as possible, then weigh the pros and cons of focusing on each issue and then narrowing your topic.

**(7) What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.**

- In my masters we were required to take a linear statistics class. For our final project in this class we had to use SPSS in a practical manner. It helped me apply the basic knowledge I had of SPSS. My competence in SPSS is strong.
- For my linear statistics class our project was related to the GDP of different countries and how it would correlate with different variables like education, natural resources, working women, tolerance in the workplace, etc. we wanted to see if there was a trend between those different variables and a country's GDP.
- Since my research is in the social science field, I use SPSS. And since this new position is related to my field and not the field of finance where they use the SAS software, I am confident that I could do it.

**(8) What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?**

*Strengths:*

- I already mentioned some of my strengths and why I would fit well with the job position you are interviewing me for.
- First I have already worked with two professors as a research assistant, hence I know what to expect. I know how to do research because of my experience with these two professors and because I am at the final stage of writing my own thesis. I know what type of problems might arise and I know how to solve them efficiently.
- Secondly, my schedule is very flexible, during some weeks, if it is required, I could put in more hours and during others, if I am not needed, I could work less. I don't have classes or a job, so my schedule is very flexible.
- Third, doing research is my passion, this is why I am doing a masters' degree now, and this is why I plan on pursuing a PhD in a couple of years. Hence I will work hard, give this job my full potential and attention and give the best of myself.
- Finally, I got 'A's in both my business writing classes, so I consider myself a very good writer and am able to communicate well ideas into writing.

*Weaknesses:*

- The only weakness that I can think of right now is not being very familiar with the research topic that will be studied. I never worked on leadership issues previously. Even though I consider myself inexperienced on this issue, I don't think this could really be considered as a main weakness since I am a fast learner.

## Appendix E: Script of Answers for Candidate A (for the Unstructured Interview)

### SCRIPT FOR CANDIDATE A (UNSTRUCTURED)

#### (A) Interest in Research Assistant Position

- I know how effective being a research assistant is because the work that will be required of me will help me for my thesis and will also be useful on the long term since I am planning on doing more research in different fields in the future.
- As I just mentioned, when I finish my thesis I want to apply for a PhD. Of course with the experience I gain from all the research assistant work, it'll be easier for me to complete my PhD.
- Also I heard the pay is good.

#### (B) Education and Experience

##### (C) Prior research experience

- I studied at the University of Western Ontario in business management.
- I am currently finishing my masters in the psychology of language at Concordia University
- Currently working on my thesis
- I will be using the knowledge I acquired (i.e. research methods) while doing my bachelor in management and my masters to the job which will make it easier for me and will improve my job performance
- During my first year at Concordia I worked as a research assistant on a topic related to children's psychology
- Back in Ontario, I worked as a teacher's assistant for a public management's class
- All this prior experience puts me at an advantage because I am aware of the expectations and the requirements of being a research assistant. I am also used to dealing with academics and know how to interact with them, since it might be a bit different than dealing with corporate people.

#### (D) Knowledge about research assistant position (different tasks required)

- Literature reviewer: I would assess myself as above average since I have to do (am doing) a lot of research for my thesis.
- Data Collector: I would assess myself as average because I only did some data collection for my professor back in Ontario.
- Data Analyst: I would assess myself as above average because for my statistics projects, I was the one in charge of analyzing the data that was collected and make different types of assessments.

#### (E) Software usually used

- I took a linear statistics class a year ago. Used SPSS for our final project.
- Also using SPSS for my thesis.
- During my linear statistics' class I was very interested in mastering the SPSS software because I knew the importance of it for my final paper and for my thesis.

- Our project for my stats class was related to examining the nature and significance of the 360 degree training process in organizations and its short versus long term dynamics on the organization and the employees' satisfaction.

**(F) Strengths and Weaknesses**

*Strengths:*

I think I would fit well with the job position you are interviewing me for because:

- First I have already worked as a research assistant and as a teacher's assistant hence I'm well experienced for this position and know the requirements. I know what type of problems might arise and I know how to solve them efficiently.
- Secondly, I am very rigorous and accurate in my work. When I work on something I work very precisely and meticulously. Usually my professors are very satisfied with my assignments, projects and papers.
- Third, since I've been doing research for years now, I became very familiar with the different databases used to find good quality academic paper. I find that ProQuest business database and PsyInfo or PsyArticles are the most accurate in my field.
- Fourth, I am by nature a very ethical person; I never cheat, always follow the rules and I always do everything according to the right principles.

*Weaknesses:*

- Saying your weaknesses is always hard because you're usually never ready to admit them. But if I must come up with at least one, concerning this job, maybe it'll be the fact that I'm working on a different topic for my thesis than the one being studied in this case. I'm not sure if you can consider that as a weakness, but it might be since research can sometimes be intense.

## Appendix F: Script of Answers for Candidate B (for the Unstructured Interview)

### SCRIPT FOR CANDIDATE B (UNSTRUCTURED)

#### (A) Interest in Research Assistant Position

- Working as a research assistant will enable me to gain experience first as a researcher and second as a student working on my thesis.
- I really like helping people so helping out a professor and their research could be great for me.
- Very interesting to work on something that might someday be published and that people might learn or gain knowledge from.
- And since I am planning on doing a PhD after my masters, I think that working as a research assistant will make my PhD track easier and smoother.

#### (B) Education and Experience

#### (C) Prior research experience

- I did a bachelor in psychology at Concordia University
- Now I'm in my third year of my masters in human relations at McGill University
- I already finished all my classes and am currently working on my thesis
- Educational background can help me succeed in this position since I will be putting my research methodology and other related classes to use.
- Already worked as a research assistant with two professors during my first and second year at McGill; both of them were working on topics related to social sciences
- Prior research assistant experience gives me an advantage since I already know what to expect as a research assistant and am already used to doing a lot of research and interacting with academics to help them as efficiently as possible with their work.
- Currently working on my thesis and I am on the final stage which is basically reviewing everything before I submit it, so I can comfortably say that my schedule is very flexible and will be able to work whenever I am needed.

#### (D) Knowledge about research assistant position (different tasks required)

- Literature Reviewer: I would assess myself as above average since I am doing a masters degree and am working on my thesis now and already worked as a research assistant to two professors.
- Data Collector: I would assess myself as above average also because for both professors I had to work with, I had to go out and collect data for their research. I also collected data while working on my project for my linear statistics class.
- Data Analyst: When I was working on my stats project, I had to analyze some of the data collected but as a research assistant, I never had to analyze the data because I couldn't really analyze it and draw any conclusions; hence, in this case I would consider myself as average.

#### (E) Software usually used

- In my masters we were required to take a linear statistics class. For our final project in this class we had to use SPSS in a practical manner. It helped me apply the basic knowledge I had of SPSS. My competence in SPSS is strong.

- For my linear statistics class our project was related to the GDP of different countries and how it would correlate with different variables like education, natural resources, working women, tolerance in the workplace, etc. we wanted to see if there was a trend between those different variables and a country's GDP.
- Since my research is in the social science field, I use SPSS. And since this new position is related to my field and not the field of finance where they use the SAS software, I am confident that I could do it.

**(F) Strengths and Weaknesses**

*Strengths:*

- I already mentioned some of my strengths and why I would fit well with the job position you are interviewing me for.
- First I have already worked with two professors as a research assistant, hence I know what to expect. I know how to do research because of my experience with these two professors and because I am at the final stage of writing my own thesis. I know what type of problems might arise and I know how to solve them efficiently.
- Secondly, my schedule is very flexible, during some weeks, if it is required, I could put in more hours and during others, if I am not needed, I could work less. I don't have classes or a job, so my schedule is very flexible.
- Third, doing research is my passion, this is why I am doing a masters' degree now, and this is why I plan on pursuing a PhD in a couple of years. Hence I will work hard, give this job my full potential and attention and give the best of myself.
- Finally, I got 'A's in both my business writing classes, so I consider myself a very good writer and am able to communicate well ideas into writing.

*Weaknesses:*

- The only weakness that I can think of right now is not being very familiar with the research topic that will be studied. I never worked on leadership issues previously. Even though I consider myself inexperienced on this issue, I don't think this could really be considered as a main weakness since I am a fast learner.

## Appendix G: Curriculum Vitae for Candidate A

[Candidate A's name]  
[Candidate A's address]  
[Candidate A's email]

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### EDUCATION

<b>M.Sc. Human Relations</b> <i>McGill University, Montreal, Quebec</i>	2006 - Present
<b>B.A. Psychology</b> <i>Concordia University, Montreal, Quebec</i>	2006

### LANGUAGES

English, French and Spanish (Fluent, written and spoken)

### WORK EXPERIENCE

<b>Research Assistant, Prof. Doug Lenard, McGill University</b> McGill University	2007
<b>Research Assistant, Prof. Nicole Hoffman, McGill University</b> McGill University	2006
<b>Waitress</b> Restaurant L'Entrecôte St-Jean	2003-2004

### COMPUTER SKILLS

MS Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), SPSS, Internet Explorer

### EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & INTERESTS

Reading, Traveling and Jogging.

*References available upon request*

## Appendix H: Curriculum Vitae for Candidate B

### Personal Information

**Name:** : [Candidate B's name]  
**E mail:** : [Candidate B's email]  
**Title of Job:** : Research Assistant

### Education

M.A. Psychology of Language (Concordia University)

H.B.A. Business and Management (University of Western Ontario)

### Work experience

Sales Representative: Footlocker (2003)

Teaching Assistant: The University of Western Ontario  
Public Management - Professor Mathieu Gourd (2004)

Research Assistant: Concordia University  
Children Psychology - Professor Joan Leonard (2006)

### Computer skills

SPSS computer software and Microsoft Office

### Languages

Fluent in Italian, French and English

### Hobbies

Music and Yoga

## **Appendix I: Introduction for Structured Interview Participants**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

You will be performing a structured interview, meaning that you will have to follow the exact questions and rate the candidate based on the answer sheet. You will not be allowed to ask other questions or make small talk with the interviewee. Each interview will take approximately 15 minutes. This information packet will help you be more knowledgeable about the overall subject and about what to do while interviewing and how to rate the interviewee. It includes your interview (questions, the answer sheet (with how to rate different responses), resumes of the two candidates you will be interviewing and qualifications that research assistants should possess to perform the job correctly). Please take a few minutes to look over the packet and afterwards, we will discuss it together and see if you have any questions or if any points need clarification. At the end, you will be asked to rate the job candidate by answering multiple questions, as well as provide information about yourself.

The research assistant will be required to present the results of the study in seminars, class presentations and meetings. In addition, she will be responsible for recruiting potential subjects/candidates for different but related studies. She will also be responsible for collecting data by conducting face-to-face interviews. Hence a big plus would be for the research assistant to have a likeable, friendly and attractive personality and be able to present themselves well.

During the interview process, please rate the candidates after each question (on either two or five points, depending on the scale). Then at the end, add (sum up) all the points to come up with the overall grade the candidate received (over 31 points). Afterwards make your hiring recommendation decision based on the total sum of points.

## **Appendix J: Introduction for Unstructured Interview Participants**

### **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

You will be performing an unstructured interview meaning that you will have to ask about certain skills and abilities that the interviewee might possess and try to see if she fits the job well and if she is knowledgeable and able to perform the task required well. Each interview will take approximately 15 minutes. This information packet will help you be more knowledgeable about the overall subject and about what to do while interviewing and how to rate the interviewee. It includes the topics you should discuss in your interview, resumes of both candidates you will be interviewing and the qualifications that research assistants should possess to perform the job correctly. Based on that, you should be able to rate the interviewee and see if she is capable of performing the job correctly. Please take a few minutes to look over the packet and afterwards, we will discuss it together and see if you have any questions or if any points need clarification. At the end, you will be asked to rate the job candidate by answering multiple questions, as well as provide information about yourself.

The research assistant will be required to present the results of the study in seminars, class presentations and meetings. In addition, she will be responsible for recruiting potential subjects/candidates for different but related studies. She will also be responsible for collecting data by conducting face-to-face interviews. Hence a big plus would be for the research assistant to have a likeable, friendly and attractive personality and be able to present themselves well.

**Appendix K: Candidate Rating Scale for Candidates A and B**

**CANDIDATE RATING SCALE:**

**Please read each question carefully and then circle the answer you find most appropriate for each question (So you can reply in an honest manner, your responses will remain confidential and will not be seen by anyone except the researchers):**

**1<sup>st</sup> Candidate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate Qualifications**

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
*Strongly Disagree-----Disagree-----Not Sure-----Agree-----Strongly Agree*

**The Candidate...**

1. Replied to answers quickly-----1----2----3----4----5
2. Made direct eye contact with the interviewer often-----1----2----3----4----5
3. Will have difficulties starting the tasks required-----1----2----3----4----5
4. Will do more than what is expected of her-----1----2----3----4----5
5. Had positive facial features-----1----2----3----4----5
6. Is up to job standards-----1----2----3----4----5
7. Will want to be in charge-----1----2----3----4----5
8. Will take total control of her own work-----1----2----3----4----5
9. Nodded her head on average every two minutes-----1----2----3----4----5
10. Had positive body proportions-----1----2----3----4----5
11. Will try to surpass others' accomplishments-----1----2----3----4----5
12. Will excel in what she does-----1----2----3----4----5
13. Had a standard weight-----1----2----3----4----5
14. Will be able to handle criticism well-----1----2----3----4----5
15. Smiled enough during the interview process-----1----2----3----4----5
16. Will panic easily when a problem arises-----1----2----3----4----5
17. Will be discouraged by big chunks of work-----1----2----3----4----5
18. Had a positive general appearance-----1----2----3----4----5
19. Can be trusted to keep the study information confidential-----1----2----3----4----5
20. Will be able to work properly under pressure-----1----2----3----4----5
21. Will be able to manage many things at the same time-----1----2----3----4----5

- 22. Will stay true to her own values-----1----2----3----4----5
- 23. Will be hard to understand-----1----2----3----4----5
- 24. Will put a lot of effort in her work-----1----2----3----4----5
- 25. Had a good posture during the interview-----1----2----3----4----5
- 26. Will easily lie to get out of trouble-----1----2----3----4----5
- 27. Was physically attractive overall/Had a pleasant appearance-----1----2----3----4----5
- 28. Showed enthusiasm while answering questions-----1----2----3----4----5
- 29. Will be able to handle complex problems-----1----2----3----4----5
- 30. Showed confidence while answering questions-----1----2----3----4----5

**Candidate Suitability**

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
*Very Inaccurate---Moderately Inaccurate---Not Sure---Moderately Accurate---Very Accurate*

**The Candidate...**

- 1. Is highly qualified for the job-----1----2----3----4----5
- 2. Is highly attractive as a potential future employee-----1----2----3----4----5
- 3. Is highly regarded for the position-----1----2----3----4----5
- 4. Did very well in this interview-----1----2----3----4----5

**Hiring Recommendations**

**OVERALL RATE (For structured interview only):** \_\_\_\_\_/31

- **Please rate the job candidate on the following scale by circling the appropriate number**

- 5. Strongly Recommend to Hire
- 4. Recommend to Hire
- 3. Indifferent about Recommendation
- 2. Recommend to Reject
- 1. Strongly Recommend to Reject

**CANDIDATE RATING SCALE:**

**Please read each question carefully and then circle the answer you find most appropriate for each question (So you can reply in an honest manner, your responses will remain confidential and will not be seen by anyone except the researchers):**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Candidate's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate Qualifications**

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
*Strongly Disagree-----Disagree-----Not Sure-----Agree-----Strongly Agree*

**The Candidate...**

- 1. Replied to answers quickly-----1----2----3----4----5
- 2. Made direct eye contact with the interviewer often-----1----2----3----4----5
- 3. Will have difficulties starting the tasks required-----1----2----3----4----5
- 4. Will do more than what is expected of her-----1----2----3----4----5
- 5. Had positive facial features-----1----2----3----4----5
- 6. Is up to job standards-----1----2----3----4----5
- 7. Will want to be in charge-----1----2----3----4----5
- 8. Will take total control of her own work-----1----2----3----4----5
- 9. Nodded her head on average every two minutes-----1----2----3----4----5
- 10. Had positive body proportions-----1----2----3----4----5
- 11. Will try to surpass others' accomplishments-----1----2----3----4----5
- 12. Will excel in what she does-----1----2----3----4----5
- 13. Had a standard weight-----1----2----3----4----5
- 14. Will be able to handle criticism well-----1----2----3----4----5
- 15. Smiled enough during the interview process-----1----2----3----4----5
- 16. Will panic easily when a problem arises-----1----2----3----4----5
- 17. Will be discouraged by big chunks of work-----1----2----3----4----5
- 18. Had a positive general appearance-----1----2----3----4----5
- 19. Can be trusted to keep the study information confidential-----1----2----3----4----5
- 20. Will be able to work properly under pressure-----1----2----3----4----5
- 21. Will be able to manage many things at the same time-----1----2----3----4----5

- 22. Will stay true to her own values-----1----2----3----4----5
- 23. Will be hard to understand-----1----2----3----4----5
- 24. Will put a lot of effort in her work-----1----2----3----4----5
- 25. Had a good posture during the interview-----1----2----3----4----5
- 26. Will easily lie to get out of trouble-----1----2----3----4----5
- 27. Was physically attractive overall/Had a pleasant appearance-----1----2----3----4----5
- 28. Showed enthusiasm while answering questions-----1----2----3----4----5
- 29. Will be able to handle complex problems-----1----2----3----4----5
- 30. Showed confidence while answering questions-----1----2----3----4----5

**Candidate Suitability**

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----  
*Very Inaccurate---Moderately Inaccurate---Not Sure---Moderately Accurate---Very Accurate*

**The Candidate...**

- 1. Is highly qualified for the job-----1----2----3----4----5
- 2. Is highly attractive as a potential future employee-----1----2----3----4----5
- 3. Is highly regarded for the position-----1----2----3----4----5
- 4. Did very well in this interview-----1----2----3----4----5

**Hiring Recommendations**

**OVERALL RATE (For structured interview only):**        /31

- **Please rate the job candidate on the following scale by circling the appropriate number**

- 5. Strongly Recommend to Hire
- 4. Recommend to Hire
- 3. Indifferent about Recommendation
- 2. Recommend to Reject
- 1. Strongly Recommend to Reject

## Appendix L: Participant's Premier Choice of Candidate

### FAVORITE CANDIDATE PICK

- **If you had to pick only one candidate, which candidate would it be?**
  - First candidate (first interviewee)
  - Second candidate (second interviewee)

**Please select the appropriate answer for each of the following questions:**

- 1) Which candidate was more proficient in knowledge of the SPSS software?**

First Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Second Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

- 2) Which candidate studied at the University of Western Ontario?**

First Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Second Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

- 3) Which candidate had more experience as a research assistant?**

First Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Second Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) Which candidate is inexperienced in management leadership issues?**

First Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Second Candidate/Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix M: Demographic Questionnaire

### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please provide the following information:

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

Birth country: \_\_\_\_\_

Birth country of both parents:

➤ Mother: \_\_\_\_\_

➤ Father: \_\_\_\_\_

Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Native language: French \_\_\_\_\_ English \_\_\_\_\_ Arabic \_\_\_\_\_ Spanish \_\_\_\_\_ Mandarin \_\_\_\_\_

If other, Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you ever perform an interview before? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please specify the purpose:

---

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---

What is your major?

---

---

Are you currently employed? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, please specify in what field:

---

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*In your opinion, what is the purpose of this study?*

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*Do you know or have you ever met one or both the interviewees? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_*

*If yes, which one: First candidate \_\_\_\_\_*

*Second candidate \_\_\_\_\_*

*Do you have any other comments?*

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND PARTICIPATION!**

**Appendix N: Payment Receipt for Participating in the Experiment**

**PAYMENT RECEIPT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

University: \_\_\_\_\_

This is to certify that, I, \_\_\_\_\_, received the amount of \$30 for participating in a study about the different types of selection interviews.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix O: Debriefing of Participants**

### **PARTICIPANT DEBRIEFING**

Dear Research Participant:

The purpose of the present research was to examine whether or not using a structured interview format (as compared to an unstructured interview format) could moderate (by reducing) the physical attractiveness bias.

This study explored the influence of the structured interview. For example, a person who is physically attractive, when using the structured interview, will have the exact same chances of being hired than a less physically attractive applicant. But when using an unstructured interview, the physically attractive candidate will have a higher chance of being selected.

In the present study, candidates (interviewers) performed either 2 structured interviews or 2 unstructured interviews with two almost equally attractive candidates. It was up to the interviewer to rate each candidate based on 6 item questions belonging to a physical attractiveness scale.

It is expected that the discrimination against less physically attractive applicants will decrease when the structured interview is used, and that all candidates will be rated on their knowledge, skills and abilities to do the job without being influenced by any biases.

Thank you for participating in this study. Your cooperation was greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact either:

Khalil Jabbour

Student in the M.Sc. in Administration program (Management option)

[Contact Information]

Dr. Kathleen Boies

Thesis Supervisor

[Contact information]

## **Appendix P: Social Science Research Assistant Job Description**

### **JOB DESCRIPTION:**

#### **Social Science Research Assistant—Concordia University**

**Title of the Position:** Social Science Research Assistant

**School/Department:** John Molson School of Business/Management

**Purpose:** The *Social Science Research Assistant* “assists social scientists in laboratory, survey, and other social science research, performs publication activities, laboratory analysis, quality control, or data management. Normally these individuals work under the direct supervision of a social scientist and assist in those activities which are more routine.”

#### **Duties and Responsibilities**

*The Research assistant will be required to:*

- Use computer systems (SPSS statistical software) to enter data and perform statistical analyses
- Assist the principal investigator in preparing materials for reports, talks, and presentations of the research
- Be able to present the results of the research in seminars, manuscripts, or other appropriate formats
- Assist the principal investigator in recruiting potential subjects for the research experiment
- Collecting data by conducting face-to-face interviews

#### **Skills and Qualifications**

*The Research assistant will be required to possess the following Tasks, Skills, Knowledge and Abilities:*

- Prepare, manipulate and manage databases
- Verify the accuracy and validity of data entered in databases and correct errors
- Knowledge of administrative procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and designing forms
- Strong computer skills (SPSS statistical software, Microsoft office and internet explorer)
- Communicating effectively orally and in writing
- The ability to conduct statistical analyses
- High personal motivation, self-management and attention to detail; able to meet deadlines and progress without direct and constant supervision
- Have a likeable/friendly personality and present themselves well

### **Minimum Qualifications**

- Bachelor's degree in management, commerce, business administration, psychology, education, or related field is required.  
Preference will be given to candidates with, or pursuing, a research-based graduate degree.

### **Position Details**

- **Hourly Wage:** \$18/hour
- **Hours:** 15 to 20 hours per week (until June 2009, with possibility of renewing)
- **Work Location:** Specially selected/reserved office in JMSB building
- **Supervisor Meeting Details:** 1 meeting per week for update

## Appendix Q: The Structured Interview

### THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW:

#### **Function Title: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

1. Why are you interested in this position?
1. Can you tell me about your education and experience? How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?
2. How would you assess yourself as a Literature reviewer?
3. How would you assess yourself as a Data collector?
4. How would you assess yourself as a Data analyst?
5. Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done?  
If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it.
6. What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.
7. What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?

Scoring criteria for each question → 5 Point Scale or 2 Point Scale:

<u>Level of Performance</u>	<u>Rating Range</u>
Excellent	5 points
Average	3 to 4 points
Poor	1 to 2 points

OR

<u>Level of Performance</u>	<u>Rating Range</u>
Above Average	2 points
Average	1 point
Limited	0.5 point

## **Appendix R: The Unstructured Interview**

### **THE EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEW:**

**Function Title: SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH ASSISTANT**

**Topics to be discussed/covered with candidate:**

- Interest in research assistant position
  
- Education and Experience (projects, work...)
- Prior research experience
  
- Knowledge about research assistant position (different tasks required)
  
- Software usually used
  
- Strengths and Weaknesses

## Appendix S: Scoring Criteria for the Structured Interview

### SCORING CRITERIA FOR THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

#### (1) Why are you interested in this position?

##### Possible Answers:

- To help with studies
- To gain experience (Learn the knowledge, skills and abilities relative to a research project)
- To assist and contribute in helping a professor in his academic endeavors
- To contribute to general knowledge creation
- To facilitate Masters/PhD trajectory (strengthens research skills and abilities)

##### Benchmark Responses:

###### Excellent 5

The interviewee must tackle 4 or 5 of the points discussed above. The interviewee's answer must be complete and thorough. He should show enthusiasm while answering. He must be well spoken, well organized and methodological in his ideas. He must be able to clearly provide a positive correlation between his studies/experience and the position as a research assistant.

###### Average 4 to 3

The interviewee must tackle 3 or 2 of the points discussed above. He should show sufficient interest in this position while answering. The candidate must be organized in his thoughts and demonstrate an average knowledge required for this particular position.

###### Poor 2 to 1

The interviewee must tackle 1 or none of the points discussed above. His answer is unclear and disorganized. He is incapable of demonstrating knowledge or interest to this particular position he is applying to.

RATING: \_\_\_\_/5

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

---

#### (2) Can you tell me about your education and experience? How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?

##### Possible Answers:

- Bachelor degree (commerce, business administration, psychology, human relations, sociology, philosophy...)
- Masters degree (commerce, business administration, psychology, human relations, sociology, philosophy...)
- Previous experience as research assistant (already familiar with tasks to be performed and expectations)
- Able to apply concepts learned from important/essential courses

- Flexible Schedule, Able to work whenever needed

**Benchmark Responses:**

**Excellent**        5

The interviewee must tackle 4 or 5 of the points discussed above. The interviewee's answer must be complete and thorough. He should show enthusiasm while answering. He must be well spoken, well organized and methodological in his ideas. He must be able to clearly provide a positive correlation between his studies/experience and the position as a research assistant.

**Average**        4 to 3

The interviewee must tackle 3 or 2 of the points discussed above. He should show sufficient interest in this position while answering. The candidate must be organized in his thoughts and demonstrate an average knowledge required for this particular position.

**Poor**            2 to 1

The interviewee must tackle 1 or none of the points discussed above. His answer is unclear and disorganized. He is incapable of demonstrating knowledge or interest to this particular position he is applying to.

**RATING:** \_\_\_\_ /5

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**(3) How would you assess yourself as a literature reviewer?  
(limited - average - above average)**

**Possible Answers:** *Above average-*

- Doing a masters degree /Working on thesis (Knows how to do academic research, performed literature reviews, familiar with related databases –PsyINFO, ProQuest)

*Average-*

- Had some experience with reviewing literature (e.g. for a class project)

*Limited-*

- Never did a literature review

**Benchmark Responses:**

Above average = 2 rating points

Average = 1 rating point

Limited = 0.5 rating point

**RATING:** \_\_\_\_ /2

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**(4) How would you assess yourself as a data collector?  
(limited - average - above average)**

**Possible Answers:** *Above average-*

- Doing a masters degree /Working on thesis (Knows how to do academic research, collected data, extracted information from numerous sources)

*Average-*

- Had some experience as a data collector (e.g. collected data for a class project)

*Limited-*

- Never collected data

**Benchmark Responses:**

Above average = 2 rating points

Average = 1 rating point

Limited = 0.5 rating point

**RATING:** \_\_\_\_ /2

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**(5) How would you assess yourself as a data analyst?  
(limited - average - above average)**

**Possible Answers:** *Above average-*

- Doing a masters degree /Working on thesis (Knows how to do academic research, collected data and analyzed data for academic purposes)

*Average-*

- Had some experience as a data analyst (e.g. analyzed data for a class project)

*Limited-*

- Never analyzed data

**Benchmark Responses:**

Above average = 2 rating points

Average = 1 rating point

Limited = 0.5 rating point

**RATING:** \_\_\_\_ /2

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**(6) Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it.**

**Possible Answers:**

- Yes, already worked on a project/problem/situation/idea that was unclear
- Research project evolve and become clearer as the project goes on (with time)

- What to focus on, what could be more interesting, what materials would be easier to find and understand
- Narrow the topic
- Weigh the pros and cons of focusing on different issues

**Benchmark Responses:**

**Excellent 5**

The interviewee must tackle 4 or more of the points discussed above. The interviewee's answer must be complete and thorough. He must be well spoken, well organized and methodical while describing the problem he faced while working on a project and how he was able to deal with it.

**Average 4 to 3**

The interviewee must tackle 3 or 2 of the points discussed above. He should show sufficient knowledge in how to deal with a problem. He should at least describe the problem and his solution to it in an average organized way.

**Poor 2 to 1**

The interviewee must tackle 1 or none of the points discussed above. His answer is unclear and disorganized. He is incapable of explaining the problem he faced and how he dealt with it.

**RATING:** \_\_\_ /5

**NOTES:** \_\_\_\_\_

---

**(7) What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.**

**Possible Answers:**

- Took linear statistics class (undergraduate level)
- Took linear statistics class (graduate level)
- Applied SPSS for thesis/projects
- Strong competence in SPSS
- Illustrates well the project

**Benchmark Responses:**

**Excellent 5**

The interviewee already took more than one linear statistics class. The interviewee's description of his projects (while using SPSS) must be well organized and well developed. His answer must be complete and thorough.

**Average 4 to 3**

The interviewee already took one linear statistics class and worked on one project while using SPSS. He must be able to show sufficient or average knowledge in SPSS software.

**Poor 2 to 1**

The interviewee took a statistics class but never used the SPSS software. His answer is unclear and disorganized. He is incapable of working on a project using SPSS software.

RATING: \_\_\_/5

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

---

**(8) What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?**

**Possible Answers:**

Strengths:

- a. Rigorous
- b. Ethical
- c. Problem solver
- d. Hard worker (ambitious)
- e. Efficient/Experienced in research
- f. Methodical
- g. Familiar with different databases
- h. Writes well
- i. Flexible hours

Weaknesses:

- j. Lack of experience in some research areas
- k. Lack of experience as a research assistant
- l. Studied in field unrelated to human science
- m. No experience in doing projects

**Benchmark Responses:**

**Excellent        5**

The interviewee states 4 or more strengths related to the job. The interviewee answers in a complete and thorough manner. He shows enthusiasm while answering. His thoughts are well organized and ordered.

**Average        4 to 3**

The interviewee states 3 or 2 strengths related to the job. The interviewee's answer is methodical. His answers are well organized and ordered.

**Poor            2 to 1**

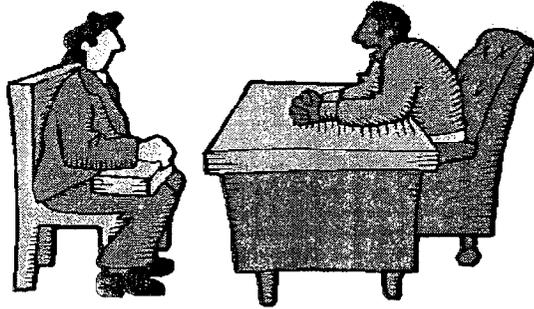
The interviewee only states 1 or no strength related to the job. The interviewee answers in a complete and thorough manner. He shows no enthusiasm while answering. His answers are unclear and disorganized.

RATING: \_\_\_/5

NOTES: \_\_\_\_\_

---

## Participants Needed: Interviewing/Recruiting Study



Volunteers are Needed for a Research Study on the Employment Interview and Recruitment:

Participants must be:

- A student at Concordia University
- Willing to participate in a valuable and productive *experiment* (2 hours long)

Participants will be compensated for their time

- **\$30** for the entirety of experiment

Please contact:

Khalil Jabbour

k\_jabbou@jmsb.concordia.ca

**Appendix U: Coding Scheme for Candidate A (Structured and Unstructured)**

**CODING SCHEME (Structured and Unstructured) CANDIDATE A**

(Check next to bullet point if topic/issue is covered)

**1-Why are you interested in this position?**

- I know how effective being a research assistant is
- Help me for my thesis
- Useful on the long term/ planning on doing more research
- I want to apply for a PhD/Help me complete my PhD with experience gained
- Also I heard the pay is good


**Total: /5**

**2-Can you tell me about your education and experience?**

**How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?**

- Studied at the Uni. Of Western Ontario in bus management
- Now finishing masters in the psychology of language at Concordia
- Currently working on my thesis
- Will use knowledge acquired in bachelor and my masters to the job
- I worked as a research assistant at Concordia
- Back in Ontario, I worked as a teacher's assistant
- I am aware of the expectations and the requirements
- I am also used to dealing/interact with academics


**Total: /8**

**3-How would you assess yourself as a literature reviewer?**

- Above average: I am doing a lot of research for my thesis

--

**Total: /1**

**4-How would you assess yourself as a data collector?**

- Average: I only did some data collection for in Ontario

--

**Total: /1**

**5-How would you assess yourself as a data analyst?**

- Above average: I analyzed data and make different assessments.

--

**Total: /1**

**6- Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it.**

**(DO NOT INCLUDE THIS QUESTION WHEN RATING THE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS)**

- Ideas evolve and become clearer as the project goes on (uncertainty).
  - I had doubts on what to focus on, what could be more interesting, what materials would be easier to find and understand
  - My topic wasn't clear.
  - The more research I did, I was able to narrow my topic and focus on a subject
  - At first the topic is usually never clear. Also the outcome/purpose is never obvious/clear
  - Expectations are never going to be known and predictable at first.
- So in my opinion the more you research your topic, the better/smoothen the process will be


**Total: /6**

**7- What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.**

- I took a linear statistics class a year ago. I used SPSS for final project
- Mastering the SPSS/importance of it for final paper/thesis
- Project related to examining the nature/significance of the 360 degree training process in organizations and short/long term dynamics on the organization/employees' satisfaction
- Also using SPSS for thesis


**Total: /4**

**8- What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?**

*Strengths:*

- I'm well experienced for this position and know the requirements. I know what type of problems might arise and I know how to solve them efficiently.
- I am very rigorous and accurate in my work. I work very precisely/meticulously.
- Very familiar with the different databases used to find good quality academic paper.
- ProQuest/PsyInfo/PsyArticles most accurate
- Very ethical person; I never cheat, always follow the rules/right principles


**Total: /4**

**TOTAL – UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW (24): \_\_\_\_\_**

**TOTAL – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (30): \_\_\_\_\_**

**Appendix V: Coding Scheme for Candidate B (Structured and Unstructured)**

**CODING SCHEME (Structured and Unstructured) CANDIDATE B**

(Check next to bullet point if topic/issue is covered)

**1-Why are you interested in this position?**

- Gain experience as a researcher/student working on my thesis
- Helping out a professor and their research
- Work on something that might be published/people learn/gain knowledge
- Planning on doing a PhD after my masters
- Will make my PhD track easier and smoother


**Total: /5**

**2-Can you tell me about your education and experience?**

**How will it help you in being a Research Assistant?**

- Bachelor in psychology at Concordia
- Third year masters in human relations at McGill
- I already finished all my classes and am currently working on my thesis
- Educational background/research methodology related classes to use
- Worked as a research assistant with two professors
- Know what to expect/used to doing research/interacting with academics
- Working on my thesis/final stage/reviewing everything
- Schedule flexible/able to work whenever I am needed


**Total: /8**

**3-How would you assess yourself as a literature reviewer?**

- Above average: I am doing a masters degree/thesis/experience

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**Total: /1**

**4-How would you assess yourself as a data collector?**

- Above average: Collect data for professors' research/statistics project

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**Total: /1**

**5-How would you assess yourself as a data analyst?**

- Average: Stats project analyze data/ research assistant couldn't analyze it

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**Total: /1**

**6-Have you ever worked on a project in which it was unclear what exactly should be done? If so, please describe the situation and how you handled it. (DO NOT INCLUDE THIS QUESTION WHEN RATING THE UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS)**

- With supervisor's help/narrow topic/focus on an interesting/innovative subject
- When working as research assistant/doubts/professor wasn't clear
- Work will never be crystal clear/never sure of what to expect/
- Research topic as much as possible
- Weigh the pros and cons of focusing on each issue
- Narrow your topic


**Total: /6**

**7-What's your experience with SPSS? Describe a project where you had to use SPSS.**

- For final project statistics class/SPSS/apply SPSS basic knowledge
- My competence in SPSS is strong
- Project/GDP of different countries/correlate with different variables/trend between those different variables and a country's GDP
- Research social science field/SPSS not SAS/confident I could do it


**Total: /4**

**8-What do you consider your research strengths and weaknesses?**

*Strengths:*

- I know what to expect/experience with these two professors/thesis
- Schedule is very flexible
- Research is my passion/will work hard, give full potential
- Good writer/able to communicate well ideas into writing


**Total: /4**

**TOTAL – UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW (24): \_\_\_\_\_**

**TOTAL – STRUCTURED INTERVIEW (30): \_\_\_\_\_**