The Moderating Effect of Attachment Styles on the Relationship between the Ability to Identify Criteria and Interview Performance

by

Melissa Jo Stuhlman

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Approved by

Jinyan Fan, Chair, Associate Professor of Psychology
Ana Franco-Watkins, Associate Professor of Psychology
Jesse Michel, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Abstract

The ability to identify criteria (ATIC), which is an individual's aptitude to correctly gauge performance criteria in a selection context, is an emerging topic of interest in the field of personnel selection. While research has shown that ATIC scores may predict test performance as well as job performance, little research has been done regarding how individual differences can affect the relationship between one's ATIC and their performance on selection procedures; specifically, the structured interview. I propose two mediated moderation models. The first model examines the moderating effect of anxious attachment on the ATIC-interview performance relationship that is mediated by interview specific rumination. The second model examines the moderating effect of avoidant attachment on the ATIC-interview performance relationship that is mediated by the difference between interview specific self-monitoring and general self-monitoring.

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Introduction

The interview remains one of the most common tools used by practitioners for selection purposes (Lievens, Highhouse, & de Corte, 2005; Salgado, Viswesvaran, & Ones, 2001). Erker, Cosentino, and Tamanini (2010) estimate that nearly 100% of organizations use some form of an interview at some point in their selection process. With use of the interview being so wide spread, many researchers have investigated the role that individual differences might play. Constructs such as personality (Cook, Vance, & Spector, 2000), self-monitoring (Anderson, Silvester, Cunningham-Snell, & Haddleton, 1999), emotional and general intelligence (Fox & Spector, 2000), speech styles (Parton, Siltanen, Hosman, & Langenderfer, 2002), the ability to identify criteria (Melchers, Klehe, Richter, Kleinmann, König, & Lievens, 2009) and more have been studied in relation to interview outcomes.

Although extant research has investigated many different individual differences that may affect interview performance, attachment style has not yet, to my knowledge, been examined in an interview context. Despite its lack of presence in interview research, attachment style is a fast-emerging topic of interest in the field of industrial organizational psychology.

Studies have assessed the relationship between attachment to leaders and other co-workers or mentors, as well as overall attachment at work. Hazan and Shaver (1990) showed that securely attached individuals portray higher levels of overall work satisfaction and confidence in their work than anxiously or avoidantly attached individuals. Additionally, anxious individuals expect to be undervalued by their co-workers, and possess more anxiety about workplace relationships and their job performance (Richards & Schat, 2011). Avoidant individuals, on the other hand, tend to view themselves as low in job performance and tend to have higher conflicts with relationships at work. In general, insecurely attached workers have lower commitment,

lower prosocial behavior, and higher likelihood of turnover. Secure attachment, however, leads to better social functioning, psychological well-being, and physical health (Richards & Schat, 2011).

The proposed study investigates the potential moderating effects of adult attachment on the relationship between the ability to identify relevant selection criteria and overall interview performance in a mock interview situation. Two models are proposed to illustrate this effect.

Literature Review

Interviews

The interview, a selection procedure intended to help predict future job performance and behaviors based on the responses of the applicant, is one of the most common personnel selection methods used in the workplace (McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994). Though interviews have been traditionally conducted face-to-face, technological advances have made it possible for other forms of interviewing settings, such as over the telephone (Oliphant, Hansen, & Oliphant, 2008) and computer-mediated video conferencing (Chapman & Rowe, 2002), to become more frequently used. There are three main types of interview formats: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. The more structured the interview, the more systematic the information collection, the questions being asked, and the response scoring. For example, structure can come in the form of asking the same questions to all interviewees, limiting prompting (or follow-up) questions, using anchored rating scales, taking notes, and controlling for ancillary information (Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, & Campion, 2014).

Of interviewing methods in general, the structured interview stands out as the most reliable and valid (Levashina, et al., 2014). Being structured, it leaves less room for interviewer differences and bias to occur. A structured interview differs from an unstructured in its ability to

accurately focus on different constructs or criteria of interest to the employer, while also limiting interviewer bias that may come about when using an unstructured or semi structured interviewing format. Structured interviews can vary in relation to the type of question that is being asked.

Levashina et al. (2014), describes situational interviews as questions, based on goal setting theory, that ask applicants to respond to a hypothetical work-related situation under the premise that intentions predict future performance. Past behavior questions ask applicants to describe what they did in a previous work-related situation under the premise that past behavior will predict future performance. Meta-analytic studies have found that both situational and past behavior interview questions have criterion-related validity, but past behavior questions show slightly higher validity (Day & Carroll, 2003; Gibb & Taylor, 2003; Klehe & Latham, 2006).

The Ability to Identify Criteria

The ability to identify criteria (ATIC) has been a source of recent interest in personnel selection. Kleinmann et al. (2011), define ATIC as "a person's ability to correctly perceive performance criteria when participating in an evaluative situation." Their claim is that applicants actively strive for good evaluations in a personnel selection setting, and this striving should drive the applicants to actively try to discern what the employer is looking for in order to adjust their behavior appropriately. Kleinmann et al. (2011) operationalize ATIC as the amount of correspondence between an applicants' perceptions of what is being evaluated and the actual performance criteria in a selection procedure, which has been consensually determined by subject matter experts (SMEs).

Research on ATIC has explored the selection procedures of interviewing (Melchers et al., 2009), assessment centers (Kleinmann, 1993; König, Melchers, Kleinmann, Richter, & Klehe,

2007), personality tests (Khele et al., 2012), and integrity tests (König, Melchers, Kleinmann, Ritcher, & Khele, 2006). Results show that ATIC scores positively relate to selection test score, which means that a high ATIC aids performance in the selection procedures (Jansen, König, Kleinmann, & Melchers, 2012). ATIC scores have also been found to demonstrate incremental validity over other selection test scores, like cognitive ability, in predicting future job performance (Kleinmann et al., 2011).

In addition to identifying performance criteria in a selection setting, ATIC may be used to recognize job demands as they arise, which will lead to improved job performance. This positive relationship to future job performance makes measuring ATIC beneficial for finding important predictive information independent of test performance. In accordance to recent research and theory, in a structured interview an applicant with high ATIC will be able to recognize certain situational cues in order to help them respond suitably to the questions asked, and there for receive a higher interview score than those who are not able to identify the targeted criteria.

Scoring of ATIC, in the interview context, is accomplished by giving each applicant a questionnaire after the interview, which contains all previously asked questions from the interview, and asking them to write down what assumptions they had about what each question was trying to assess. Trained assistants then code these statements in order to determine whether each corresponds to one of the target dimensions determined by SMEs, and to what degree. The postulation with the highest fit for the targeted dimension for each question is used to compute an overall ATIC score, which is the average of all of ratings across every interview questions with a high score corresponding to higher ATIC (Melchers et al., 2009).

An individual with a high ATIC will figure out an appropriate response to a given question, and this will lead the interviewer to rate the interviewee's performance as more

positive. This being said, ATIC is contingent upon the transparency of the selection procedure, in that it only useful when the targeted criteria is not apparent (Klehe, Konig, Richter, Kleinmann, & Melchers, 2008). Structured interviews are typically classified as non-transparent as opposed to other selection procedures like cognitive ability tests, in which the candidate is aware of what construct is being measured. ATIC levels are only useful when the selection procedure is non-transparent because a transparent procedure puts all of the applicants on a level playing field, so to speak, because it is no longer necessary to discern important criteria.

In a non-transparent selection procedure, such as the structured interview, an applicant must go through a two-step process. Applicants must first recognize what is being measured, and then perform in accordance with their hypothesis (Kleinmann et al., 2011). Therefore, in an interview an applicant must first accurately decipher what the interview question is asking and then craft an appropriate response that expresses the criterion they identified. Fan, Stuhlman, Chen and Weng (2015) pointed out that these two components are roughly equivalent to the cognitive and behavioral components of social effectiveness (Jansen et al., 2013).

Kleinmann et al. (2011) postulate that those with higher ATIC scores are more able to show dimension-relevant behavior, which will lead to higher performance scores. Jansen et al. (2013) found that individual differences in situational assessment (i.e. ATIC) predicted performance in behavior-based selection procedures. While the concept of ATIC is focused on the identification of criteria, little is known about the behavioral component that is required to translate these assumptions into appropriate responses. It is this behavioral component, through which individual differences such as attachment styles may moderate the ATIC-performance link.

Hypothesis 1: The ability to identify criteria is positively related to interview performance ratings.

However, the extant literature has not investigated what specific individual differences could potentially impede an individual's ability to convert the criteria they have identified into appropriate responses in an interview. Because the interview experience is innately social, it is plausible that attachment theory, which deals with social interactions, could play a role.

Attachment Theory Overview

The origin of attachment theory begins with the work of John Bowlby, who helped to formulate the basic principles, and Mary Ainsworth, who made it possible to empirically test some of Bowlby's ideas. The theory is grounded in cybernetics, psychiatry, ethology, and cognitive-developmental psychology (Bretherton, 1992). According to the theory, human beings have an "attachment behavioral system" that is a result of evolution in order to assure an individual's propinquity to a caregiver who provides support and protection. While every person is believed to have an attachment system, individuals differ in their levels of anxiety and avoidance. These individual differences are thought to stem from the differences in the internal working model of self and others that is developed through the type of interaction that occurs with their primary attachment figure. Primary caregivers, who are usually one or both parents (but can also be a grandparent, sibling, or daycare worker), are likely to serve as an infant's attachment figure (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010). Bowlby (1973) argues that the relationship between the attachment figure and the child has a large influence on how a child's personality develops, and this relationship is largely a product of the attachment figure's responsiveness and emotional availability in response to the child's signs of distress.

During infancy, the amount of security that an infant experiences depends largely on the external signals, such as the proximate availability and responsiveness of primary caregivers. After a period of repeated interactions, the child will develop a set of information structures, or internal working models, that characterizes those exchanges and contribute to the endogenous regulation of the attachment system (Bowlby, 1973). If the child's interactions with their attachment figure are generally warm, responsive, and consistently available, the child learns that others can be counted on and trusted. Accordingly, the child will then assuredly explore the world around them and initiate warm exchanges with others because of their knowledge that their caregiver is potentially available if needed (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). If interactions with their attachment figure are emotionless, rejecting, erratic, or fear provoking, the child learns that others cannot be counted on for security and comfort. This knowledge is embodied in insecure or anxious working models of attachment. The child is likely to regulate their behavior accordingly by either becoming excessively demanding of attention or by withdrawing from others and attempting to achieve a high degree of self-sufficiency (Main, 1990).

Ainsworth developed the laboratory procedure called the strange situation in order to categorize infant-parent relationships into either secure, avoidant, or anxious attachment styles (Ainsworth et al., 1978). This procedure involves monitoring the infant's and attachment figure's (mother's) behavior when the mother is present, when she leaves, when a stranger attempts to comfort the infant, and when the mother returns. Ainsworth monitored these behaviors in a laboratory setting, and always went to observe the participants in their own homes as well. Attachment figures of secure infants are usually responsive, available, and sensitive to the needs of their child. They are quick to comfort the infant when they display signs of distress. In

comparison, attachment figures of anxious infants are inconsistently available and responsive, and parents of avoidant infants tend to be more rejecting and aloof (Belsky & Cassidy, 1994). Attachment theory proposes that these differences in childrearing styles result in the development of different attachment system functioning in children, which in turn affects the child's behavioral responses.

The works of Bowlby and Ainsworth focused on the infant-parent interaction, and how they contributed to the development of a working model of self and others in infants. They did not study attachment past childhood, but others speculated that the attachment styles developed in infancy will continue on into adolescence and adulthood and slowly began to test these theories.

Hazan and Shaver (1987) used the infant attachment theory typology developed by Bowlby and Ainsworth to describe adult relationships. They used the descriptions from Ainsworth et al. (1978) to describe the three adult attachment styles they proposed by translating the items from infant-caregiver focused to adult-love focused. The three styles are secure, avoidant, and anxious/ambivalent, which are very similar to those described by Ainsworth. This research on attachment and romantic love was one of the first to look at attachment in adulthood.

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) examined attachment in adulthood, and proposed a four-group model of attachment styles that consist of secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful styles. These styles are similar to those defined by Hazan and Shaver, with the adjustment that avoidant is broken down into the two categories of dismissing and fearful. While their model was empirically supported, I will focus on the three more widely used categories of attachment (i.e. secure, avoidant, and anxious) in order to keep this exploratory study more simplistic in nature. If results support the hypothesized relationship between attachment and interview

performance, more research should be done to examine the relationship using the four-group model of adult attachment styles.

The application of attachment theory to the workplace is a fast-emerging topic of interest in the field of industrial organizational psychology. Some work has already been done to explore the possibility of its connection to various theories in the work place. This includes studies on attachment and transformational leadership (Popper & Mayseless, 2003), group processes (Rom & Mikulincer, 2003), mentoring (Wang, Greenberger, & Noe, 2009), Workaholism (Tziner & Tanami, 2013) leaders as attachment figures (Davidovitz, Mikulincer, Shaver, & Popper, 2007), individual work behavior (Richards & Schat, 2011), and leader member exchange (Richards & Hackett, 2012) to name a few. Each of these studies draws parallels between adult attachment style functioning and how it might affect different relationship within the workplace. Although attachment research has already begun to expand to the field of IO psychology, there have been no studies (to my knowledge) that examine the affect attachment styles might have on the interview process and outcomes.

The Moderating Role of Anxious Attachment

An anxious attachment style results from inconsistent responses from a parent or attachment figure, in regards to their infant's signals of distress. When interacting with the infant, the parental figure may be overly intrusive sometimes, and absent or unavailable at other times (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). The infant will learn that their attachment figure is inconsistent and unpredictable. This leads to overdependence on others stemming from a negative self-view, in which they believe they are the reason for the mixed responses (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

As an adult, this negative view of self will translate into self-blame when failure occurs. An anxiously attached adult will tend to have an intense fear of rejection, jealousy or fear of

abandonment, a preoccupation with relationships (Brennan et al., 1998), and a tendency to ruminate on distress and negative emotions (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). In other words, anxiously attached individuals will blame themselves for failures, and will ruminate on these failures long after they have happened.
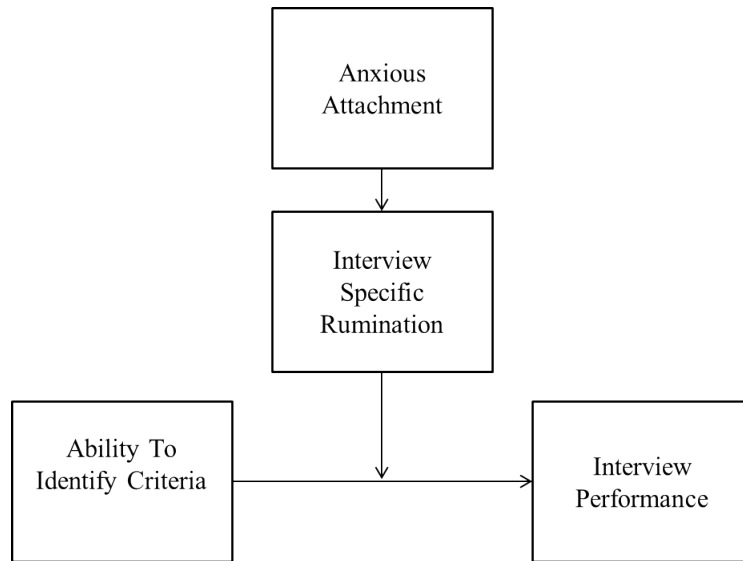

Figure 1: *The mediated moderation model for anxious attachment.*

Rumination is defined as a "cognitive process characterized by thinking about concerns and problems in unproductive, repetitive ways, and experiencing difficulties terminating these chains of thought" (Jong-Meyer, Beck, & Riede, 2009). It is a fixation on problems caused by distress, which interferes with more productive actions that could be occurring. Rumination has been found to correlate with a range of maladaptive cognitive styles such as pessimism, self-criticism, and neediness (Ciesla & Roberts, 2002). In other words, ruminative thoughts have a tendency to be negative in nature. These pervasive thoughts tend to consist of being focused on past events, and wondering why they happened, or what could have been done differently. Worry, on the other hand, though significantly correlated with rumination, tends to be more future-oriented and focuses on issues or threats that might occur (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, &

Lyubomirsky, 2008). Though individuals may engage in worry for how an interview will go before it begins, during the interview they will, if prone to rumination, focus on their current actions and those of their immediate past.

Response styles theory (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991) describes rumination as prolonging distress through making it more likely that people will use negative thoughts and memories to understand their current circumstances, and they will have more pessimistic and fatalistic thinking. Individuals, who are prone to ruminate, will seek to make sense of their current situation through a negative lens of past situations that, in their opinion, did not go well. The tendency to ruminate has also been found to remain relatively stable over time (Bagby, Rector, Bacchiochi, & McBride, 2004), and to lead to less confidence in solutions during problem solving tasks (Lyubomirsky, Tucker, Caldwell, & Berg, 1999).

In an interview context, I believe this will manifest in the form of the applicant spending time thinking of how they could have answered the previous question better instead of focusing on adequately answering the current question being asked, so they will not be using their high levels of ATIC (if available) to their advantage, which will drive their interview rating down. This is because those who are anxiously attached, in a stressful situation such as an interview, tend to show higher accessibility of fears regarding rejection than those who are avoidant or securely attached (Mikulincer, Birnbaum, Woddis, & Nachmias, 2000). This may lead the anxiously attached interviewee to question their responses on previous interview questions because of their desire to be accepted. They will ruminate on their responses, and think of how they could have answered the question better instead of concentrating on sufficiently answering the current question being asked in accordance to what they believe the selection criteria to be. *Hypothesis 2:* Anxious attachment is positively related to interview specific rumination.

This rumination will use the individual's limited cognitive resources, which will leave little for them to use to attempt to craft answers that model the selection criteria they have identified. This is because humans are unable to carry out more than one cognitively demanding task at the same time without declines in performance in at least one of the tasks (Kahneman, 1973). Therefore, engaging in rumination during an interview will lower the individual's capability to translate the selection criteria they have identified into suitable interview responses.

For example, in an interview context, an individual with low ATIC's interview performance will be lower regardless of their attachment style or level of rumination. However, for individuals with high ATIC, their performance is also determined by their attachment style, where strong attachment anxiety (and therefore higher rumination) will weaken the ATIC-performance link because it interferes with the ability to translate their high ATIC into interview performance.

Hypothesis 3: (a) Anxious attachment will moderate the relationship between ATIC and interview performance, such that the ATIC-interview performance relationship will be weaker for individuals with a high level of attachment anxiety than for individuals with a low level of attachment anxiety. (b) Interview specific rumination will mediate the above moderation effect of attachment anxiety on the ATIC-interview performance relationship.

The Moderating Role of Avoidant Attachment

An avoidant attachment style results from perceived parental rejection during infancy (Ainsworth et al., 1978). As the infant bids for closeness to the attachment figure, the infant repeatedly experiences apparent dismissal that creates a pattern of maintaining emotional distance from others (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). From these early interactions stems the notion that all others are unavailable and unresponsive, which in turn causes avoidantly attached adults to

avoid intimacy and social situations due to a lack of trust in others (Richards & Schat, 2011).

These individuals become self-reliant in order to not have to depend on others, which they

believe will only let them down.

This avoidance of social situations can result in poor, or a lack of, emotional feedback, as

well as poor social skills (Kafetsios, 2004). Anders and Tucker (2000) found that avoidantly

attached individuals show insufficiencies in the social skills of conversational regulation and

interpersonal sensitivity. Since they tend to avoid social situations, they do not have as many

opportunities to interact with others and gain necessary social skills. I argue that this lack of

social skills will be apparent to the avoidantly attached applicant, so they will actively attempt to

self-monitor their behavior in order to appear in a more favorable light because they believe this

is necessary to be selected for the job. More of their cognitive resources will be spent on making

sure to participate in social norms such as smiling, nodding, and proper eye contact because

these actions to not come as naturally to them as they would to a more extraverted individual.

Studies have shown that there is a positive correlation between traits such as other-

directedness and extraversion to high self-monitoring (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). This

tendency toward other-directedness and extraversion is not a quality that is usually present in

those with an avoidant attachment style because of their desire to steer clear of social situations

and to look after themselves without the help of others. This may not be the case with anxious

attachment as it is related to some facets of extraversion (Noftle & Shaver, 2006). Therefore,

avoidantly attached individuals will have lower general self-monitoring because it is normally

unnecessary for them, as they typically try to actively avoid social situations where self-

monitoring would be of use. Because those who are avoidantly attached do not typically engage

in self-monitoring, they will find it more difficult to do so in situations that call for it, such as an interview.

Self-monitoring includes being aware of social cues, and being willing to respond appropriately to them with a particular interest in meeting the expectations of others (Snyder, 1974). When assessing self-monitoring, individuals are sorted into a category of "high self-monitoring" or "low self-monitoring" based on their responses to a self-monitoring inventory (Snyder and Monson, 1975). According to Snyder, individuals who are considered high self-monitors are able to fully contemplate social situations as they related to their self-presentation, and respond appropriately.

The concept of self-monitoring seems similar to ATIC when taken at face value, but there are two major differences between the two. One is that self-monitoring requires a strong motivational component because it is concerned with status and meeting expectations, while ATIC is an ability with no motivational requirement. The second is there is not a significant correlation between the two, which shows that they are conceptually distinct constructs (Klehe et al., 2011).

Face-to-face interviews are inherently a performance in terms of both visual presentation and verbal responses. Therefore, if an individual is low in self-monitoring, something that is crucial to the visual presentation part of the interview, they will need to devote more cognitive resources to their self-presentation, which will not allow them the cognitive resources respond in alignment with their identified criteria. They will be more focused on regulating their self-presentation than focusing on adequately answering the specific interview questions being asked. If, in this same situation, that individual decides to designate cognitive resources toward the application of their ATIC, then their visual performance (face-to-face appearance) will suffer,

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and this could also affect their overall interview performance rating by biasing the interviewer's opinions of them.

Those who are high in general self-monitoring have been shown to be skilled in regulating the impressions they make in various social situations, one of which being the interview context (Fuglestad & Snyder, 2009; Levashina & Campion, 2006). This is because it is something they engage in frequently, and therefore comes as second nature. If an individual is avoidantly attached, and therefore low in general self-monitoring, it will take more cognitive resources to be successful because they are not used to the process, so it requires conscious concentration. This will lead to a decrease in performance of one of the tasks (either self-monitoring or interview responses) because individuals are not capable of carrying out two or more attention demanding tasks without declines in performance on at least one of the tasks (Kahneman, 1973).

Humans have a limited amount of cognitive resources to allocate to tasks, when the cognitive load increases, by adding more tasks or increasing the difficulty, task performance declines in one or all of the tasks being performed (Norman & Bobrow, 1975). So it follows that individuals who are avoidantly attached, and therefore may be low self-monitors, will have to devote more of their limited cognitive resources to their self-presentation in an interview context, which will then leave little to no resources left to allocate to thinking of appropriate responses with respect to the criteria they have identified. When this cognitive overload happens, their performance in either or both tasks (self-monitoring and ATIC) will decline, which will lead to lower overall interview performance.

Cognitive load is typically measured through physiological tests (e.g. heart-rate variability and pupil dilation), task and performance based techniques (primary task and

performance on non-related secondary task), and rating techniques (self-reported mental effort) (Paas, Tuovinen, Tabbers, & Van Gerven, 2003). As use of physiological and task performance measurement techniques would decrease the fidelity of the interview context, they will not be used in this study. Similarly, utilization of a rating technique would require stopping between each interview question in order to rate mental exertion. This would also lower the fidelity of the interview and therefore will not be used. I believe one way to measure cognitive overload in the interview context for individuals with different levels of avoidant attachment is by measuring the difference between general self-monitoring and interview specific self- monitoring.

A larger difference between interview specific and general self-monitoring will represent more cognitive load, as it will show that individuals are actively attempting to self-monitor in the interview context, which is a skill they do not normally use. For high general self-monitoring interviewees the difference will be minimal, as the behavior will remain consistent regardless of the specific situation. However, if an individual does not normally participate in general self-monitoring, and an occasion arises in which they must, it will take more conscious effort (and there for more cognitive processes) because it is something that is out of the ordinary for them.

A parallel can be drawn between the situation described previously and a situation in which a normal individual is attempting to cook an elaborate dinner. Since the techniques required will not be those the individual uses in their day-to-day lives, they will require more concentration. In contrast a chef at a high end restaurant may be able to execute the same techniques will little conscious effort, as they are second-nature to them because of the regularity of use required by their profession.

Hypothesis 4: Attachment avoidance is positively related a larger difference between general self-monitoring and interview-specific self-monitoring.
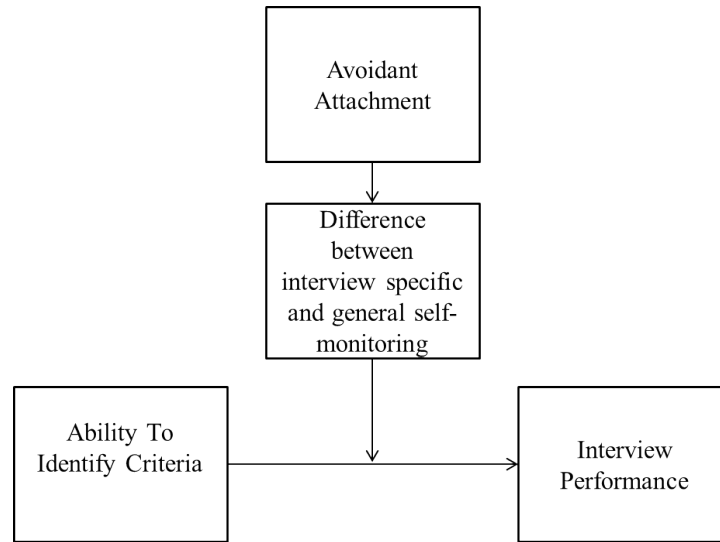
Figure 2: *The mediated moderation model for avoidant attachment*

Hypothesis 5: (a) Avoidant attachment will moderate the relationship between ATIC and interview performance, such that the ATIC-interview performance relationship will be weaker for individuals with a high level of attachment avoidance than for individuals with a low level of attachment avoidance. (b) The difference between interview specific self-monitoring and general self-monitoring will mediate the above moderation effect of attachment avoidance on the ATIC-interview performance relationship.

Method

Participants

Participants (n=166) were business undergraduate students at a large southeastern university, who received extra credit in their class for participation. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 27 years old with an average of 20.32, with 63.9% being male. Most of the participants' identified as Caucasian 83.1%, followed by African American 8.4%, Asian or

Pacific Islander 4.8%, Hispanic 2.4%, and Native American 1.2%. The average number of jobs (working at least 20 hours a week) was 1-3, with 70% of participants selecting this option.

Procedure

An announcement about the opportunity to participate in a mock interview for extra credit was made in each section of the contemporary issues in business administration I, contemporary issues in business administration II, and oral communication for business classes. These classes consisted of primarily sophomores and juniors. Interested students, who were at least 18 years of age, were instructed to sign up for a mock interview time through a scheduling website, and informed that the interview process will take approximately 30 to 45 minutes. The students were also encouraged to dress in an interview appropriate manner. This was to motivate the participants to perform as they would in a real world selection context.

During the scheduled mock interview, participants were instructed to imagine they are interviewing for a store level executive position in a large retail chain. In addition to receiving 25 points of extra credit for their class, the participants were informed that the top 10% individuals with the highest interview rating will be entered into a drawing for a gift card. This is done in order to increase motivation for performance that would replicate what would be found in an actual job interview. The interviewer, one of five graduate students in the department of psychology, then guided participants through a structured interview. All interviews were videotaped in order for performance to be rated at a later date. Research assistants were be trained in evaluating the interviewees' performance based on a supplied anchored rating scale. They had no knowledge of the purpose of the study. The participants' were then asked to fill out a post interview questionnaire. The participants were informed that their questionnaire will be confidential, but not anonymous, as I needed to match their responses to their mock interview performance scores. The questionnaire included measures of the ability to identify criteria,

interview specific rumination, self-monitoring, interview specific self-monitoring, attachment style, and demographic questions. The participant were then debriefed as to the purpose of the experiment, given the opportunity to request written feedback on their interview performance, and thanked for their participation.

Interview raters were trained using Frame of Reference (FOR) training. FOR is widely used in assessment center training in order to remove idiosyncratic standards that raters may possess, and replace them with a common frame of reference, as deemed by the organization, for the rating criteria (Bernardin & Buckley, 1981). The goal is to try and align individual perceptions more closely with those held by the organization. Because FOR training has been shown to increases overall rating accuracy (Woehr & Huffcutt, 1994), it was be used as the main training method for raters in this study.

The trained raters were composed of undergraduate research assistants. The training consisted of giving each rater a copy of the interview questions and corresponding rating scales. A series of sample responses to the interview questions were provided and they used them to practice rating each based on the anchored rating scale, and wrote out justifications for each of their ratings. These sample responses were varied with respect to if they should be rated low, medium, or high on the anchored rating scale. After the raters finished rating the sample responses, they were asked to explain why they rated each the way they did. The training group was then be given the ratings of the sample questions that were agreed upon by the normative group of interviewers (who are acting as the organization in the instance). A discussion was had on how each sample should have been rated as deemed by the normative group and any questions or concerns the raters might have will be addressed. This gave each of the raters a common frame of reference to use when rating the taped interviews.

Interviewers, who were composed of a group of graduate students, participated in a training session with the goal of becoming acquainted with the interview questions and rating scales. This involved learning how to properly fill out the structured interview form and when to ask probing questions in order to get full answers from the interviewee. They were instructed to give minimal non-verbal feedback during the interview in order to reduce differences between the interviewing styles of the different interviewers. Each of the interviewers were instructed to practice performing the interview with one another in order to familiarize them with the process.

Measures

Interview and ratings scale. Interview questions and their corresponding anchored rating scales were provided by a large multinational retail organization. Answers are rated based on their inclusion of specific target criteria. Ratings for all questions were combined at the end to create an overall performance score. A panel of subject matter experts (SMEs) was used to evaluate the appropriateness of provided rating scales, and adjustments will be made if necessary. The inter-rater agreement levels (rwg) for interview performance were assessed using the calculations proposed by James, Damaree, and Wolf (1984, 1993). This was done in order to ensure that averaging ratings across raters into a single aggregate score is appropriate. All of the mean levels of rwg for interview performance were above .94.

Attachment style (ECR: Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998). This is an attachment style measure with 36 items. Participants rated the extent to which each item is descriptive of their feelings in close relationships on a 7-point Lickert scale ranging from 1(not at all) to 7 (very much). Eighteen items assessed attachment avoidance, and eighteen items assess attachment anxiety. The validity and reliability of this scale has been previously supported (Brennan et al.,

1998; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Alpha for the anxious attachment scale was .887. Alpha for the avoidant attachment scale was .874.

ATIC. A self-developed questionnaire was used based on the criterion in the structured interview used to identify participants understanding of targeted criteria. This questionnaire consisted of a set of free response questions that asked the participants to formulate a hypothesis of what each question from the interview was actually asking. These open ended responses were then be coded and rated for the degree to which they match to actual targeted criteria. Targeted criteria will be consensually determined by a group of SMEs. The inter-rater agreement levels (rwg) for ATIC were assessed using the calculations proposed by James, Damaree, and Wolf (1984, 1993). This was done in order to ensure that averaging ratings across raters into a single aggregate score is appropriate. The mean levels of rwg for ATIC were above .89.

Self-Monitoring Scale (SM) (Snyder, 1974). This 25-item measure assessed the extent individuals manage their images and expressive behavior in social situations. Responses with higher scores, based on a scoring key, indicate greater self-monitoring. Alpha for the self-monitoring scale was .85 after removing items 9 and 12 because of their low corrected item-total correlations.

Interview specific rumination scale adapted from the rumination component of the RRQ (RRQ-rumination; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). This scale measured repetitive and excessive thinking about previous responses and action during the interview. Participants rated how much they agree with statements such as "I often found myself re-evaluating how I responded to a previous interview question" on a 5-point likert scale. Alpha for the self-developed interview specific rumination scale was .90.

Interview specific self-monitoring scale adapted from the state self-monitoring scale (Zhang, Bi,& Yu, 2010). This 5 question scale measured the amount an individual adjust the representation of his or her image during an interview. Participants rated how much they agree with statements such as "during the interview, I did not attempt to tailor my responses to something the interviewer wanted to hear" on a 5 point Likert scale. Alpha for the self-developed interview specific self-monitoring scale was .72 after removing item 2 because of its low corrected item-total correlation.

Analytic Strategies

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 4 were evaluated using linear regression to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Hypotheses 3a and 5a were analyzed model one in Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro in SPSS. Hypotheses 3b and 5b, the mediated moderation models, were tested using model 4 in Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro in SPSS.

Results

Hypothesis 1 stated that the ATIC would be positively related to interview performance. This was supported as ATIC scores significantly predicted interview performance scores, $b = .38$, t(164) = 4.66, $p<.01$. ATIC also explained a significant proportion of variance in interview performance, $R^2 = .12$.

Hypothesis 2 stated that anxious attachment would be positively related to interview specific rumination. This hypothesis was not supported, $b = .09$, $t(165) = 1.67$, $p = .10$. Anxious attachment did not explain a significant proportion of variance in interview specific rumination, $R^2 = .02$. Although not supported at the .05 level, the tendency was consistent with hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3a stated anxious attachment would moderate the relationship between ATIC and interview performance, such that the ATIC-interview performance relationship will be weaker for individuals with a high level of attachment anxiety than for individuals with a low level of attachment anxiety. As can be seen in table 1, the regression analysis showed there was a significant moderating effect of anxious attachment, $b = .25$, $\Delta R^2 = .027$, $F(1,162) = 4.44$, $p < .05$. However, simple slope analysis indicated that when anxiety is low, the simple slope was .21, $p = .06$; and when anxiety is high, the simple slop was .53, $p < .01$, as can be seen in figure 1. Thus, the simple slope patterns were opposite to what was hypothesized. Therefore, Hypothesis 3a was not supported.
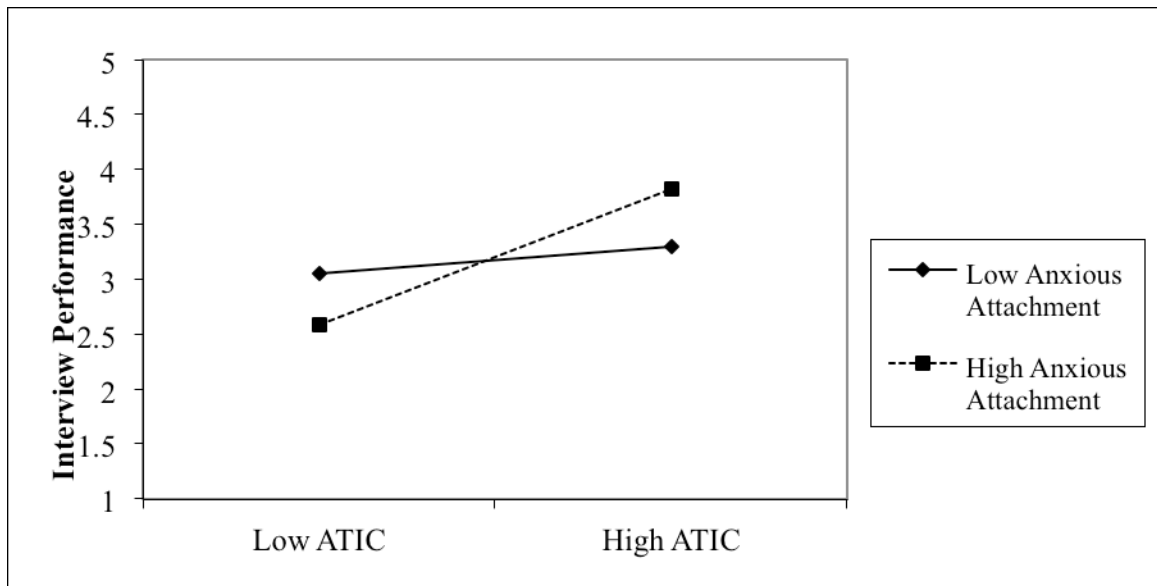

Figure 3: *Anxious attachment interaction*

Hypothesis 3b stated that interview specific rumination would mediate the moderation effect of attachment anxiety on the ATIC-interview performance relationship. This hypothesis was tested using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro for SPSS. Results indicate that the mediated

moderation index was .0127 with a 95% confidence interval of [-.0136, .0675], which contained zero. Thus Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

Additional analysis was conducted to test whether interview specific rumination might moderate the relationship between ATIC and interview performance. According to table 1, results indicated the interaction effect was not significant, $b = .09$, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $F(1,162) = .78$, $p > .05$. Interview specific rumination did not moderate the ATIC-interview performance relationship.

Hypothesis 4 stated that avoidant attachment would be positively related to a difference between interview specific self-monitoring and general self-monitoring, $b=-.09$, $t(165) = -.095$, $p >.05$. Avoidant attachment did not explain a significant proportion of variance in the difference between interview specific and general self-monitoring, $R^2 = .003$. Thus Hypothesis 4 was not supported.

Hypothesis 5a stated that avoidant attachment will moderate the relationship between ATIC and interview performance, such that the ATIC-interview performance relationship will be weaker for individuals with a high level of attachment avoidance than for individuals with a low level of attachment avoidance. As can be seen in table 1, the regression analysis showed there was not a significant moderating effect of avoidant attachment, $b = .08$, $\Delta R^2 = .00$, $F(1,162) =8.41$, $p >.05$. Thus, Hypothesis 5a was not supported.

Hypothesis 5b stated that the difference between interview specific self-monitoring and general self-monitoring would mediate the moderation effect of attachment avoidance on the ATIC- interview performance relationship. This hypothesis was tested using Hayes' (2013) PROCESS Macro for SPSS. Results indicate that the mediated moderation index was .001with a

95% confidence interval of [-.0081, .0055], which contained zero. Thus Hypothesis 5b was not

supported.

Table 1*: Moderated Regression Analysis*

Model	b at Entry	R^2	F	ΔR^2
Step 1 (Anxious Attachment)		.14	10.49**	
ATIC	.38**			
Anxious	.01			
Step 2		.17	4.44*	.03
ATIC × Anxious	.25*			
Step 1 (Interview Rumination)		.14	8.76**	
ATIC	.36**			
Interview SM	-.07			
Step 2		.14	.78	.01
ATIC × Interview SM	.09			
Step 1 (Avoidant Attachment)		.12	8.41**	
ATIC	.38**			
Avoidant	-.05			
Step 2		.12	.16	.00
ATIC × Avoidant	.08			
Step 1 (Diff Self-monitoring)		.14	9.08**	
ATIC	.39**			
Interview SM	.03			
Step 2		.16	2.94†	.02
ATIC × Interview SM	.16			

Note. All dependent variables above are continuous variables. †p<.10 *p<.05 **p<.01

Additional analyses show that difference between interview specific self-monitoring and

general self-monitoring does not moderate the ATIC-Interview performance relationship, *b =*

.16, ΔR² = .02, *F*(1,162) =2.94, *p* < .10. However, the simple slope analysis indicated that when

the difference is low, the simple slop was .24, *p* = .053; and when the difference is high, the

simple slop was .54, *p* < .01. This tendency was opposite to what was hypothesized.
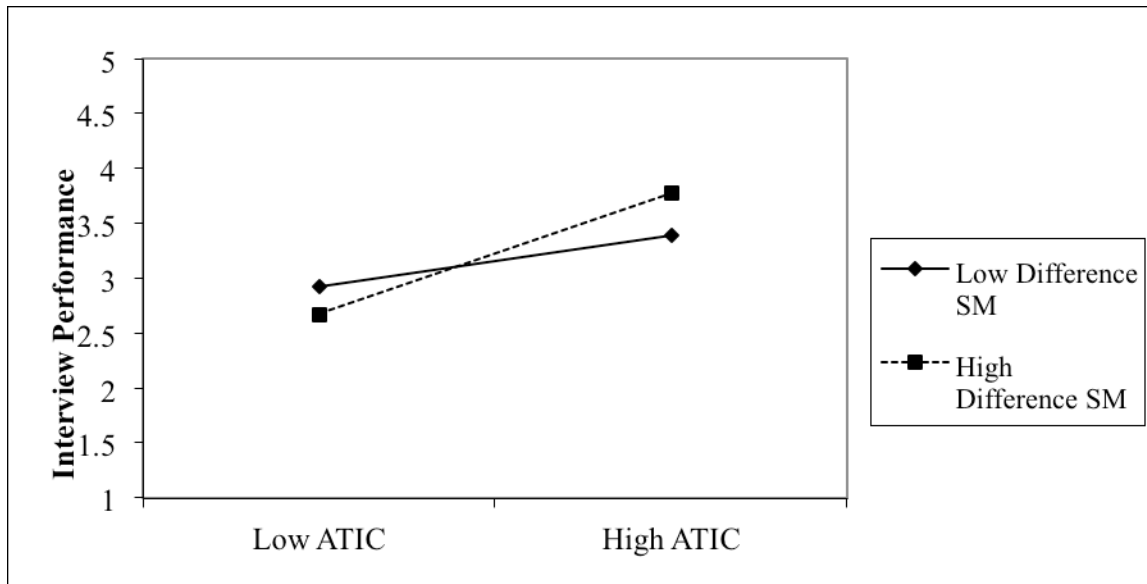
Figure 4: *The difference between interview specific and general self-monitoring interaction*

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the boundary conditions for the ATIC-interview performance relationship. It attempted to replicate and expand upon previous findings of the positive relationship between ATIC and interview performance (Melchers et al., 2009), by incorporating a moderating effect of attachment style through the mediating variables of interview specific rumination and interview specific self-monitoring.

The previously established linked between ATIC and interview performance (Melchers et al., 2009) was replicated, as results show a significant positive relationship between the two variables. Two mediated moderation models were tested. The first model involved anxious attachment, working through the mediating variable of interview specific rumination, as a moderator of the ATIC-interview performance link. The results showed that while the overall mediated moderation model involving anxious attachment and interview specific rumination was non-significant, there was a significant moderation effect of anxious attachment on the relationship between ATIC and interview performance. This moderating effect was in the opposite direction to what was originally hypothesized. As anxious attachment increased, the

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relationship between ATIC and interview performance was strengthened. Originally, I hypothesized that those who are more anxiously attached will tend to ruminate more during an interview, which would consume a significant amount of their cognitive resources. This would interfere with the translation of ATIC to appropriate interview performance thereby weakening the relationship between the two variables.

I speculate that the unexpected finding may be due to anxious individuals' fear of rejection by others (Brennan et al., 1998). This fear may cause the individual to attempt to impress the interviewer by putting their "best foot forward" in order to avoid being rejected. Hazan and Shaver (1990) found that anxiously attached individuals main motivation might be to gain respect and admiration from others in the workplace. They will work hard to please others, such as supervisors or interviewers, because they are sensitive to other's negative evaluations of them (Fraley, Niedenthal, Marks, Brumbaugh, & Vicary, 2006). This behavior may be present in the interview process as the anxiously attached applicant strives to achieve a positive evaluation from the interviewer, and a subsequent job offer. Because of their strong tendency to desire the acceptance of others, if they are able to figure out the selection criteria of the interview question, they will try harder to act on those identified criteria in order to please the interviewer. This will help them to better convert their ATIC into interview performance.

The second model involved avoidant attachment, working through the mediating variable of the difference between interview specific and general self-monitoring, as a moderator of the ATIC-interview performance link. Although not statistically significant, results show a tendency for the difference between interview specific self-monitoring and general self-monitoring moderated the relationship between ATIC and interview performance. As the difference in self-monitoring increased, the relationship between ATIC and interview performance was

strengthened. This means that interviewees who self-reported more self-monitoring during the interview than they reported in general were better able to translate ATIC into interview performance scores.

A potential explanation for this unexpected effect could be that a higher level of state self-monitoring may have increased the interviewee's perceptiveness of non-verbal cues. These may have included indicators such as nodding, eye contact, posture, and subtle facial expressions. By looking to the interview for non-verbal cues, the interviewee may have been able to determine if they were giving in effective responses, and adjust their answers appropriately if they determined they were not. The opportunity to adjust their responses based on non-verbal feedback from the interview, would help the interviewee convert their ATIC into interview performance.

In regards to the null findings of avoidant attachment, it is possible that factors in the research design may have contributed to the lack of significant results. The interview contained only 7 questions, and interviewers were limited to a predefined set of probing questions. Because of this, the average interview was only 10-15 minutes. This short time frame may not have allowed enough time for sufficient cognitive depletion and/or attachment system activation.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are a couple of limitations that may lessen the impact of the results found. The first of these being the sample was composed of undergraduate students. While the participants were business students who were asked to dress professionally, there may have been an issue with motivation as it was a mock interview for extra credit as opposed to a mock interview for a grade or a real world employment interview. Participants were informed of the opportunity to win a gift card for being in the top 10% of performers, but this may not have been adequate motivation.

The second limitation involved the relatively small sample size of n=165. While this was sufficient to show the relationship between ATIC and interview performance, it may have impacted the application of insecure attachment styles, as the distribution of insecure attachment styles (avoidant and anxious) in the United States is only 35% (Grossmann, Grossmann, & Waters, 2006). The mean for avoidant attachment was 2.54, which was significantly lower than the median scale score of 3, $t(165) = -10.23$, $p <.01$. The mean for anxious attachment was 2.73, which was significantly lower from the median scale score of 3, $t(165) = -5.48$, $p <.01$. In other words, the majority of my sample was not avoidantly or anxiously attached.

Another limitation, as previously mentioned, is the length of the interview, while a few interview lasted upwards of 40 minutes, the average interview time was 10-15 minutes. This may not have been a sufficient amount of time for cognitive resource depletion, or activation of the attachment system. Future research should make efforts to control for the length of the interview. This can be accomplished by asking a larger set of questions, or questions that are richer in content that would require longer responses.

The tendency of the difference between interview specific and general self-monitoring to moderate the ATIC-interview performance relationship was found. Future studies should replicate this relationship with alternative, validated, measures of interview specific self-monitoring, as the one used in this study was self-developed.

This study also found that anxious attachment strengthened the relationship between ATIC and interview performance, future studies should replicate and expand this finding. A potential mediator that should be examined is vigilance to cues relevant to appraising and monitoring the emotion and responsiveness of others. Fraley et al. (2006) found that anxiously attached individuals are more attuned to the emotional expressions of others, and are better able

to perceive changes in emotional expression than others. This may help them better apply their ATIC to obtain higher interview performance scores.

Results show the tendency for anxious attachment to be related to interview specific rumination at the $p = .1$ significance level. Future studies should further examine this potential relationship with other measures of state rumination, in order to rule out the possibility of construct validity issues.

At a more general level, there is a need for further examination of the moderation effect through other variables such as social skills, as attachment styles might be too distal. The mechanisms through which ATIC is converted into appropriate interview responses, and subsequent performance, is still largely unexplored. Future studies should look into the cognitive process that take place as an interviewee is thinking about their response to an interview question.

Practical implications

The results showed that anxious attachment and the difference between interview specific and general self-monitoring moderated the positive relationship between ATIC and interview performance. Practitoners should be wary of the potential for "false positives" in the interview process. While high ATIC has been related to greater interview and job performance, attachment anxiety has associated with negative aspects of performance such as reduced organizational citizenship behaviors and less effort put forth in team tasks (Harms, 2011). Therefore, the higher interview performance scores of anxiously attached individuals may not translate into higher work performance.

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Appendix A
Measures for current study

Experience of Relationships Scale

Instructions: The following statements concern how you feel in relationships with others. We are interested in how you generally experience relationships, not just in what is happening in a specific relationship. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

Item #	Item	Dimension
1	I prefer not to show others how I feel deep down.	Avoidance
2	I worry about being abandoned.	Anxiety
3	I am very comfortable being close to others. ®	Avoidance
4	I worry a lot about my relationships.	Anxiety
5	Just when other people start to get close to me I find myself pulling away.	Avoidance
6	I worry that other people won't care about me as much as I care about them.	Anxiety
7	I get uncomfortable when others want to be very close.	Avoidance
8	I worry a fair amount about losing my connections with others.	Anxiety
9	I don't feel comfortable opening up to other people.	Avoidance
10	I often wish that others' feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.	Anxiety
11	I want to get close to others, but I keep pulling back.	Avoidance
12	I often want to merge completely with other people, and this sometimes scares them away.	Anxiety
13	I am nervous when other people get too close to me.	Avoidance
14	I worry about being alone.	Anxiety
15	I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with others. ®	Avoidance
16	My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.	Anxiety
17	I try to avoid getting too close to others.	Avoidance
18	I need a lot of reassurance that I am liked and appreciated by other people.	Anxiety
19	I find it relatively easy to get close to other people. ®	Avoidance
20	Sometimes I feel that I force others to show more feeling, more commitment.	Anxiety
21	I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on others.	Avoidance
22	I do not often worry about being abandoned. ®	Anxiety
23	I prefer not to be too close to other people.	Avoidance
24	If I can't get others to show interest in me, I get upset or angry.	Anxiety
25	I tell others just about everything. ®	Avoidance
26	I find that other people don't want to get as close as I would like.	Anxiety

27	I usually discuss my problems and concerns with other people. ®	Avoidance
28	When I'm not connected to people, I feel somewhat anxious and insecure.	Anxiety
29	I feel comfortable depending on others. ®	Avoidance
30	I get frustrated when others are not around as much as I would like.	Anxiety
31	I don't mind asking other people for comfort, advice, or help. ®	Avoidance
32	I get frustrated if others are not available when I need them.	Anxiety
33	It helps to turn to others in times of need. ®	Avoidance
34	When other people disapprove of me, I feel really bad about myself.	Anxiety
35	I turn to other people for many things, including comfort and reassurance. ®	Avoidance
36	I resent it when others spend time away from me.	Anxiety

® = reverse coded

Response scale	Strongly Disagree	Moderately Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Dimensional scores computed with average of the 18 respective items for each dimension after recoding reverse items.

General Self-Monitoring Scale

The following statements concern how you interact with others. We are interested in how you generally experience interactions, not just in what is happening in a specific interaction. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. In social situations, I have the ability to alter my behavior if I feel that something else is called for	○	○	○	○	○
2. I have the ability to control the way I come across to people, depending on the impression I wish to give them	○	○	○	○	○
3. I am often able to read people's true emotions correctly through their eyes.	○	○	○	○	○
4. In conversations, I am sensitive to even the slightest change in the facial expressions of the person I'm conversing with.	○	○	○	○	○
5. My powers of intuition are quite good when it comes to understanding others' emotions and motives.	○	○	○	○	○
6. I can usually tell when others consider a joke to be in bad taste, even though they may laugh convincingly	○	○	○	○	○
7. When I feel that the image I am portraying isn't working, I can readily change it to something that does	○	○	○	○	○
8. I can usually tell when I've said something inappropriate by reading it in the listener's eyes	○	○	○	○	○
9. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.	○	○	○	○	○
10. I have found that I can adjust my	○	○	○	○	○

behavior to meet the requirements of any situation I find myself in

11. If someone is lying to me, I usually know it at once from that person's manner of expression

12. Even when it might be to my advantage, I have difficulty putting up a good front.

13. Once I know what the situation calls for, it's easy for me to regulate my actions accordingly.

Interview Specific Rumination Scale

The following statements are concerned with your thought process **during the mock interview**.
Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. During the interview, I found myself ruminating or dwelling on my answer to a previous question	○	○	○	○	○
2. During the interview, I often played back in my head how I responded to the previous question	○	○	○	○	○
3. During the interview, I always seemed to be rehashing in my mind things I had said	○	○	○	○	○
4. During the interview, I did not waste time rethinking questions that were over and done with	○	○	○	○	○
5. During the interview, I found it hard to hard to shut off thoughts about how my previous responses came across	○	○	○	○	○
6. During the interview, I did not ruminate or dwell on my responses for very long	○	○	○	○	○
7. During the interview, I found myself reevaluating the responses I had given to previous interview questions	○	○	○	○	○

Interview Specific Self-Monitoring

The following statements are concerned with your impression of your behavior **during the mock interview**. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. During the interview, I did not attempt to tailor my responses to something the interviewer wanted to hear	○	○	○	○	○
2. During the interview, when I was uncertain of how to respond or act, I looked to the behavior and reaction of the interviewer for cues.	○	○	○	○	○
3. During the interview, I did not change my opinions in order to please the interviewer or to win his/her favor.	○	○	○	○	○
4. During the interview, I responded to questions how I thought the interviewer wanted me to respond	○	○	○	○	○
5. During the interview, I adjusted my behavior based on what I thought the interviewer wanted to see.	○	○	○	○	○

Example ability to identify criteria free response questions

Instructions:

During the interview, you may have thought about what **specific traits/personality characteristics/ behaviors each question was trying to assess** (That is, what the question was really asking). We are interested in understanding your thinking process.

We would like you to tell us your assumption(s) about what each of the interview questions were trying to assess. You can write down up to three assumptions for each question. You can leave it blank if you do not have any specific assumptions.

For example:

What qualities do you think the question "You have newly been placed in charge of a branch. Your employees don't have enough trust in you yet and act somewhat diffident towards you. What would you do?" was trying to assess

Example Assumption you may have thought-
taking initiative for building confidence in my employees and for getting accepted as the new branch manager

1. What qualities do you think the question "Tell me about a time you needed to work with someone you disagreed with" was trying to assess?

Example interview questions and anchored rating scale

Tell me about a time you needed to work with someone you disagreed with.

Low	Medium	High
1	3	5
Individual experiences some difficulty interacting with others	Individual is respectful in interactions, regardless of their differences	Individual initiates conversations, in order to solve problems/disagreements
Individual shows irritation when asked to help others	Individual is willing to help others when needed	Individual is proactive in seeking to help others
Individual finds it hard to maintain a calm composure in difficult situations	Individual stays positive and constructive in difficult situations	Individual attempts to preserve relationships with others through difficult situations