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Applicant Deception in Employment Interviews: Prevalence, Ricks and Potential Solutions

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Faking in job interviews: Agenda


- What is applicant deception?
 - Introduction & Definitions
 - Prevalence of deception
 - Differentiating Honest IM from deceptive IM (faking)
- Causes and antecedents
- Impact for applicants & Risks for organizations
- Potential solutions
 - Detecting faking?
 - Training interviewers?
 - Probing and follow-up questions?
 - Warning applicants?

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WHAT IS APPLICANT DECEPTION?




“My short-term goal is to bluff my way through this job interview. My long-term goal is to invent a time machine so I can come back and change everything I've said so far.”

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Introduction & Definitions



Employment interview:

- Used far more frequently than any other method of personnel selection (except maybe the resume)
- Extensively researched for decades
- Yet, still “something of an enigma”

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Huffcutt, A. I., & Culbertson, S. S. (2011). Interviews. In *APA Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology* (Vol. 2: Selecting and developing members for the organization, pp. 185-203). Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

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Introduction & Definitions (2)

Impression Management (IM)

- Behaviors individuals use to influence the impressions others have of them
- E.g., to create a positive impression in the minds of interviewers
- Used extensively by job applicants
 - 97.5% of applicants use at least one tactic
 - with an average of 37.25 tactics used per interview

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Elks, A. P. J., West, B. J., Ryan, A. M., & DeShon, R. P. (2002). The use of impression management tactics in structural interviews: A function of question type? *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87, 1200-1208.

Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1996). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. *Psychological Bulletin*, 120, 347-377.

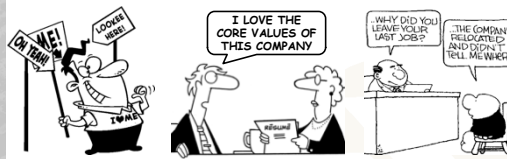
Stevens, C. K., & Kliegel, A. L. (1995). Making the right impression: A field study of applicant impression management during job interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 387-406.

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Introduction & Definitions (3)

Main types of IM tactics:



<p>Self-focused e.g., <i>self-promotion</i></p>	<p>Other-focused e.g., <i>ingratiation</i></p>	<p>Defensive e.g., <i>excuses, justification</i></p>
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Bolino, M. C., Kacmar, K. M., Turnley, W. H., & Clorap, J. B. (2008). A multi-level review of impression management motives and behaviors. *Journal of Management*, 34, 1088-1108. doi:10.1177/0149206308324225

Stevens, C. K., & Kliegel, A. L. (1995). Making the right impression: A field study of applicant impression management during job interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80, 387-406.

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Introduction & Definitions (4)

Important to separate...

- **Honest IM**
 - Statements factually accurate and drawn from an individual's actual work history
- **Deceptive IM (i.e., faking)**
 - Statements factually inaccurate, stretching the truth, or even explicitly made up

Gilmore, D. C., & Ferris, G. R. (1989). The effects of applicant impression management tactics on interviewer judgments. *Journal of Management*, 15, 557-584.
Kunda, J., & Campion, M. A. (2005). A model of faking behavior in the employment interview. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 14, 299-316.

Introduction & Definitions (5)

Truth	Lies
<p>Honest IM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceived as appropriate by interviewers ▪ May enhance the ability of the interview to make accurate selection decisions ▪ Potential source of predictive validity 	<p>Deceptive IM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perceived as inappropriate by interviewers ▪ May detract from the ability of the interview to pick the best candidates ▪ Potential threat to the validity of the interview

Roulin, J., Roulin, N., & Taraf, R. (in prep). Development and validation of the honest impression management in business scale.
Janßen, A., König, C. J., Stadlmann, E. H., & Kleinmann, M. (2012). Applicants' self-regulatory behavior: What do recruiters expect and what do they get? *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, 11, 77-85.
Kleinmann, M., & Plahn, U. C. (2010). Selling oneself: Construct and criterion-related validity of impression management in structural interviews. *Human Performance*, 24, 29-48.

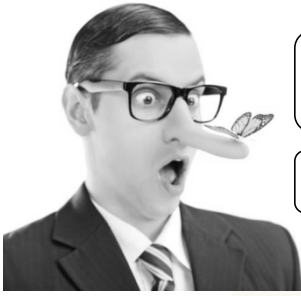
Introduction & Definitions (6)

Applicant deception is...

- ...their attempts to misrepresent themselves during the interview
- ... or an intentional distortion of the responses provided as a way to create a favorable impression

Roulin, N., Kings, F., & Briggall, S. (in press). A dynamic model of applicant faking. *Organizational Psychology Review*.

Prevalence




81% of job applicants admitted telling at least one lie in their last interview...

... with an average of 2.19 lies per interview

WEISS, B., & FELDMAN, R. S. (2006). Looking good and lying to do it: Deception as an impression management strategy in job interviews. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 36*, 1070-1086.

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Prevalence (2)



Percentage of candidates using faking behaviors

	Study 3 (n = 589)	Study 5 (n = 85)	Study 6 (n = 151)
Slight image creation	99.49	95.29	85.43
Embellishing	96.10	85.88	72.19
Tailoring	96.60	91.76	72.85
Fit enhancing	94.57	90.50	
Extensive image creation	91.85	80.00	64.9
Constructing	71.31	63.51	51.66
Inventing	88.12	74.71	58.28
Borrowing	47.95	34.12	27.81
Image protection	95.76	85.88	86.75
Omitting	85.40	74.12	78.81
Masking	84.21	82.35	59.60
Distancing	75.21	58.82	60.00
Ingratiation	98.64	95.29	77.48
Opinion conforming	96.26	95.29	77.48
Interviewer or organization enhancing	96.60	91.76	
Total	99.49	98.82	93.38

LEVASHINA, J., & CAMPION, M. A. (2007). Measuring faking in the employment interview: Development and validation of an interview faking behavior scale. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*, 1638-1656.

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Prevalence (3)

% of applicants who engaged in faking tactics when applying for a job	★		+		■		🇺🇸	
	Stud.	Exp.	Stud.	Exp.	Stud.	Exp.	Stud.	Exp.
...overemphasized or exaggerated positive attributes	37	5	17	56	40			
... fabricated or made up information to maximize their chances of getting hired	11	0	0	17	10			
...tried to present themselves as more agreeable than they really are	87	16	18	41	30			
... pretended to be more interested in the job than they really were	79	30	25	-	39			

DOROVAN, J. J., DWIGHT, S. A., & HURTZ, G. M. (2003). An assessment of the prevalence, severity, and verifiability of entry-level applicant faking using the randomized response technique. *Human Performance, 16*, 81-106.

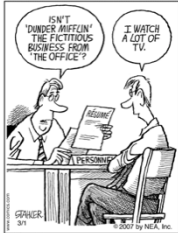
KONG, C. J., WANG, J., & CHEN, G. (2012). How much do Chinese applicants fake? *International Journal of Selection and Assessment, 20*, 247-255.

ROBIN, N., & KING, F. (under review). When winning is everything: The relationship between competitive workforces and job applicant faking.

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**APPLICANT DECEPTION:
CAUSES AND ANTECEDENTS**



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Causes & Antecedents

Individuals who are more likely to fake in an interview are those...

- ... higher on Machiavellianism
- ... lower on Honesty/Humility
- ... lower on Conscientiousness
- ... with stronger Competitive Worldviews



Hogan, M., Levinson, J., & Hong, H. (2013). Will I fake it? The interplay of gender, Machiavellianism, and self-monitoring on strategies for honesty in job interviews. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 117, 269-271.
Roulin, N., & Krings, F. (under review). When winning is everything: The relationship between competitive worldviews and job applicant faking.
Bourgeois, J., Roulin, N., & Tarraf, R. (in press). Development and validation of the honest impression management in interview scale.

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Causes & Antecedents (2)

The way interviews are conducted can reduce applicants' opportunity to fake...

- More structured/standardized formats
- Longer interviews
- Panel of interviewers



Levinshina, J., & Campion, M. A. (2006). A model of faking likelihood in the employment interview. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 14, 299-316.
Roulin, N., Krings, F., & Binquet, S. (in press). A dynamic model of applicant faking. *Organizational Psychology Review*.

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Causes & Antecedents (3)


The way questions are asked can also influence applicant faking...

Faking behavior	Question type				Follow-up questioning			
	Past behavioral (n = 76)		Situational (n = 75)		Follow-up (n = 81)		No follow-up (n = 70)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Total	1.62	0.60	1.83	0.60	1.91	0.64	1.52	0.50
Slight image creation	1.69	0.63	2.01	0.71	2.05	0.71	1.62	0.58
Extensive image creation	1.36	0.57	1.41	0.55	1.52	0.63	1.22	0.41
Image protection	1.69	0.70	1.86	0.73	1.95	0.77	1.58	0.60
Ingratiation	1.73	0.91	2.08	0.86	2.12	0.91	1.66	0.84

Levashina, J., & Campion, M. A. (2007). Measuring faking in the employment interview: Development and validation of an interview faking behavior scale. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*, 1638-1656.

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**DECEPTION:
IMPACT FOR APPLICANTS
AND
RISK FOR ORGANIZATIONS**



"Your résumé is bloated with half-truths, false praise, exaggeration and unsubstantiated accomplishments. I'd like to hire you to write our Annual Report."

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Impact for applicants

What is the impact of applicant IM tactics on interviewers' ratings?

Meta-analysis of Effects of Different Types of Impression Management on Interview Ratings

IM type	k	N	r	SD _r
Self-promotion	13	2,202	.26	.12
Other-focused IM	12	2,024	.13	.11
Defensive IM	12	2,075	.12	.09
Nonverbal IM	7	1,562	.18	.08

Levashina, J., Hartwick, C. J., Morgeson, F. P., & Campion, M. A. (2014). The structured employment interview: Narrative and quantitative review of the research literature. *Personnel Psychology, 67*, 241-293.

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Impact for applicants (2)

What about applicant faking only?

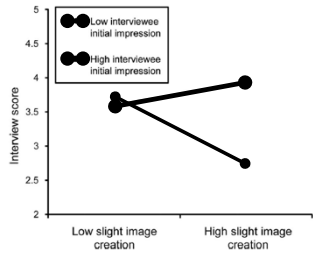
→ Some results suggest a positive impact

Faking tactics used in interview	Probability of receiving a 2 nd interview or job offer
Defensive tactic (image protection)	11%
No faking	31%
Assertive tactic (extensive image creation)	77%

Levashina, J., & Campion, M. A. (2007). Measuring faking in the employment interview: Development and validation of an interview faking behavior scale. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1638-1656.

Impact for applicants (3)

Can help compensate when interviewers formed a negative initial impression about the applicant



Swaid, B. W., Barick, M. R., Harris, T. B., & Stowerek, A. C. (2011). Managing and creating an image in the interview: The role of interviewee initial impressions. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96, 1275-1288.

Risks for organizations

Does faking impact the quality of hiring decisions?

- Limited research in the interview literature!
- But research on faking on tests shows that...
 - Faking can change the ranking of applicants
 - Faking can attenuate the predictive validity of tests
 - If hired, fakers have lower job performance...
 - ... and engage in more counter-productive behaviors

Dorevici, J. J., Dughi, S. A., & Schneider, D. (2014). The impact of applicant faking on selection measures, hiring decisions, and employee performance. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 35, 479-493.
Kornell, S., Strack, D., J. Holme, J. A., & Robit, C. (2008). Faking and the validity of conscientiousness: A Monte Carlo investigation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 93, 140-154.
Ohmer, T. A., Lee, N. M., Mariani, J., Lee, S. J., Lavin, R. J., & Carminell, J. J. (2013). The impact of 'non-targeted' fakers on personality test faking, hiring, and workplace deviance. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 55, 160-168.

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Risks for organizations (2)

In other words, there is a risk that...

... you think you hire...



...but you end up with




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**FAKING:
POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS**




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Potential solution: Detecting faking



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Potential solution: Detecting faking (2)

Are people in general good at detecting deception?

- **NO!** Multiple studies showing that detection accuracy is usually not better than chance level!
- Why?
 - People are often over-confident in their ability
 - ... and rely on the wrong cues to deception

Bond, C. F., & DePaulo, B. M. (2008). Individual differences in judging deception: Accuracy and bias. *Psychological Bulletin*, 134, 477-492.
 DePaulo, B. M., Chartrand, T. L., Cooper, H., Lindsay, J. J., & Malinowski, L. (1997). The accuracy-confidence correlation in the detection of deception. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 1, 348-357.
 DePaulo, B. M., Lindsay, J. J., Malone, B. E., Mulkenbruck, L., Chartrand, T. L., & Cooper, H. (2003). Cues to deception. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129, 74-116.

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Potential solution: Detecting faking (3)

What about in job interviews?

	Study 1	Study 2	Study 3	Study 4
Participants	154 interviewers	92 interviewers	136 students	48 students
Age	41.2 (8.9)	39.9 (9.1)	22.6 (2.8)	22.8 (2.8)
Gender	49% women	52% women	58% women	42% women
Experience	9.6 (7.6) years	10.4 (7.0) years	-	-
Applicants	3 male students	4 male/4 female employees	4 male employees	4 male/4 female employees
Video material	2x5' mock interviews	4x5' mock interviews		1x5' mock interview

Roulin, N., Bangerter, A., & Levashina, J. (2015). Honest and deceptive impression management in the employment interview: Can it be detected and how does it impact evaluations? *Personnel Psychology*.

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Potential solution: Detecting faking (4)

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Data collection for applicants / interviewers:
 Applicants and interviewers coding recorded by the software at the exact time associated with the use of each tactic

Self-promotion
 Image protection
 Image creation
 ...

Data coding system:
 Each IM tactic is associated with a specific key on the keyboard.
 Applicants/ interviewers press the appropriate button when they used / think the applicant used a specific tactic

Real-time coding with Noldus Observer XT software

Roulin, N., Bangerter, A., & Levashina, J. (2015). Honest and deceptive impression management in the employment interview: Can it be detected and how does it impact evaluations? *Personnel Psychology*.

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Potential solution: Detecting faking (3)

Actual Detection vs. Chance Level (pseudo-dyads)

Indicator	Correct detection	Chance level	t-test	Cohen's d
Study 1 – Recruiters				
• Honest IM	13%	8%	$t(154)=6.29, p < .01$	.49
• Faking	14%	7%	$t(154)=5.00, p < .01$	.53
• Overall	13%	13%	$t(154)=8.20, p < .01$	.78
Study 2 – Recruiters				
• Honest IM	25%	22%	$t(92)=2.25, p < .05$	.19
• Faking	12%	8%	$t(92)=2.64, p < .05$	.35
• Overall	20%	16%	$t(92)=2.43, p < .05$	.36
Study 3 – Students				
• Honest IM	23%	15%	$t(136)=6.95, p < .01$	.69
• Faking	19%	6%	$t(136)=10.02, p < .01$	1.10
• Overall	23%	12%	$t(136)=11.47, p < .01$	1.12
Study 4 – Students				
• Honest IM	29%	26%	$t(48)=61, p = .54$	.12
• Faking	12%	13%	$t(48)=53, p = .59$	.06
• Overall	20%	19%	$t(48)=45, p = .65$	.08

Roulin, N., Bangeter, A., & Levashina, J. (2016). Honest and deceptive impression management in the employment interview: Can it be detected and how does it impact evaluations? *Personnel Psychology*.

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Potential solution: Detecting faking (6)

OK... but what about in real interviews?

- Field study in 10 recruiting agencies
- 164 applicants interviewed for real jobs...
 - 98 women, mean age: 34, mean interviewing experience: 14 interviews
- ...by 36 professional interviewers
 - 21 women, mean age: 32, mean interviewing experience: 4.5 years, 1260 interviews conducted
- Two questionnaires completed right after the interview
 - Applicants' self-reported use of IM and faking
 - Interviewers' perceived use of IM and faking by applicant

Roulin, N., Bangeter, A., & Levashina, J. (2014). Interviewers' perceptions of impression management in employment interviews. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29, 141-163.

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Potential solution: Detecting faking (7)


Variable	Interviewers' perceptions				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Self-promotion	.14	-.06	-.10	-.11	-.06
2. Deceptive ingratiation	-.07	.08	.00	-.01	.05
3. Image protection	.03	.15	.05	.04	.00
4. Slight image creation	-.02	.14	.03	-.00	.03
5. Extensive image creation	-.03	.02	-.11	-.15	-.11

**No convergence between applicants' self-reports and interviewers' perceptions!
... especially for the most deceptive tactics!**

Roulin, N., Bangeter, A., & Levashina, J. (2014). Interviewers' perceptions of impression management in employment interviews. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29, 141-163.

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Potential solution: Detecting faking (8)


Does “gray hair” make a difference? 


- No impact of experience in hiring or number of interviews
- No impact of age
- Students as good as professional interviewers (if not better) in the experiment

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Roulin, N., Bangerter, A., & Levašina, J. (2016). Honest and deceptive impression management in the employment interview: Can it be detected and how does it impact evaluations? *Personnel Psychology*.

Potential solution: Detecting faking (9)

... So what characteristics of interviewers make a difference?

NOT Intelligence (or cognitive abilities) 

✓ ... but Honesty and Trust 

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Roulin, N. (under review). Individual Differences Predicting Impression Management Detection in Job Interviews

Potential solution: Detecting faking (10)

How does interviewers’ perceptions of applicants’ use of IM and faking influence their evaluations?

- Applicants perceived as...
 - ... honestly presenting their qualities (i.e., using self-promotion) are *rewarded*
 - ... hiding things from the interviewer (i.e., using image protection) are *punished*
 - ... lying about their qualities (i.e., using image creation) are *punished*
- But these perceptions are not exactly accurate...
- So... interviewers’ attempts to discount faking seem doomed to failure by their inability to correctly identify when applicants **actually engage in faking**

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Roulin, N., Bangerter, A., & Levašina, J. (2014). Interviewer perceptions of impression management in employment interviews. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 29, 141-163.

Potential solution: Training

Train interviewers to use the right cues to faking!

Higher frequency or voice pitch	Eye contact or gaze aversion	Hand or arm movements or fidgeting	Looking LESS nervous or anxious
Nodding or head movements	Logical structure of the story	Posture shift or body movements	Response length and level of details
Repetitions in the story	Speech disturbances (e.g., eh...)	Pauses, hesitations, or silences	Speaking faster

Adapted from Schneider, L., Powell, D. M., & Roulin, N. (2015). Cues to Deception in the Employment Interview. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 23, 182-190.

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Potential solution: Probing

Need to better understand how probing influences the use (and effectiveness) of faking

- Initial results: Probing → More faking!
- What about probing type?
 - No probing
 - Neutral probing ("Please tell me more...")
 - Positive probing ("That's interesting, tell me more...")
 - Negative probing ("Frankly, I find that hard to believe, tell me more...")

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Levashina, J., & Campion, M. A. (2007). Measuring faking in the employment interview: Development and validation of an interview faking behavior scale. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1628-1656.

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Potential solution: Warning

Should organizations use warning instructions?

- Initial results with personality tests: Warning = less faking!
- And in interviews?
 - Early promising results
 - But this forces organizations to fake!
 - Applicants' reactions?
 - Legal issues?

WARNING

If you lie, we will eliminate you from the selection process

Fan, J., Guo, D., Kameli, S. A., Lopez, F. J., Tian, T. S., & Meng, H. (2012). Testing the efficacy of a new procedure for reducing faking on personality tests within selection contexts. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97, 444-458.

Lewis, J. J., & Paul, S. A. (2011). Interview faking: Investigation of applicants in HR and why. 20th Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Philadelphia, PA.

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Any question?
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