Assessing Professional Attributes using Conjoint Analysis

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Introduction

Nowadays across the business world, dressing for work does not always mean wearing suits or ties. The “casual Friday” phenomenon, perhaps fueled by the influx of young professionals in technology industries, has resulted in a trend towards “dressing down” on the job. Job candidates in academia frequently lament that they are the best-dressed people in the room when they undergo interviews. How have these trends affected the approach that is recommended to graduating students in hospitality as they seek their first jobs in the industry? Especially now, as the recession continues to shrink the economy and it is becoming more difficult for hospitality program graduates to find management positions, this question takes on added weight. With the job market becoming more competitive, it is imperative that academia prepare students optimally to meet industry expectations. This begins with the interview process, where students seek to differentiate themselves from other candidates and interviewers gather information about applicants in order to make judgments about future work performance (Morgeston & Campion, 1997; Savage, 2009).

Professors help hospitality students in the job searching process by reviewing résumés, conducting mock interviews, and providing realistic guidance about industry expectations. As the trends noted above suggest, however, hospitality management students’ perceptions of appropriate standards of appearance and demeanor for interviewing and entering the professional world have changed. This can be readily observed in the classroom, on field trips, and at career fairs and other school-related functions. It would seem that there is no longer an industry consensus around what constitutes professionalism or what attire is acceptable or unacceptable to wear to a job interview. With this study we hope to add some clarifying evidence to the literature.

A related concern pertains to how these perceptions differ among recruiters, faculty, and students. To what extent do recruiters weigh professional dress in evaluating candidates? Do other factors, such as GPA, work experience, or personality carry more weight? What differences exist between faculty and student opinions?

Several studies suggest that there are indeed differences of opinion distinguishing students, faculty, and industry representatives as to which traits are most important or valued. For example, Hall...
and Berardino (2006) found that students view professional attire as being much less important than faculty members do (not a surprising result). In their comparison of accounting students, recruiters, and faculty, Baker and McGregor (2000) found that employers and faculty consider integrity paramount in terms of a job candidate’s potential, yet students rate it as substantially less important. Only faculty members believe that overall grade point average is important. The purpose of this study, then, is to better understand how perceptions of professionalism, including attributes that are considered to be indicators of future job performance, differ among hospitality students, faculty, and industry representatives. Using conjoint analysis on a large data set gathered during a major industry trade show, we compare these perceptions in order to determine if and to what extent the importance of traits varies across demographic variables.

**Literature Review**

We focused the initial literature review mainly on studies that examined the role of dress and appearance in forming perceptions of the professionalism of interviewees. We then expanded the review to consider research that targeted other characteristics that are perceived to be important, including the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of successful job candidates. After analyzing the findings in the literature, seven criteria of successful job candidacy were selected for use in the study: interview attire, academic grade point average (GPA), interpersonal skills, interview preparedness, the ability to work with others, alignment with organizational culture, and work experience.

**Interview Attire**

With the exception of a candidate’s résumé, which is typically examined ahead of time by key interviewers, the initial impression of a candidate that an interviewer will form will be based on the image that the candidate presents at an interview. The effects of professional appearance in the workplace and in academia have been a focus of research in a variety of disciplines. Researchers have discovered that professional dress has been directly linked to an individual’s self-perception as well as to the perceptions that others form of that individual. For example, studies suggest that dressing professionally (jacket and tie or suit and tie) has resulted in feeling, or being perceived as, trustworthy, intelligent, authoritative, competent, and of greater expertise (Peluchette & Karl, 2007; Sebastian &
Bristow, 2008; Stegeman, 2007). In contrast, casual dress has been associated with perceptions of friendliness, approachability, and likeability (Peluchette & Karl, 2007; Sebastian & Bristow, 2008). According to Sebastian and Bristow (2008) both professional and casual styles of dress may be appropriate depending on the situation and an individual’s objective.

The influence of professionalism on a job candidacy is complicated by a lack of agreement among students, faculty and industry managers on what constitutes professional dress. Given that industry representatives do the hiring, it would seem important that faculty views, which directly influence student decisions about how to dress for interviews, are in line with the views of managers (Newton & Cahney, 1996). Hall and Berardino (2006), who studied the perceptions of appropriate professional behaviors of business school faculty, students, and human resource managers, found significant differences between the groups pertaining to the practice of requiring professional dress during class presentations as well as to the role that faculty members play in counseling students on the propriety or advisability of body/facial piercings. Numerous studies, in both hospitality-related and non-hospitality fields, have suggested that professional dress, appearance, and grooming are important or desired attributes for successful job candidates (Baker & McGregor, 2000; Christou, 2002; Fjelstul, 2007; Posner, 1981; Tas, 1988; Tesone & Ricci, 2005).

GPA

Since a student’s primary “job” is to study academic materials, a student’s GPA is often seen as the equivalent of an employer’s performance evaluation. The use of the GPA as a selection variable is controversial; however, when a job candidate has limited work experience, the GPA provides an apparently objective criterion to which recruiters can turn in screening applicants and establishing a candidate’s potential (Kuncel, Hezlett, & Ones, 2004; Posner, 1981). Although some studies suggest that overall GPA is not considered by industry to be an important selection criterion (Baker & McGregor, 2000; Guo, Adams, & Price, 2009; McKinney, Carlson, Mecham, D’Angelo, & Connerley, 2003), there is support elsewhere for the proposition that GPA is used as a selection tool and may well be important when identifying a set of candidates to be interviewed (Roth & Bobko, 2000; Rynes, Orlitzky, & Bretz, 1997). Additionally, Baker & McGregor (2000) found that, even though the value of the GPA varied
among the five groups examined in their study, all groups maintained that GPA should be included in candidate analysis. In Sciarrini et al. (1995), the GPA was considered moderately important by all groups as well.

**Interpersonal Skills**

Interpersonal skills, which include listening as well as oral and written communication abilities, are widely identified across the literature as important competencies. Interpersonal skills—sometimes referred to generically as communication skills—have been ranked among the five most important skills for entry-level managers by hospitality industry leaders (Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Fjelstul, 2007; Kay & Russette, 2000; Mayo & Thomas-Haysbert, 2005; Tesone & Ricci, 2005). In fact, Mayo and Thomas-Haysbert (2005) discovered that hospitality professionals ranked interpersonal skills as the most important competencies for hospitality graduates. Tas (1988), who pioneered research on hospitality competencies for entry-level managers, argued that effective oral and written communication skills constitute an “essential” competency. In a follow-up to Tas’s research, Christou (2002) also found communication skills to be an “essential” quality for industry managers. In studies comparing the perceptions of students, faculty, and industry representatives, communications skills have held strong as an important skill across all groups (Baker & Harris, 2000; Baker & McGregor, 2000; Baker & McGregor, 2009; Posner, 1981; Raybould & Wilkins, 2006).

**Interview Preparedness**

Little research exists that directly examines the preparedness of a candidate for an interview or the impact of such preparation on job offers. One study addresses the effects of preparation for interviews that involves faculty members conducting mock interviews so that candidates can “rehearse” performing in the interview setting, concluding that mock interviews lead to increased confidence and enhanced interviewing skills (Hansen, Oliphant, Oliphant, & Hansen, 2009). Related research addresses time management skills and competencies—commonly referred to as “self-management” skills—that would seem to be closely aligned with skills involved in being prepared for an interview. Chung-Herrera et al. (2003) identified time management as the second most important dimension under the self-management dimension. Group differences pertaining to two out of four time-management dimensions
were found to differentiate the views of students, faculty, and managers by Hall and Berardino (2006). Raybould and Wilkins (2005) also identified a self-management skill group, which included time management as well as the ability to set personal objectives and develop a personal career plan. These studies may apply tangentially to interview preparedness skills, which common sense suggests involve at least the ability to appear at the designated time, to manage one’s responses to questions within the allotted time frame, and to appear knowledgeable about the organization for which one is interviewing.

**Ability to Work with Others**

Having the ability to work with others involves being able to work as a team member as opposed to behaving as an individual who prefers to work alone or does not like to help others. Being team-oriented is a highly valued trait in the hospitality industry. Tesone and Ricci (2005) found that the ability to work as part of a team was the number one skill identified by industry practitioners. In Fjelstul’s (2007) research, teamwork ranked as the second most important skill. In other hospitality research, teamwork has finished among the top ten competencies (Chung-Herrer et al., 2003; Raybould & Wilkins, 2006). Baker and Harris (2000) discovered that students who specialize in technology or information systems felt that the ability to work with others was one of the two most important traits in the eyes of recruiters. Other research has addressed closely related personality traits, such as having a sense of humor, without using the term “teamwork,” in attempting to identify the foundation for a team-oriented attitude (Posner, 1981; Guo et al., 2009).

**Alignment with Organizational Culture**

Alignment with an organization’s culture and mission occurs when a candidate’s values and beliefs are consistent with those espoused in the organization’s internal literature, such as its mission statement. An employee’s “emotional commitment” and sense of identity with a company lead to greater employee and firm performance (Hemp, 2002 p.11). A meta-analysis conducted by Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson (2005) found that person-organization (PO) fit, the compatibility between a person and an organization, correlated significantly with the intent to hire and with actual job offers. Guo et al. (2009) also examined this variable in relation to hospitality recruiting for graduating seniors and found it to be one of the top three criteria involved when firms make hiring decisions.
Work Experience

Work experience, like GPA, is another controversial selection variable. In fact, when work experience is stronger, GPA is less likely to be a factor in screening applicants (Rynes et al., 1997). In hospitality education most students see themselves as having work experience through internships or practicums; industry does not necessarily perceive that exposure as ideal, however, since it is typically operational and managerial (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005). Industry tends to consider students to be “overqualified but under-experienced” (Raybould & Wilkins, 2005, p. 211). Nevertheless, empirical research has suggested the importance of combining both hospitality education and work experience for hiring entry-level managers and for future success in the industry (Breiter & Clements, 1996; Guo et al, 2009). In Sciarini et al. (1995), work experience was considered the most important prescreening factor by students, faculty, and industry. Research in fields not specific to hospitality has also revealed work experience to be an important selection criterion for recruiters (Posner, 1981). In addition to looking at work experience in a generic sense, important competencies for entry-level managers include handling guest problems, following guest service standards, and operating under pressure; such skills may develop only or primarily with work experience (Christou, 2002; Fjelstul, 2007; Kay & Russette, 2000; Tas, 1988; Tesone & Ricci, 2005; Wilson, Murray, & Black, 2000).

Research Questions

To confirm or refute the importance of the characteristics we tracked through our literature review, we developed the following research questions:

**RQ1: How important are each of the seven characteristics to professionals in the field, and how important do faculty and students perceive these characteristics to be?**

Even if professionals, students, and faculty perceive that some or most of these characteristics are important, they may differ in their beliefs about their relative importance. The following research question results:

**RQ2: Does the relative importance of student characteristics vary among (a) students, (b) faculty, and (c) professionals?**
An understanding of the importance of these characteristics to professionals is especially critical, because they hire the students. For example, if professionals believe that interpersonal skills are important, then faculty should work with students to cultivate those skills. If attire is important, then faculty should emphasize this importance to students and teach them what level of dress is expected by professionals. Moreover, it is important to determine the extent to which students and faculty already understand which characteristics are important and how important each one is. Also, to enhance the validity of the study we must determine whether the relative importance of the characteristics is affected by other (demographic) variables, such as experience in the field or gender. Such demographic variables might make evidence regarding RQ1 and RQ2 more understandable. The following research question examines the issue:

**RQ3:** Do any demographic variables affect the importance of the seven characteristics to (a) students, (b) faculty, or (c) professionals?

Finally, these measures of importance are pertinent only if they are reliable predictors of hiring preferences. The measures would certainly be more valuable if they could be used to ascertain hiring preferences. The following research question addresses this concern:

**RQ4:** Once knowledge about the importance of the seven characteristics exists, can hiring preferences be reliably predicted?

The ability to predict hiring preferences would go far toward establishing the pertinence of the measures as valid descriptors of hiring preferences. With such validity, these measures would be of great value in counseling students in preparation for their entry into the job market.

**Methodology**

**Subjects**

The study took place during the 2009 National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show in Chicago. The NRA Show is the largest expo of its type, with more than 2,000 exhibitors and 70,000 participants covering four days and more than 565,000 square feet of exhibit space (National Restaurant Association, n.d.). In addition to industry presence, the NRA Show annually features numerous colleges and universities that represent their hospitality/culinary programs through exhibit booths. Therefore the NRA
Show was identified as the ideal location in which to recruit participants for the study, which included hospitality management students and faculty as well as industry representatives. All participants in the study were over the age of 18 years.

Due to the nature of the NRA Show, participants were randomly solicited for voluntary participation by students and faculty trained through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) in three primary ways: 1) via intercept while they were walking through the NRA Show, 2) when they approached one of the investigators’ participating university booths, and 3) at their own booths during slack times. Additionally, faculty, students, and recruiters were asked to participate during a special student/faculty reception co-hosted every year by three major hospitality companies that recruit from hospitality programs across the nation.

**Research Design**

The seven characteristics in the study were each manipulated on three levels. Interview Attire was “pictured” as Casual, Professional Casual, or Professional. Grade Point Average was given as 2.50, 3.10, or 3.70.\(^1\) Work Experience was classified as Less Than One Year, One to Two Years, or More Than Two Years. The four remaining characteristics—Interpersonal Skills, Interview Preparedness, Ability to Work With Others, and Alignment with Organizational Culture—were each described as Below Average, Average, or Above Average.

Hypothetical student descriptions were created on cards and presented to the respondents at the NRA Show. As an innovation beyond past practice involving conjoint analyses, these cards were full-color and laminated, and they contained photos so that respondents could “see” levels of attire (rather than simply relying on textual descriptions). The cards represented various combinations of the three levels of each of the seven characteristics. A full replication of these levels would have necessitated the creation of 2,187 cards (3 X 3 X 3 X 3 X 3 X 3 X 3). Instead, an orthogonal array was developed for the seven characteristics that required only 18 cards (Addelman, 1962). The correlations between the

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\(^1\) Baker & McGregor (2000) examined GPAs in increments of 0.10 from 2.00 to 4.00 and determined that 2.50 was viewed (by professionals, students, and faculty) as Below Average (and was usually the minimum GPA required for graduation), 3.10 was Average, and 3.70 was Above Average. They also determined that all subjects better understood GPA numbers when they were rounded to the nearest hundredth. Baker & McGregor (2009) confirmed these findings.
characteristics in the array were all zero, so that the effects of the characteristics could be examined without full replication. The design was fully tested with students at two major universities.

**Data Collection Process (Task)**

All participants were asked to assume that they were human resource managers for a hospitality management company and that they were hiring a new employee. Subjects were asked to rank the 18 theoretical students (presented on 18 cards) based on hiring preference from 1 (most desirable) to 18 (least desirable). A detailed instruction sheet that included a thorough description of each trait was provided for reference. Each card had a two-digit student number; the participants used these numbers to indicate their rankings. Participants then ranked a second set of four cards. The characteristic levels for these four cards were assigned randomly. These rankings were used to determine whether the results from the first 18 were reliable for predicting hiring preferences.

Once the task was completed the results were tabulated on a rankings sheet. One column included the 18 student ranks and the second column included the four random student ranks for validation. The second half of the instrument data recordings consisted of general demographic information, which also included participant role (student, faculty, industry, or some combination of these) and years of hospitality experience. Once participants completed their data sheets, the laminated cards were shuffled prior to the next use.

A total of 152 participants completed the research task. Those participants did not know that the 18 hypothetical student cards contained a manipulation check—one card contained the lowest level possible for each of the seven characteristics. Any reasonable person would rank that hypothetical student last. As described in Table 1, 122 participants provided usable responses.

**Please See Table 1**

**The Conjoint Analysis Approach**

The responses to the 18 cards were examined through conjoint analysis (Green & Srinivasan, 1978; Green & Wind, 1975). Conjoint analysis develops measures of utility that represent the importance of the various levels of the seven characteristics. The data were modeled such that the seven
characteristics are independent variables and the responses are dependent variables. The model is shown in Figure 1. The beta coefficients that are derived by the model are measures of utility.

Please See Figure 1.

The characteristics were coded beginning with the levels that were perceived to be least desirable. A priori, the least desirable levels would be “Casual” for Attire, “2.50” for GPA, “Less Than One Year” for Work Experience, and “Below Average” for each of the remaining characteristics. These levels serve as the base for coding the orthogonal array. Each of the characteristics was coded using two dummy variables to represent the three levels. For example, the Interpersonal Skills characteristic was coded using zeroes for both dummy variables for “Below Average.” “Average” was coded with a one for the first dummy variable and a zero for the second. “Above Average” was coded using a zero for the first dummy variable and a one for the second. Thus, the model was coded as follows: A value of one was entered when a non-base level was present; otherwise, the value entered was zero. Conjoint (beta coefficients) were then derived for each non-base level of each characteristic—14 in all. The conjoints measure the utility of any particular level relative to the base level. Utility is not measured for the base levels. Base levels are simply starting points on the basis of which utility can be measured.

The non-base levels of each characteristic will have a measure of utility, and the sum of these represents a total measure of utility for the seven characteristics. The measures for some levels will contribute more to this total utility than will others. Heuristically, if one level contributed more than another did to total utility, that level was more important than the other level. Furthermore, if the conjoint was negative, then the level was less important than the base level. Thus, conjoints provide measures of importance. Given that there are 18 hypothetical students, and 14 conjoints, conjoint analysis can be applied to a group of persons, or even to a single individual, depending on whose utility is to be measured.

Results and Discussion

Conjoint analysis was used to address RQ1. For RQ2 and RQ3, MANOVA was used to determine whether students, faculty, and professionals differed significantly from one another.

2 Participants assigned a ranking of “1” to the best hypothetical student, and “18” to the worst. This represents an inverse numerical relationship, so conjoints were actually expected to be negative. The signs are reversed to promote understanding.
Univariate ANOVAs were then used to determine which characteristic levels caused groups to differ. Multiple comparisons were performed for significant ANOVAs and tested using Tukey’s Studentized Range Test (for RQ2). Finally, the reliability of the conjoints (RQ4) was examined by comparing actual and predicted results using Kendall’s Tau statistic.

**RQ1: Are the Seven Characteristics Important?**

The 14 conjoints (two for each characteristic) are presented in Table 2. They are presented for all 122 participants pooled together, and then they are presented for Students, Faculty, and Professionals. Conjoint that are significant are indicated as such. Numerically, if a conjoint is significant, it is significantly different from zero. Because base levels for the characteristics are coded as zeroes, a level that is significant is more important than the corresponding base level. For example, the overall conjoint for Professional Attire is 1.6216. This number is significant, which means that Professional Attire is more important than Casual Attire (base level). The conjoint for Professional Casual attire is 0.0587. This number is not significantly different from zero, which means that, generally, wearing Professional Casual attire is no different from wearing Casual Attire. Care must be taken when explaining these results. Conjoint must be examined simultaneously. It is one thing to point out that Professional Casual Attire is just as good as Casual Attire, but the important point is that Professional is more important than Professional Casual or Casual Attire, and that Professional Attire makes a difference in an interview.

**Please See Table 2**

Of the seven characteristics, all except Work Experience were important at some level. No group perceived that work experience was important at any level. Each group thought Professional Attire was important, but Professional Casual Attire was no better than Casual Attire. Students and Professionals placed significant emphasis on GPA; interestingly, Faculty did not. Note also that Professionals viewed GPA as an important characteristic only when it was 3.70—not when it was 3.10. To Professionals, a 3.10 GPA was not much better than a 2.50.

All four of the remaining characteristics were important to all three groups at all levels. For each group, Interpersonal Skills and Ability to Work with Others were the most important characteristics. Not
only are these two characteristics important, but also they are significantly more important at Above
Average levels than at Average levels. While the remaining characteristics, Interview Preparation and
Alignment with Organizational Culture, are very important, Above Average levels of these two
characteristics are not significantly better than Average levels. In short, participants believe that students
are either ready for an interview or they are not, and that they either fit into an organization or they do
not.

RQ2: Does the Relative Importance Of the Characteristics Vary Across Groups?

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the groups
varied in their perceptions of what is important. Wilks’ Lambda for the MANOVA was 0.72118922, and
the p-value was 0.1252. This implies that the groups did not differ significantly from each other. Indeed,
as shown in Table 2, the only conjoint at which groups differed significantly was for the More Than
Two Years level of Work Experience. Tukey’s test showed that, for the More Than Two Years level,
Faculty differed significantly from both Students and Professionals, but Students and Professionals did
not differ from each other. Care must be taken not to overemphasize these differences, however,
because none of the three groups believed More Than Two Years work experience was important
anyway.

It is perhaps unusual for conjoints to differ so little across groups. It is tempting, too, to assert
that this lack of difference implies that Students, Faculty, and Professionals all “see things the same
way.” Careful analysis, however, shows that this may not be correct. In a conjoint analysis performed by
Baker & McGregor (2000), for example, any difference of 0.8 or so between groups was statistically
significant. In this study, Faculty assigned a conjoint of 2.8167 to Professional Attire, whereas
Professionals assigned a conjoint of 1.0744. While both of these conjoints are significant (important),
the difference between them, 1.7423, is not. The reason these conjoints (and many others) did not differ
significantly is that there is so much variation in the data within the groups. Thus, the most important
difference among the groups may be that Students and Faculty are not as consistent (knowledgeable)

3 The conjoint for Faculty for More Than Two Years of work experience (and five other conjoints in the study) are negative. If
these negative conjoints had been significant, they would have been less important than the base levels, but because they are
not significant, they simply are unimportant.
about what characteristics are really important, and Professionals are also unsure at times. Perhaps examining the effects of demographic variables can better explain differences across groups.

**RQ3: Do Demographic Variables Affect the Results?**

The participants provided demographic information about their age, gender, years of experience, level of education, and marital status. The effects of these variables were assessed using MANOVA; the test statistics and corresponding p-values for the tests are shown in Table 3. Gender, age, marital status, and education did not significantly affect the results, but experience did. Univariate models were applied to the fourteen conjoints to determine which characteristics were affected by experience. Two of the levels, Average Alignment with Organizational Culture (p-value = 0.0315) and Professional Casual Attire (p-value = 0.0245), were significant. With each increase in level of experience, the conjoint for Alignment with Organizational Culture increased by 0.116. This implies that, as individuals gain more and more experience in the industry, they realize with increasingly clarity that alignment with an organization’s values and strategic approach is important. With each increase in the level of experience, the conjoint for Professional Casual attire decreased by 0.166. With experience individuals realize that only professional attire is acceptable for job-seeking interviews.

**RQ4: Can Hiring Preferences Be Reliably Predicted?**

Each subject ranked a second group consisting of four hypothetical students. The characteristics for those students were assigned randomly, and the four students had different arrangements of characteristics than any of the 18 students in the first group. Using the individual conjoints for the appropriate levels, a predicted utility score was developed for each of the four hypothetical students. These predicted scores were ranked from 1 (best) to 4 (worst). These predicted ranks were compared with the four actual ranks that the participants provided. Kendall’s Tau was used to assess the correlation between the predicted and actual ranks. These are reported in Table 4. The correlation was significant for all groups. Thus, for all groups, conjoint models were consistent with the actual ranks assigned to a second group of students. The conjoints can be used to predict hiring preferences.

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4 A few participants indicated that they were members of a minority, and that English was not their native language. Neither minority status nor native language affected the results, but the number of participants in these demographics was so small that numerical results are hardly meaningful.

5 The Age variable was “close to” significant; this closeness was driven by its correlation with the Experience variable.
Summary, Limitations, and Future Research

Professionals place tremendous emphasis on Interpersonal Skills, Interview Preparation, Ability to Work with Others, and Alignment with Organizational Culture when deciding whom to hire. Students and Faculty also realize that these characteristics are very important. All groups except Faculty believe that GPA is important, and all groups believe that Professional Casual Attire is no better than Casual Attire. The wise interviewee dresses professionally. None of the groups believes that Work Experience is important; there is not, however, a large difference between having no work experience and having two years of industry experience.

That lack of importance may be the result of a weakness in the study. Work experience was varied on three levels: less than one year, one to two years, and more than two years. Perhaps additional research should be conducted to determine how much work experience is needed before it is strong enough to be important. For example, work experience could be varied on these three levels: less than one year, one to five years, and more than five years. Additional research could also examine the effects of work experience on the importance of various other characteristics. This study showed that as individuals gain work experience, they place greater emphasis on the importance of alignment with an organization, and they more clearly realize that professional attire is the dress code of choice for interviews.

There is considerable variation in the conjoints for Students and Faculty. This is a clear indication that Students and Faculty do not fully understand the importance of various characteristics in employment interviews. This can partially be explained by the nature of the task: Students and Faculty were instructed to assume the role of Human Resource Manager. More likely, however, the results can be explained by sheer lack of knowledge. Future research should address this issue, and simultaneously address ways in which Faculty can better understand what characteristics are important to Professionals. Research should also focus upon methods by which Faculty can share their knowledge about the importance of these characteristics with Students.

6 Some of the Professionals may also have been unaccustomed to playing the role of human resource manager. Unexplained variation was strong in the Professionals group, too.
References


Table 1: Responses Used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Responses</th>
<th>152</th>
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<tr>
<td>Less: Deletions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failed Manipulation Check (#37 ≠ 18th)</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed both of the above</td>
<td>(5) 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Responses Used</td>
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</table>

Responses Used by Group

<p>| | |</p>
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<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Students</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Responses Used</td>
<td>122</td>
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</table>

Rank = \( \beta_0 + \beta_1 d_1 + \beta_2 d_2 + \beta_3 d_3 + \beta_4 d_4 + \beta_5 d_5 + \beta_6 d_6 + \beta_7 d_7 + \beta_8 d_8 + \beta_9 d_9 + \beta_{10} d_{10} + \beta_{11} d_{11} + \beta_{12} d_{12} + \beta_{13} d_{13} + \beta_{14} d_{14} + \varepsilon \)

Where

Rank = the dependent variable, as affected by the characteristic levels and their conjoints.

\( d_1 = 1 \) if student has work experience of one to two years and 0 otherwise

\( d_2 = 1 \) if student has work experience of more than two years and 0 otherwise

\( d_3 = 1 \) if student has professional casual attire and 0 otherwise

\( d_4 = 1 \) if student has professional attire and 0 otherwise

\( d_5 = 1 \) if student has GPA of 3.10 and 0 otherwise

\( d_6 = 1 \) if student has GPA of 3.70 and 0 otherwise

\( d_7 = 1 \) if student has average interpersonal skills and 0 otherwise

\( d_8 = 1 \) if student has above-average interpersonal skills and 0 otherwise

\( d_9 = 1 \) if student has average preparation for the interview and 0 otherwise

\( d_{10} = 1 \) if student has above-average preparation for the interview and 0 otherwise

\( d_{11} = 1 \) if student has average ability to work with others and 0 otherwise

\( d_{12} = 1 \) if student has above-average ability to work with others and 0 otherwise

\( d_{13} = 1 \) if student has average alignment with the organization and 0 otherwise

\( d_{14} = 1 \) if student has above-average alignment with the organization and 0 otherwise
\( \varepsilon \) = unexplained error

\( \beta_0 \) = a parameter that adjusts the remainder of the model to the ranking scheme

\( \beta_i \) = the \( i \)th parameter (where \( i = 1 - 14 \), \( \beta_i \) is the conjoint corresponding to the "\( i \)th" variable above).

Figure 1: Conjoint Analysis Model

Table 2: Overall Results, and Results for Students, Faculty, and Professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>OVERALL</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Group Differences</th>
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<td>( R^2=.3787 )</td>
<td>( R^2=.3986 )</td>
<td>( R^2=.3699 )</td>
<td>( R^2=.3939 )</td>
<td>Multivariate ANOVA 0.1252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(n=122)</td>
<td>(n=46)</td>
<td>(n=20)</td>
<td>(n=56)</td>
<td>(p-values)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAITS (Conjoints)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attire</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Professional Casual</td>
<td>0.0587</td>
<td>-0.4638</td>
<td>1.0333</td>
<td>0.1399</td>
<td>0.1126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>1.6216*</td>
<td>1.7681*</td>
<td>2.8167*</td>
<td>1.0744*</td>
<td>0.1599</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade Point Average</td>
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<tr>
<td>GPA = 3.10</td>
<td>0.6571*</td>
<td>1.1486*</td>
<td>0.6500</td>
<td>0.2560</td>
<td>0.2292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA = 3.70</td>
<td>1.6462*</td>
<td>2.6341*</td>
<td>0.7000</td>
<td>1.1726*</td>
<td>0.0737</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Skills</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.7350*</td>
<td>2.6812*</td>
<td>2.2000*</td>
<td>2.9702*</td>
<td>0.5270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above-Average</td>
<td>4.6913*</td>
<td>4.3623*</td>
<td>4.1500*</td>
<td>5.1548*</td>
<td>0.3926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparation For the Interview</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.0123*</td>
<td>1.9638*</td>
<td>2.2833*</td>
<td>1.9554*</td>
<td>0.8550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>2.7541*</td>
<td>2.9819*</td>
<td>2.9167*</td>
<td>2.5089*</td>
<td>0.6481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability To Work With Others</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.7773*</td>
<td>2.5978*</td>
<td>2.7500*</td>
<td>2.9345*</td>
<td>0.8148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>4.4071*</td>
<td>4.2283*</td>
<td>3.9500*</td>
<td>4.7173*</td>
<td>0.5790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with Organizational Culture</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>1.3033*</td>
<td>1.4710*</td>
<td>1.5500*</td>
<td>1.0774*</td>
<td>0.5103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>2.1393*</td>
<td>2.1268*</td>
<td>2.6000*</td>
<td>1.9851*</td>
<td>0.6460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One to Two Years</td>
<td>-0.2022</td>
<td>-0.0833</td>
<td>-0.7333</td>
<td>-0.1101</td>
<td>0.3055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More Than Two Years</td>
<td>0.2227</td>
<td>0.4746</td>
<td>-1.0167</td>
<td>0.4583</td>
<td>0.0332**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* -- Statistically significant at \( \alpha=0.05 \). (This addresses RQ1).

** -- Statistically significant at \( \alpha=0.05 \). (This addresses RQ2).

Table 3: Effects of Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Wilks’ Lambda</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>0.93279732</td>
<td>0.8968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>0.81728015</td>
<td>0.0642</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>0.77341615</td>
<td>0.0114*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>0.76677616</td>
<td>0.3710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>0.89684732</td>
<td>0.5831</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
* Because this is significant at $\alpha=.05$, ANOVAs must be examined for each trait.

**Table 4: Predicting Hiring Preferences**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Kendall’s Tau</th>
<th>P-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Respondents</td>
<td>.4502</td>
<td>&lt;0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>.5012</td>
<td>&lt;0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>.4121</td>
<td>&lt;0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>.4194</td>
<td>&lt;0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>