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DISSERTATION

**IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FAKING BEHAVIOR IN THE
SELF-REPORT MEASUREMENT OF PERSONALITY**

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Doctorate in Philosophy

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Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2002

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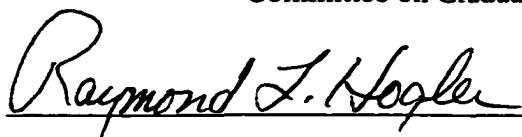
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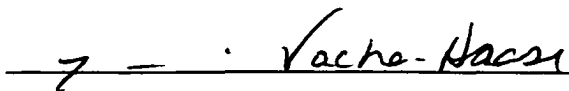
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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY ROSEMARIE MUELLER-HANSON ENTITLED IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FAKING BEHAVIOR IN THE SELF-REPORT MEASUREMENT OF PERSONALITY BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY.


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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FAKING BEHAVIOR IN THE SELF-REPORT MEASUREMENT OF PERSONALITY

Personality tests are useful predictors of work performance; however, there is a concern among some practitioners and researchers that these tests can be faked. In the literature on faking, there is a fierce debate about the extent of this issue: some research has demonstrated that validity coefficients are reduced when people fake while other research has demonstrated that validity coefficients are not affected.

These conflicting findings are a direct result of three problems in the literature. First, there is little consensus about the definition of faking. Often the term “social desirability” is used interchangeably with faking though these are conceptually different constructs. Second, in many studies, paper and pencil lie scales are often used to measure faking, though these scales may not adequately detect faking. Third, little is known about the psychological processes that underlie faking behavior.

The present study will address these issues by proposing and testing a model of impression management strategy. In this model, faking is hypothesized to be immediately preceded by an impression management strategy, which, in turn, is preceded by one’s ability, willingness, and opportunity to fake and by the individual’s perceptions of the situation. Partial support for the initial model was found and a revised model was proposed. The revised model suggests that people who have a lack of rule consciousness and emotional stability, who are concerned about presenting a positive image, and who are willing to manipulate others to attain this goal are more likely to believe that faking is

not only possible, it's acceptable. Moreover, these individuals are more likely to plan on faking on a pre-employment personality test and then follow through on this plan.

Implications of these findings include: a) people differ with regard to how much they will fake on a personality test in an employment setting with some faking substantially and others faking very little or not at all, b) the extent to which an individual fakes is determined by the person's attitudes and personality characteristics, and c) faking may be prevented by altering people's beliefs about their ability to fake and the appropriateness of faking.

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Dedication

This manuscript is dedicated to my husband Scott and son Ryan. Without their support, encouragement, and love this work would not have been possible.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The possibility of faking raises the specter of personality test scores 'measuring' not permanent dispositions but momentary presentations of self to suit the occasion... First, faking or response 'distortion' is a misleading concept because it implies that there is a 'true' response that can be determined independently of the behavior of the test-taker. Because determining the true response is logically and empirically impossible, the concept of faking must be replaced by the concept of strategic action or the idea that the test-taker uses the test items to portray himself or herself as a certain kind of person for the occasion (Kroger & Wood, 1993, p. 1297).

When personality tests are used in selection settings, the underlying assumption is that individuals are reporting their "true" personalities. However, as the above quote illustrates, personality test scores may not in fact represent one's "true" personality, but rather a strategic attempt on the part of the test taker to present oneself in a particular light. In selection settings, personality tests are used to predict future job performance, but the utility of such tests is threatened when applicants fake their responses to present a favorable image.

There are many advantages to using personality test scores in selection. Personality test scores have been shown to be predictive of a variety of work-related criteria (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Ones, Viswesvaran & Schmitt, 1993; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991), and they account for variance in work performance not accounted for by cognitive measures (e.g., Sackett, Gruys & Ellingson, 1998). Moreover, personality measures do not appear to result in as much adverse impact against minority groups as cognitive measures do (Hattrup, Rosck & Scalia, 1997; Hogan, Hogan & Roberts, 1996).

Despite these advantages, however, many organizations eschew personality testing because of concerns about faking (Douglas, McDaniel, & Snell, 1996), and these concerns have recently been at the center of a fierce debate about the effects of faking on the validity of non-cognitive measures.

One reason faking has been such a hotly debated topic is because the literature is replete with conflicting results and conclusions about the nature and scope of the issue. At the root of these conflicts is the lack of a clear definition, measurement, and understanding of the psychological processes that underlie faking in selection settings. Moreover, there are individual differences in faking, but little is known about the underlying characteristics that contribute to these differences. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to present and empirically evaluate a model that specifies the antecedents and process of faking behavior in a realistic setting.

For the purposes of the present paper, faking is defined as a behavior and it is synonymous with response distortion. Simply put, faking is the degree to which individuals alter their responses on a self-report personality inventory in an attempt to be evaluated positively. Therefore, because faking is defined as a behavior, the most appropriate way to measure this behavior is by examining the difference between personality test responses and scores in an honest versus an applicant condition.

According to the model presented in Figure 1, the degree to which a person engages in faking behavior is determined by the impression management strategy that one adopts. Impression management strategy is defined as an overarching approach that an individual uses to create a certain image of him or her self. This strategy is unique to the individual and the situation. For example, if an individual were applying for a very

desirable job, he or she might attempt to project an image of someone who is intelligent, conscientious, and honest. In contrast, this same individual might attempt to project the image of someone who lacks intelligence, honesty and conscientiousness if she or he were trying to evade military service.

The overall impression management strategy will likely shape the individual's behavior in a variety of settings. For example, the individual who is trying to present a positive image in order to secure a desirable job might exaggerate his or her good qualities on a resume, s/he might further expound on these exaggerations during an interview while simultaneously downplaying negative attributes, and s/he might distort responses on a personality questionnaire. Conversely, one's strategy might be to respond to interviews and personality tests frankly and openly if the individual believes that he or she already possesses desirable characteristics or if being caught in a lie is a concern.

Although the impression management strategy proposed in this paper is a general strategy that transcends any single situation, the present study will focus on how one's impression management strategy impacts faking on a personality inventory. The reason for this focus is that faking on personality tests has been a controversial topic that warrants further study. Specifically, in the present model the impression management strategy is synonymous with intentions (or lack of intentions) to engage in faking behavior on a self-report personality inventory.

The impression management strategy that one adopts is theorized to be determined by situational and dispositional factors. Dispositional antecedents include individual differences in the ability, willingness, and opportunity to fake. Situational antecedents are the individual's perceptions of whether the situation is important enough

to adopt a particular impression management strategy and the individual's perceptions of the subjective norms about faking.

As an initial empirical test of this model, participants will respond to a personality inventory in both an honest and a simulated applicant condition, and the difference in scores between these two conditions will provide a measure of faking. Participants will also respond to a variety of other measures, including intentions to fake, ability to fake, opportunity to fake, willingness to fake, and the perceptions of the situation. Relationships between these variables will be tested in a latent variable structural model.

As noted previously, the topic of faking on non-cognitive measures has been hotly debated in the literature. Prior to delving into a more detailed explanation of the model of faking behavior, it is necessary to briefly review the literature associated with this debate to understand the context in which the model operates.

The Faking Debate

There is widespread disagreement in the personality testing literature over the nature and extent of faking. Numerous studies have demonstrated that people can successfully fake when instructed to do so (c.f., Hough, Eaton, Dunnette, Kamp, & McCloy, 1990; Mahar, Cologon & Duck, 1995; Paulhus, Bruce, & Trapnell, 1995; Scandell & Wlazelek, 1996; Schwab, 1971; Thornton & Gierasch, 1980; Viswesvaran & Ones, 1999). However, there is less agreement as to how frequently faking occurs among applicants (Griffith, Chmielowski, Snell, Frei, & McDaniel, 2000; Luther & Thornton, 1999). Some researchers maintain that faking is rare in selection settings (Ellingson & Sackett 2001, Hogan & Nicholson, 1988; Hogan, et al., 1996) while others have argued

that it is rampant (e.g., Anderson, Warner, & Spencer, 1984; Douglas, et al., 1996; Kluger & Colella, 1993; Thumin & Barclay, 1993; Zickar & Robie, 1999).

Not only do researchers disagree on the frequency of faking in employment settings, they also disagree on the effects of faking on the validity of non-cognitive measures. Some research has demonstrated convincingly that faking does not affect the construct (Ellingson, Smith, & Sackett, 2001; Smith, Hanges, & Dickson, 2001) or criterion-related validity (e.g., Barick & Mount, 1996; Hough, et al., 1990; Ones, Viswesvaran, & Reiss, 1996) of non-cognitive measures. Moreover, attempting to partial out the variance due to socially desirable responding from overall test scores either has no effect on or slightly attenuates criterion-related validity (Hogan, et. al., 1996; Hogan & Nicholson, 1988) and does not lead to the recovery of a person's "honest" scores (Ellingson, Sackett, & Hough, 1999). In contrast, other research has shown that both construct validity (Douglas, et al., 1996; Schmitt & Ryan, 1993) and criterion-related validity (Douglas et al., 1996; Holden & Jackson, 1981; Pannone, 1984; Topping & O'Gorman, 1997; Worthington & Schlotzmann, 1986) are reduced greatly when people fake, and that selection decisions are negatively affected by faking (Douglas et al., 1996; Griffith, et al., 2000; Mueller-Hanson, Heggstad, & Thornton, 2001; Rossé, Stechar, Miller, & Levin, 1998; Zickar, Rosse, Levin, & Hulin, 1996).

Two possible reasons for these discrepant findings are: a) there are individual differences in faking behavior and b) "faking" has been defined and measured differently across these studies. When average personality scores are compared between applicant and incumbent samples, it's often the case that small differences between these two groups are observed (e.g., Ellingson & Sackett, 2001) and the conclusion is that real

applicants fake very little. However, individuals differ greatly in the amount of faking in which they engage (e.g., Griffith, et al., 2000; McFarland & Ryan, 2000), with some people not faking at all, some people only slightly exaggerating their positive qualities, and other people faking substantially. Therefore, applicants as a whole may fake very little, but some applicants fake substantially, and it is these individuals who are likely to be over-represented among high-scoring applicants. The present study is an attempt to examine the individual personality differences that contribute to differences in faking behavior. Understanding these differences is an initial step in identifying extreme fakers in an applicant pool.

A second reason for disagreement in the literature stems from the fact that “faking” has been defined and measured in a variety of ways. As a result, studies that purport to examine similar phenomena may actually be assessing very different phenomena. The next section reviews some of the ways faking has been defined and distinguishes these definitions from the definitions used in the present study.

The Nature of Faking and other Related Constructs

In much of the literature on faking, the term “faking” is often used interchangeably with similar concepts such as impression management, response distortion, and socially desirable responding. However, there are substantive differences in the meanings assigned to these terms. In the present paper, faking has been defined as the degree to which individuals alter their responses on a self-report personality inventory in an attempt to present a certain image (note that in personnel selection, there is not much concern with faking bad, and thus the term faking can be assumed to mean faking

good). Faking is therefore synonymous with the terms “response distortion” or “dissimulation.”

Faking is often defined as a subcomponent of the larger construct of social desirability. Paulhus (1991) categorizes social desirable responding as a response bias, which is “a systematic tendency to respond to a range of questionnaire items on some basis other than the specific item content (i.e., what the items were designed to measure)” (p. 17). At a very general level, substantial agreement exists as to the definition of socially desirable responding as demonstrated by the following definitions. Socially desirable responding has been defined as:

- “the tendency to give answers that make the respondent look good” (Paulhus, 1991, p. 17),
- “the need of Ss to obtain approval by responding in a culturally appropriate and acceptable manner” (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960, p. 353),
- “the tendency of subjects to attribute to themselves, in self-description, personality statements with socially desirable scale values and to reject those with socially undesirable scale values” (Edwards, 1957, p. vi),
- “the tendency to choose items that reflect societally approved behaviors” (Nunnally & Berenstein, 1994, p. 382).

Of the above definitions, only Crowne and Marlowe’s include mention of a psychological process: the need for approval. The other definitions are somewhat tautological; they describe social desirable responding as responding in a socially desirable manner. The terms “tendency” and “need” imply that an underlying, stable characteristic exists that accounts for social desirable responding. However, little is

known about the nature of this underlying characteristic. Moreover, socially desirable responding is assumed to be a response bias; however, these definitions do not necessarily lead to this conclusion. Individuals could respond in a socially desirable manner either because they truly believe that they possess socially desirable characteristics, or they may believe that they do not possess these characteristics, but they want others to see them in a positive light.

Paulhus (1991) has labeled these two possibilities self-deception and impression management, respectively. Self-deception is best described as the normal, unconscious tendency for people to view themselves in a favorable light (Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987) while impression management is described as a conscious effort to present a positive image. Therefore, people engaging in self-deception respond in a socially desirable manner in anonymous as well as public settings because they truly believe they possess good qualities, whereas people engage in impression management in public settings only. It has been hypothesized that self-deception is positively related to self-esteem, adjustment, achievement motivation, and adaptive reactions to stress (Helmes & Holden, 1986; Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987).

Attempting to control for self-deception appears to decrease the validity of personality assessments (e.g., Costa & McCrae, 1992; Hogan & Nicholson, 1988), which is likely because self-deception has been shown to be an enduring personality characteristic that relates to a number of positive traits (Furnham, 1986; Helmes & Holden, 1986; Zerbe & Paulhus, 1987). Moreover, studies using peer ratings have demonstrated that others generally view people who score high on measures of self-deception as having positive characteristics (Paulhus, 1991). Thus, it is questionable if

self-deception is being operationalized appropriately; others often view those who appear to be engaging in self-deception in a positive light, and people engaging in self-deception also view themselves positively; so it is not clear where the self-deception lies.

A central problem with the literature on faking is that faking is often defined as social desirability and no attempt is made to separate self-deception from impression management (e.g., Ones, et al., 1996). Because self-deception appears to relate to several traits of interest, it is inappropriate as a synonym for faking and will result in faulty conclusions about the effects of faking. Paulhus (1991) argues that faking is more appropriately defined by the impression management component of social desirability.

Zerbe and Paulhus (1987) have defined impression management as a “conscious presentation of a false front ... to create a favorable impression” (p. 253). They go on to explain that impression management might be both a temporary reaction to a specific situation (e.g., consciously distorting one’s answers to a personality test when applying for a very desirable job) and/or a more enduring characteristic in which certain individuals habitually engage in faking behavior across a variety of situations. Therefore, it is unclear according to this definition if impression management is a trait or a behavior or both. If impression management is merely a situation-specific behavior, the implication is that it may be controlled by altering the situation (e.g., warning people not to fake). If, however, impression management reflects a more stable individual difference, the implication is that faking may be controlled by identifying individuals who habitually engage in impression management.

As discussed previously, there is little consensus in the literature as to a clear definition of individual differences underlying impression management. The model

discussed in the present paper proposes that faking is a behavior that is influenced by several individual difference variables, including individual differences in ability, willingness, and opportunity to fake and individual perceptions of the situation. With regard to the measurement of individual differences in the tendency to fake, several efforts to measure faking have been attempted as reviewed in the following section.

Measurement of Faking and Related Constructs

Further complicating the literature on faking is the variety of ways in which it has been measured. Some of the more creative methods of identifying faking include using item-response theory (IRT) to detect aberrant responding (McFarland, Wiechmann, & Chandler, 2001; Zickar & Drasgow, 1996), measuring response latencies (Holden, Kroner, Fekken, & Popham, 1992; Vasilopoulos, Reilly, & Leaman, 2000), and asking people to indicate whether they have performed bogus tasks (Anderson, et al., 1984; Hartshorne & May, 1928; Pannone, 1984). However, to date none of these methods has been able to reliably distinguish individuals who are faking from those who are not. Moreover, using IRT and response latencies in operational settings is somewhat difficult because of the complicated nature of these procedures. Thus, self-report measures are the most common method of identifying faking behavior.

Numerous self-report measures have been designed which purport to measure faking behavior. These measures are often used as a means of identifying invalid test results and/or correcting test scores for the effects of response distortion. However, as demonstrated in the following section, there is little evidence that these measures actually capture faking behavior.

Early Measures of Faking

Hartshorne and May (1928) were perhaps the first to use a questionnaire to detect deception in children. This questionnaire contained two parts: one to measure “lying to win approval” and the other to measure “lying to escape disapproval.” Sample questions from the first part included: “Do you read the Bible every day?” and “Are you always on time at school or for other functions?” Children who scored three standard deviations above the mean of an honest control group were believed to be lying. This early assessment had a split half reliability of .84 and correlated fairly well with actual cheating behavior (correlation coefficient’s ranged from .2 to .4). Questions on the “lying to escape disapproval” scale consisted of asking children if they had cheated. The results from this scale were more problematic. Some children who had been caught cheating admitted to it, others did not. Thus, it was difficult to use this scale to reliably identify children who cheated. Subsequent self-report measures of response distortion were largely based on the landmark work of Hartshorne and May and consisted largely of either socially desirable items that are almost always true of people and socially undesirable items that are rarely true of most people.

MMPI-2 Validity Scales

The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory- 2 (MMPI-2: Hathaway & McKinley, 1991) contains two validity scales that are used to identify invalid profiles. The Lie (L) scale was designed to detect attempts to present an ideal personality description rather than an accurate description (faking good). The items mainly consist of minor faults and flaws that most people would acknowledge as true such as, “At times

I feel like swearing,” “I do not always tell the truth,” and “I get angry sometimes.”

Generally, items on the L scale are very transparent, and thus only fairly unsophisticated individuals are identified as faking good by the L scale. Individuals who are overly moralistic and rigid may also score high on the L scale (Butcher, 1990). If the score on the L scale is too high, the MMPI-2 clinical profile is considered to be invalid.

The Subtle Defensiveness scale (K) is less transparent than the L scale and was designed to detect people who are defensive and guarded when responding to the MMPI. Item content includes the denial of social problems, and thus this scale is probably more consistent with the notion of self-deception than impression management. Sample items include: “At times I feel like smashing things,” “Often I can’t understand why I have been so irritable and grouchy,” and “I often think ‘I wish I were a child again’.” The score on the K scale, which is used to correct scores on several of the clinical scales, has been found to correlate with social class and education, and several personality factors such as self-acceptance, self-esteem, and independence (Butcher, 1990). However, if the K scale score is too high, then the MMPI-2 clinical profile may not be interpretable.

The L and K scales correlate only moderately with each other (.37 for males and .28 for females), which indicates that they may be measuring different constructs. Scores on either the L or K scale can be influenced by both individual and situational variables. One could score high on the L scale because he or she is trying to “fake good” in a given situation, because he or she habitually “fakes good” across a variety of situations, or because he or she is extremely moral or religious. Likewise, someone could score high on the K scale if he or she were particularly guarded in a given situation or if she or he

engaged in denial on a regular basis as a coping mechanism. This notion of habitually attempting to project a positive image was extended through the work of Allen Edwards.

Edwards' Social Desirability Scale

Edwards (1957, 1990) believed that all statements about personality could be described in terms of their position on a social desirability continuum and that the tendency to give social desirable responses is a stable personality characteristic. To test this assertion, he developed a Social Desirability (SD) scale, which consists of 39 items from various MMPI scales. Edwards demonstrated that the SD scale correlates positively with desirable personality characteristics such as cooperativeness and agreeableness and negatively with undesirable characteristics such as anxiety and hostility. He therefore concluded that a high score could mean either that an individual was high on a given trait or that the individual was merely high on the trait of social desirability.

Because the SD scale shows very large correlations with personality measures (even when participants were responding "honestly"), this scale cannot distinguish conscious from unconscious distortion. Therefore, it is more appropriate as a measure of self-deception than faking. Moreover, despite his landmark work in the area of social desirability, Edwards never fully explained the nature of the social desirability trait. However, other theorists such as Crowne and Marlowe believed this trait reflected a need for approval, and they incorporated this notion into the development of their social desirability scale.

Marlowe Crowne Scale

Crowne and Marlowe (1960), criticized Edwards' SD scale as being confounded with psychopathology, and developed their own scale to measure social desirability: the

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (MCSD: Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Sample items include “I am always careful about my manner of dress” and “ I have never intensely disliked anyone.” Although the scale was initially designed to measure an individual’s need for approval, later interpretations suggest that it is better described as a measure of avoiding disapproval (Paulhus, 1991).

The MCSD was intended to identify individuals who were responding in a desirable manner, but interpretation of the MCSD scale is complicated by the fact that high scoring individuals actually do tend to be honest, adjusted, and friendly (as rated by others). Therefore, a high score could mean one of several possibilities: a) high self-esteem, b) a lack of knowledge about one’s own behavior, or c) a conscious lie. In fact, Paulhus (1991) has demonstrated that the MCSD is related both to self-deception and impression management, and has not been effective as a means of identifying individuals engaging in conscious response distortion. An early attempt at detecting this type of response distortion on a measure of “normal” personality was made by Hans Eysenck.

EPI L Scale

The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI: Eysenck & Eysenck, 1963) contains a lie scale (the L scale) that was designed to detect response distortion. Sample items from this scale include: “Have you ever been late for an appointment or work?” , “Do you sometimes gossip?” and “Would you always declare everything at customs, even if you knew that you could never be found out?” Eysenck, Eysenck, and Shaw (1974) found that this scale was strongly negatively related to neuroticism scores on the EPI in conditions where people were motivated to dissimulate. In conditions where people had no motivation to distort their scores, the L scale correlated to a small degree to the

neuroticism scale. Therefore, Eysenck et al. concluded that their scale effectively distinguished individuals motivated to lie from those who had no such motivation.

However, in both conditions, the reliability of the L scale was high ($\alpha = .77$), and Eysenck et al. theorized that scores on the L scale have two sources of variance: dissimulation, and a stable personality trait that is possibly related to lack of insight about oneself. Thus, like the MCSD scale, the EPI L scale is not a pure measure of situation-specific response distortion and potentially reflects individual differences in self-deception.

CPI Good Impression Scale

The California Psychological Inventory (CPI: Gough, 1987), which shares many items with the MMPI, contains a Good Impression (GI) scale that assesses an individual's desire to make a good impression and please others. Sample items include: "There are a few people who just cannot be trusted," "When things go wrong I sometimes blame the other person," and "I like to boast about my achievements every now and then." The CPI manual provides an equation to detect faking good based on the GI and other scales. However, in practice, this method identifies very few invalid protocols, indicating that it may underestimate of faking behavior.

The GI Scale correlates slightly negatively with several cognitive measures, positively with measures of conscientiousness and emotional stability, and positively with the L and K scales of the MMPI. Moreover, it correlates substantially ($r = .83$) with the Self Control Scale of the CPI (Gough, 1987). As with the MCSD scale, people who score high on the GI scale are also rated as conscientious, capable, adjusted, etc. by their

spouses (Paulhus, 1991). Thus it appears that the GI is more a measure of individual differences in self-control and adjustment than faking behavior on the CPI.

BIDR

The Balanced Inventory of Desirable Responding (BIDR: Paulhus, 1991) was created to measure Paulhus' two components of socially desirable responding: self-deceptive enhancement and impression management. The self-deceptive enhancement scale (SDE) is said to measure one's tendency towards ego enhancement. Sample items include: "My first impressions of people usually turn out to be right," "I always know why I like things," and "It's hard for me to shut off a disturbing thought." The impression management scale (IM) measures one's conscious tendency to present him or her self in an overly positive manner. Sample items include overt behaviors such as, "I never swear," "I sometimes tell lies if I have to," and "I never cover up my mistakes."

Replicating the discriminant validity of the two BIDR scales has proven to be difficult (Barrick & Mount, 1996; Frintrup, 1999; McFarland & Ryan 2001). Moreover, the correlation between scores on personality measures and the IM scale is moderate to high even under conditions of anonymity (c.f., Frintrup, 1999; Mueller-Hanson & Thornton, 2000), which is in direct contrast with Paulhus' notion that IM only operates in a public context. Therefore, though the IM scale was designed to identify situation specific faking, it clearly measures a more stable individual difference variable as well.

Conclusions about Self-Report Measures of Faking

Several of the measures reviewed above purport to measure stable individual differences in the tendency to give socially desirable responses on self-report measures (e.g., the MMPI-2 K scale, Edwards SD scale, the MCSD scale, the CPI GI scale, and the

SDE scale of the BIDR). However, these types of measures are often correlated with positive personality characteristics measured in “honest” conditions and therefore are not appropriate as measures of faking. Other measures have been specifically designed to detect conscious efforts to fake good in a particular context (e.g., the MMPI-2 L scale, the Eysenck L scale, and the BIDR IM scale.). However, it is clear that these scales measure more than just situation-specific behavior.

Hurd, Barrett, Miguel, Tan, and Lueke (2001) have noted that response distortion scales should ideally be both related and unrelated to personality. That is, response distortion and personality scales should share variance in settings that motivate distortion, and should share no variance in settings that do not motivate distortion. However, self-report measures of response distortion generally share variance with substantive personality measures regardless of the context. Thus, the shared variance between impression management and personality scales in applicant settings is not all due to faking and these scales cannot be used to reliably distinguish the fakers from the non-fakers. This failure may arise from the fact that “lie” scales may themselves be faked (Griffith, et al., 2000; McFarland, et al., 2001) such that people can consciously distort their answers on the test without obtaining a high score on the lie scale.

Another difficulty with self-report measures of faking is that although these scales purport to measure the same phenomenon, they tend to have low intercorrelations (O’Grady, 1988; Paulhus, 1991). One explanation for this finding is that these scales are actually measuring different theoretical constructs. In fact, exploratory factor analyses of these different scales often reveals content factors rather than factors of self-deception and impression management (e.g., the propensity to lie, gossip, etc), and people may

differ in what they are willing to distort, depending on the situation (Lueke, Snell, Illingworth, & Paidas, 2001). Thus, the types of things that people distort are perhaps less important than the psychological processes that underlie the distortion.

Psychological Processes Underlying Faking

The difficulties in defining and measuring faking may be a direct result of the lack of a universally accepted theory on faking. There is some evidence that individual differences exist with regard willingness and ability to fake (e.g., Douglas, et al., 1996; Zickar & Robie, 1998). However, to date there has been little research on these individual differences and about the psychological processes underlying faking. This section reviews two theories that have been proposed to explain these processes, and presents a more detailed overview of the model proposed in the present study.

Snell et al.

Snell, Sydell, and Lueke (1999) note that there is little understanding of the process of faking and of individual differences in the tendency to fake. Their interactional model of faking, reproduced in Figure 2, attempts to integrate hypothesized individual differences in faking with characteristics of the situation. As demonstrated in the figure, successful faking requires two components: the ability and the willingness to fake.

According to this theory, the ability to fake is determined by dispositional and experiential factors and by characteristics of the test itself. Dispositional factors include general cognitive ability and emotional intelligence. According to the model, individuals must be intelligent enough to know how to obtain a good score. Moreover, individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to have the ability to choose more

appropriate responses in a given situation. Most research examining the link between cognitive ability and faking has shown a negative rather than positive relationship (e.g., Hartshorne & May, 1928; Ones, et al., 1996; Weiner & Gibson, 2000). However, little research has been done to explore the link between emotional intelligence and faking. Experiential factors are defined as a recognition of both what is required by the target job and of what is being measured. Lastly, certain characteristics of the test may make it easier to fake. These characteristics may include item transparency, response format, and subjective vs. objective items. Items that are more transparent, that are on a Likert scale rather than a forced choice format, and that are subjective rather than objective are more fakable. However, even subtle, forced-choice, and objective items may be faked (Nguyen & McDaniel, 2000; Thornton & Gierasch, 1980; Worthington & Schlottmann, 1986).

The willingness, or motivation, to fake is thought to be influenced by demographic factors, dispositional factors, and perceptual factors. Research on demographic factors has been limited to age and gender, and findings have generally indicated that males and younger people engage in more dishonest behaviors (Snell et al., 1999). However, these effects are generally small and the findings have been mixed.

Dispositional factors in willingness to fake include integrity, Machiavellianism, manipulateness, organizational delinquency, locus of control, and stage of cognitive moral development. According to the model, people who are low on integrity, who are high on Machiavellianism, manipulateness, and delinquency, who have an internal locus of control, and who are in an early stage of moral development are more likely to

fake. Many of these assertions remain untested, though there is some support for the link between integrity and faking (e.g., McFarland & Ryan, 2000).

Perceptual factors in the willingness to fake include perceptions of others' behavior and attitudes, organizational fairness, personal attitudes about the acceptability of faking, expectations for the success of faking, and importance about the outcome of faking. According to the model, people are more likely to fake if they believe that other people are dissimulating, that others find faking acceptable, that the organization's selection procedures are unfair, that they are able to successfully fake, and that the situation is important enough to merit faking.

Lastly, the model leaves room for contextual factors. For example, warnings have been demonstrated to mitigate faking, though the effects are small (Dwight & Donovan, 1998). Other contextual factors that may influence faking include general economic conditions (more faking should occur when jobs are scarce), the employment status of the applicant, etc.

In a partial empirical test of this model, Lueke, et al. (2001) had participants respond to a personality inventory in a variety of hypothetical scenarios (e.g., "you are starving and have to get the job to feed your family" and "you are not competing against very many people for the job"). They measured faking behavior by examining change in responses between an honest condition and responses given in the scenarios. They found that people tended to cluster into three groups according to their willingness to fake:

- **Cluster 1: these individuals enhance their responses on employment tests any chance they have and are not deterred by situational constraints. These people feel that**

distortion is more acceptable and that everyone does it. They are also less likely to see the testing process as fair, and are most likely detected by a lie scale.

- **Cluster 2:** these individuals are similar to people in cluster 1, but they are more strategic in that they will only fake if they are unlikely to get caught and fake more on items are relevant to the job. These individuals are unlikely to be detected by a lie scale because lie scale items are often not job-related.
- **Cluster 3:** these individuals will only distort in certain circumstances (e.g., jobs are scarce). These individuals may score high on a lie scale, given the right situation, even though they usually distort less often than other individuals.

These findings provide support for the notion that individuals differ with respect to the impression management strategy that they adopt, though this study did not examine personality traits that contributed to these differences in impression management strategy. A major aim of the present study, therefore, is to propose and empirically test several personality characteristics that contribute to faking behavior.

McFarland & Ryan

McFarland & Ryan (2000, 2001) offer a general model of applicant faking using the theory of planned behavior. This model, reproduced in Figure 3, hypothesizes that faking behavior results from the intention to fake which results from attitudes toward faking, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Situational influences and the ability to fake moderate these relationships. Attitudes toward faking include beliefs about the rightness or wrongness of faking, subjective norms include beliefs about how others view faking, and perceived behavioral control includes beliefs about the ease or difficulty of faking

McFarland and Ryan (2001) found substantial support for their model. They demonstrated that attitudes toward faking, subjective norms of faking, and perceived behavioral control toward faking were all significantly related to the intention to fake. They also found that individuals offered a monetary incentive had a higher valence toward performing well, and people warned about a lie scale were more concerned about being detected. However, they did not find support for valence or warnings as moderators of the relationship between attitudes and intentions. Moreover, knowledge of the constructs being measured (ability to fake) did not moderate the relationship between intention to fake and faking behavior. Intentions to fake were significantly related to faking behavior (as measured by difference scores between honest and faking conditions). Lastly, a standard measure of response distortion (the BIDR) correlated only moderately with difference scores, indicating that this measure was not completely capturing faking behavior.

A Model of Impression Management Strategy

The model proposed in the present study integrates concepts from both the Snell et al. (1999) and McFarland and Ryan (2000, 2001) models. In the proposed model (presented in Figure 1), the antecedents of impression management are similar to the ability and willingness to fake factors in the Snell et al. model. However, in the proposed model, these antecedents do not lead directly to faking behavior, but rather to the impression management strategy. Additionally, in the present model, contextual factors such as perceptions of the situation and opportunities to manage impressions are treated as distinct concepts from the ability and willingness to manage impressions.

The impression management strategy concept in the present model is similar to McFarland and Ryan's notion of intentions to fake. However, the present model differs from McFarland and Ryan's in that it includes individual differences in personality characteristics as antecedents to the impression management strategy in addition to perceptions of the situation. The various components of the model are explained in detail below.

Antecedents

Snell et al. (1999) offers several possible antecedents to faking behavior such as the ability and willingness to fake, though little work has been done thus far to test these relationships. The model proposed in the present paper also illustrates several antecedents that will influence one's impression management strategy; however, many of these antecedents differ from the antecedents in Snell et al's model. The antecedents in the present model can be grouped into four major categories: perceptions of the situation, ability to manage impressions, willingness to manage impressions, and opportunity to manage impressions.

Perceptions of the situation. Both Snell et al. (1999) and McFarland and Ryan (2000, 2001) include perceptions of the situation in their models. For faking to occur, individuals must perceive that the situation is important enough to merit faking and that faking is appropriate and/or possible. In the present model, factors hypothesized to be important to one's perceptions of the situation include the perceived importance of presenting a positive impression in a given situation, the belief that answering items in a certain way will lead to an improved score, and the expectancy that one has the ability to improve his or her score. Additionally, people's perceptions about subjective norms may

also be important. Lueke et al., (2001) found that beliefs about the prevalence and acceptability of faking were related to faking. Therefore, these perceptions are likely to lead to an individual adopting an impression management strategy.

Hypothesis 1: Perceptions of the situation (perceived importance of presenting a positive impression, beliefs about one's ability to present a positive impression, and beliefs about subjective norms) will be related to the impression management strategy.

Ability to manage impressions. In the present model, the ability to manage impressions is defined as a cluster of knowledge and skills that enables an individual to adopt an impression management strategy. Frei, Snell, McDaniel & Griffith (1999) proposed that ability to fake is related to: ability to identify personality characteristics associated with good job performance and ability to figure out what a personality test is measuring. However, McFarland & Ryan (2001) found that knowledge of what the test measures did not impact faking. This finding may have occurred because they attempted to manipulate knowledge by providing some subjects with information about the test measured, while others did not receive any information. However, most personality tests are so transparent that even individuals in the group that did not receive information were probably able to guess what the test measured. Other researchers have theorized that general cognitive ability is related to the ability to fake (e.g., Snell et al., 1999); however, the opposite relationship has been observed in the literature (Hartshorne & May, 1928; Ones, et al., 1996; Weiner & Gibson, 2000).

Despite this conflicting evidence, it seems intuitively obvious that to adopt an impression management strategy, one must know how items should be answered to

obtain a good score. For example, when confronted with the item “I get anxious easily at work,” one must know that answering “false” or “disagree” will result in a more favorable score than answering “true” or “agree.” Therefore, it is hypothesized that individuals who know how to answer personality questions in a favorable manner are more likely to adopt an impression management strategy.

A second factor that may contribute to one’s ability to manage impressions is self-monitoring. Self-monitoring is defined as “self-observation and self-control guided by situational cues to social appropriateness” (Snyder, 1974, p. 526). It has been suggested that high self-monitors have the ability to be successful fakers (McFarland & Ryan, 2000; Paulhus, 1991; Schlenker, 1980); however, there has been little empirical support for this link. One possibility for this lack of support is that the link between self-monitoring and faking has always been studied directly. High self-monitors are likely to be concerned with managing impressions regardless of the situation. Therefore, it may be difficult to detect a direct relationship between self-monitoring and faking behavior. However, detecting a relationship between self-monitoring and adopting an impression management strategy is more likely because, by definition, high self-monitors are more likely to adopt intentions to engage in impression management.

Hypothesis 2: Ability to fake, as measured by knowledge of how to obtain a desirable score and self-monitoring, will be positively related to the impression management strategy.

Willingness to manage impressions. In addition to having the ability to adopt an impression management strategy, one must be willing to adopt this strategy for successful faking to occur. Machiavellianism, the willingness to be deceitful and manipulative to

further one's own interests, has consistently been theorized to relate to impression management (Schlenker, 1980; Snell et al., 1999) and some support for this relationship has been found (Cunningham, Wong & Barbee, 1994). People who are high on the characteristic of Machiavellianism could therefore be expected to alter their scores on a personality scale in order to achieve a desired goal.

In a similar vein, low integrity has been hypothesized to relate to the willingness to be fake, though support for this hypothesis has been mixed (c.f., Cunningham, Wong, & Barbee, 1994; Lilienfeld, 1993; McFarland & Ryan, 2000). These mixed results could be the result of differences in the way integrity has been measured. As Murphy (2000) notes, integrity is a complex construct and different integrity tests often capture different aspects of the construct. At a broad level, integrity is thought to contain components of conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness (Ones, 1993). McFarland and Ryan (2000) found that individuals who were low in conscientiousness and emotional stability (measured in an honest condition) were more likely to fake. However, conscientiousness and emotional stability are broad characteristics. It is likely that only certain components of these broader constructs are related to one's propensity to fake. In the present model it is hypothesized that individuals low in rule-conscientiousness and adjustment are more likely to adopt an impression management strategy because these are two of the characteristics that relate most strongly to a lack of integrity (Murphy & Lee, 1994).

Hypothesis 3: The willingness to fake, as measured by high Machiavellianism, low rule-conscientiousness, and low adjustment, will be positively related to the impression management strategy.

Opportunity to manage impressions. Even if one has the ability and willingness to engage in impression management, there may be situations in which the individual does not have the opportunity to engage in impression management. For example, the test may not be transparent enough for the person to know how to respond in order to increase his or her score, the person may fear being detected by a lie scale or verification of responses, or the person may have high enough levels of the trait of interest that further increasing his or her scores are unnecessary or, in fact, impossible. Individuals who are in actuality low on the trait of interest have more room to increase their scores through faking. Therefore, opportunity to manage impressions may largely be a function of an individual's low "true" standing on desirable traits such as conscientiousness and emotional stability, and individuals who lack desirable traits may fake to appear more desirable.

Hypothesis 4: Individuals who have more opportunity to manage impressions, as measured by low standings on desirable traits, are more likely to adopt an impression management strategy.

Impression Management Strategy and Faking Behavior

In Snell et al's (1999) interactional model of faking, they hypothesized that individual differences in the ability and willingness of individuals to distort their responses would interact with the assessment context to predict successful faking. McFarland and Ryan's (2000/2001) model also hypothesizes relationships between ability and willingness to fake and intentions to fake. The present model incorporates and extends these perspectives with the notion of impression management strategy. The impression management strategy is an individual's general plan for how to present him or

her self in a given situation and is akin to McFarland and Ryan's notion of intentions to distort or not distort one's self-presentation.

As Ajzen (1992) notes "the most immediate determinant of any given behavior is the intention to perform or not perform that behavior" (p. 33, emphasis in original). As faking is an actual behavior, it is most proximally predicted by intentions to fake. Intention to fake has been defined as the impression management strategy in the present model. Therefore, intentions to fake are believed to be the best predictor of actual faking behavior.

Hypothesis 5a: Faking behavior will be predicted by the impression management strategy.

Hypothesis 5b: The impression management strategy will mediate the relationship between the antecedents and faking behavior.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

Participants

Participants were 516 undergraduate students from introductory psychology classes who volunteered in exchange for research credit. Due to the lengthy nature of the surveys, data were screened for random responding in three ways. First, surveys were screened to ensure participants answered at least seven of the ten items in the final questionnaire. This survey was chosen because it was the shortest of all the surveys and leaving too many items blank would render this survey useless. Six individuals failed to complete this questionnaire and their responses were discarded. Next, responses were screened to ensure participants followed the directions on the knowledge questionnaire (described below). Eleven individuals did not follow directions and their responses were discarded. Finally, a random response index was created by examining scores on three pairs of identical items. Ten participants had responses that differed by more than two points across the three pairs, indicating a substantial amount of inconsistency in responding, and their responses were discarded. In all, 27 participants were discarded because of random responding or failure to follow instructions, leaving a total of 489 participants.

Seventy percent of the participants were women, and ages ranged from 18 to 43 ($M = 19$, $SD = 1.94$). The majority of the participants were Caucasian (86%), which is representative of the university population as a whole.

To estimate the generalizability of the student sample to an applicant population, participants were asked about their previous work history. Although 71% of the participants were freshmen, 98% reported having at least some previous work experience. The average amount of work experience reported was 3.6 years ($SD = 2.3$). Thirty eight percent reported being employed at the time of the study, and the number of hours worked per week for these individuals was highly variable, ranging from 2 to 40 hours ($M = 16$ and $SD = 7.75$). The types of experience reported could generally be classified as retail sales, childcare, or restaurant work. Although the students in the sample were relatively young and did not have a great deal of work experience, most had at least some exposure to work that is typical for an entry-level working population.

Measures

Background questionnaire. A short background questionnaire was administered to measure characteristics of the sample and previous work experience. This information was used to evaluate the representativeness of the sample to the adult working population. The background questionnaire is presented as Appendix A.

Perceptions of the situation. Individuals' perceptions of the situation were measured through a 10-item questionnaire developed specifically for this study (see Appendix B). These items measured participants' beliefs that attaining a high score in the simulated applicant condition was important, that they were capable of increasing their scores (perceived behavioral control), and that others faked and found this behavior acceptable (subjective norms). Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*). High

scores on the perceptions questionnaire indicate a perception that faking was appropriate and desirable in this situation.

Ability to manage impressions. Ability to manage impressions was measured through a knowledge questionnaire and a self-monitoring scale (Snyder, 1974). The knowledge questionnaire (see Appendix C) consisted of 20 items from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP: Goldberg, 1999). Ten items measured emotional stability and ten items measured conscientiousness. These items were chosen because conscientiousness and emotional stability are traits that are typically valued by employers across a variety of occupations, and therefore, knowledge of how to obtain a high score on these traits appears to be particularly relevant in selection settings.

Rather than rating themselves on these items, however, the participants were asked to imagine that they were trying to answer these questions in such a way as to present a very positive image to an employer. They were instructed to indicate what the “right” response would be in order to achieve the best score possible and were given the following choices: “strongly agree,” “strongly disagree,” and “neither agree nor disagree.” Items that were answered in the keyed direction were scored as correct. For example, the item “Waste my time” measures conscientiousness and answering “strongly disagree” would result in a higher conscientiousness score. Therefore, “strongly disagree” was scored as a correct answer while “strongly agree” and “neither agree nor disagree” were scored as incorrect. The total score on the knowledge questionnaire could range from 0 to 20 with high scores indicating greater knowledge of how the items should be answered to obtain a desirable score.

Self-monitoring was measured using Snyder's (1974) 25-item self-monitoring scale. This scale has shown adequate reliability and validity evidence in a number of studies (e.g., Snyder, 1974; Snyder & Tanke, 1976). Sample items include "My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs" and "I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting" (both reverse scored). Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*). High scores indicate high levels of self-monitoring.

Willingness to manage impressions. Willingness to manage impressions was earlier defined by individual differences in Machiavellianism, adjustment, and rule-conscientiousness. Machiavellianism was measured by the Mach IV, Version 1 (Christie & Geis, 1970). The Mach IV, a 20-item scale, was designed to measure a person's tendency to manipulate others to achieve his or her own ends and has been shown to have adequate reliability and validity in a variety of studies (Wrightsman, 1991). Sample items include "Most people who get ahead in the world lead clean, moral lives" and "Honesty is the best policy in all cases" (both reverse scored). Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*). High scores indicate a high level of Machiavellianism.

Adjustment and rule-conscientiousness were measured by representative items (10 for each scale) from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP: Goldberg, 1999), which are listed in Appendix D. IPIP scales have been shown to have good internal consistency and to relate to other well-developed measures of similar constructs. On each of these scales, participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options

ranged from 0 = *Very Accurate* to 4 = *Very Inaccurate*). These scales were reverse scored so that high scores would indicate low levels of rule consciousness and adjustment.

Opportunity to manage impressions. As noted earlier, opportunity to manage impressions is believed to be largely a function of an individual's "true" standing on the characteristic of interest. Individuals who are low in socially desirable traits have more opportunity to increase their personality scores through faking. Therefore, opportunity to manage impressions was assessed by measuring participants' "true" standing on the broad traits of conscientiousness and emotional stability. These traits were chosen because they often show the largest increases between honest and fake good conditions (e.g., McFarland & Ryan 2000, 2001), and they are similar to traits measured in the target personality questionnaire. "True" standing was assessed on conscientiousness and emotional stability as measured by 20 items (for each scale) from the IPIP (Goldberg, 1999; see Appendix E for a list of these items). Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Agree* to 4 = *Strongly Disagree*). Each scale was scored separately and items were reversed scored so that high scores indicated low levels of conscientiousness and emotional stability, and thus more opportunity to engage in impression management.

Impression management strategy. The impression management strategy that individuals' intended to adopt was measured by the seven items used by McFarland and Ryan (2001)¹. This scale reflected whether an individual intended to fake on the target personality selection assessment to raise his or her scores, and demonstrated good

¹ My sincerest thanks to Dr. Lynn McFarland who graciously allowed her measure of intentions to be used in the present study.

reliability and validity (for predicting actual faking behavior) in the McFarland and Ryan study. A sample item from this scale is “I intended to fake my responses on the test.” Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*). High scores indicate greater intentions to fake.

Personality assessment. The KeyPoint Job Fit Assessment (ADP Screening & Selection Services, 2002) was used as the target personality assessment. The KeyPoint Job Fit Assessment is a commercially available personality assessment that measures five broad characteristics that relate to the five-factor model of personality (Digman, 1990; John, 1989). The scales on the Job Fit Assessment are as follows:

- Extroversion is a preference for working with others rather than alone. This dimension also refers to the extent to which an individual enjoys situations in which he or she can interact with others, such as company gatherings, meetings, etc.
- Dependability refers to the tendency to be punctual, reliable, and responsible at work. Dependable individuals have a tendency to follow established rules and procedures and follow through on their work commitments.
- Assertiveness reflects a preference for dealing with others in a direct manner, expressing opinions openly, and taking initiative in work situations. Assertive people are persuasive, decisive, and strong leaders.
- Achievement Striving is a tendency to work hard, a willingness to delay personal gratification to meet work goals, and an intrinsic desire to improve one’s work-related skills.

- **Stress Tolerance** refers to how an individual handles stress at work. This dimension reflects an individual's resiliency in the face of demanding or difficult situations, events, or people at work.

The Job Fit Assessment consists of 60 items (12 per scale). Participants responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*). The Job Fit Assessment was chosen for the present study because it was designed specifically for use in selection settings, and is typical of other self-report assessments used with job applicants. High scores on each scale indicate higher levels of each trait.

The Impression Management Questionnaire. Despite the difficulties with self-report scales of faking, these scales are commonly used to assess faking in an actual selection context. Therefore, a self-report measure of faking, the Impression Management Questionnaire (IMQ: Mueller-Hanson, 2001), was included in the present study (see Appendix F). The IMQ, consisting of 15 items, was designed to assess conscious response distortion. Similar to the impression management scale of the BIDR (Paulhus, 1991), the IMQ consists of statements about behaviors in which nearly everyone engages, but to which hardly anyone likes to admit. In a previous study (Mueller-Hanson, 2001), the IMQ demonstrated adequate reliability and validity. The IMQ items were interspersed with the KeyPoint Job Fit items, and participants responded to each item using the same 5-point Likert scale (response options ranged from 0 = *Strongly Disagree* to 4 = *Strongly Agree*). High scores indicate a greater amount of response distortion.

Procedures

After completing the background questionnaire, participants completed the self-monitoring scale (ability to manage impressions), the Machiavellianism, rule consciousness, and adjustment scales (willingness to manage impressions), and the broad measures of emotional stability and conscientiousness (willingness to manage impressions). Prior to completing each set of measures, participants were urged to respond honestly and reminded that their responses would be kept strictly anonymous and confidential. They were further instructed to respond by describing the way they truly saw themselves, and not how they wished others to see them. Next, participants completed the KeyPoint Job Fit questionnaire with the IMQ embedded in it with the same honesty instructions.

After completing the Job Fit questionnaire and IMQ, participants took the knowledge test. For this measure, participants were instructed not to respond by describing themselves, but rather to indicate what the “best” answer would be if one were trying to obtain a good score and make a favorable impression. This was done so that the knowledge questionnaire would truly be a measure of one’s ability to identify the best answer rather than one’s willingness to do so. After completing the knowledge questionnaire, the participants were given a short, five to ten-minute break.

After the break, the participants were led through a guided imagery exercise in which they were asked to imagine their dream job. The instructions for this exercise were as follows:

We are now going to do something completely different. Put down your pencils for a moment, lean back in your seats, close your eyes, and think about your

dream job. Think about the type of work you want to be doing. Think about where you will be working. Think about the type of people you will be working with. Lastly, think about the type of salary that you will be making. Now open your eyes and imagine that you have finished college and any graduate training needed to qualify for your dream job. Imagine that you are now applying for this dream job and that you have had several interviews with a very desirable company. Things seem to be going well when you get a call from the human resources director and she says “We are really interested in you and we think you are just who we are looking for. But there is just one more thing we need you to do. We need you to take and pass a personality test before we can make you an offer because we only want the right kind of people working here. If you can pass the test, I’m ready to make you an offer – if not, I wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. However, I have ways of detecting if you have lied on this test, and if I catch you doing this, you will not be offered the position.”

The participants were then asked if they understood these instructions and were asked to again complete the KeyPoint Assessment (with the IMQ embedded in it) as if they were in the above situation, without regard to how they had responded to the questionnaire previously. Participants were asked to imagine their “dream job” because it was important that they imagine they were applying for a job that was very desirable. Additionally, the instructions made it clear that passing the personality test was the only thing standing in the way of obtaining this job; however, they were warned not to lie. Although this exact scenario is unlikely in actual employment settings (i.e., rarely would a personality test be used to make a final decision in a selection setting), these

instructions were carefully constructed to give participants the psychological realism of an applicant setting. In many situations, a personality test may be a major determinant of whether an applicant continues through the screening process.

After completing the KeyPoint Job Fit for a second time, the participants were asked to reflect back on the last scenario and recall what their intentions were while completing the personality assessment in the simulated applicant condition. At this point, it was emphasized that participants were no longer responding as if they had been applying for their dream jobs, and they were urged to be very candid about their intentions. The intentions questionnaire was given after the simulated applicant scenario because it was felt that giving the intentions measure before would only prime people to fake (the intentions questionnaire was used in a similar manner by McFarland & Ryan, 2001). Moreover, because participants had been warned against lying, it may have been difficult for some individuals to admit up front that they intended to lie on the personality assessment.

Lastly, the participants were asked about their perceptions of the simulated applicant condition. Again, participants were asked to reflect back on the applicant scenario and honestly report what their perceptions were at that time. Again, these perceptions were measured after the actual scenario because measuring them beforehand may have primed people to fake and some participants may have had difficulty answering honestly. Once all the questionnaires had been completed, the participants were debriefed and dismissed.

Analyses

The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling with EQS (Bentler, 1995). Following the process outlined by Byrne (1994) and Bentler (1995), a two-step approach was used. First, measurement models were tested for each of the hypothesized latent variables using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Testing the measurement models before the structural models is necessary to ensure that the indicators adequately represent the hypothesized underlying latent variable. Models that did not adequately represent the latent variable were respecified based on theoretical considerations and retested. Second, the hypothesized structural model was tested. Across all the models tested, the maximum number of parameters to be estimated was 68. Bentler and Chou (1987) recommend a ratio of sample size to estimated parameters of at least 5:1. In the present study, this ratio was approximately 7:1, indicating that the sample size was sufficient to test all of the proposed models.

For all these analyses, Mardia's coefficient was used to evaluate multivariate normality. For all models tested, the normalized estimate of Mardia's coefficient was greater than 3, which indicates significant non-normality. Therefore, all models in the present study were evaluated using maximum likelihood estimation with the robust command, which is the most effective way of analyzing non-normal data in EQS (Bentler, 1995).

The fit of the model to the data was evaluated in several ways. First, the chi-square statistic provides an indication of whether the observed fit is significantly different than the expected fit. A nonsignificant chi-square value indicates a good fit; however, the chi-square statistic is extremely sensitive to sample size and will almost always be

significant with medium to large samples (Bentler, 1990; Bentler & Bonett, 1980; Raykov, Tomer, & Nesselroade, 1991). Therefore, in the present study, two fit statistics which are not heavily influenced by sample size are reported in addition to the chi-square value (the Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square, which adjusts the chi-square value for non-normal data, is reported in place of the standard chi-square): the Robust Comparative Fit Index (CFI), which is equivalent to the CFI for non-normal data, and the Root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA, Steiger & Lind, 1980).

The CFI can range from 0 to 1.0 and provides a comparison of the proposed model fit to a null model (no relationships between the variables). A CFI of .90 or higher is indicative of a good fit (Newcomb, 1990, 1994). The RMSEA provides an estimate of the average of the population residuals. An RMSEA of .05 or less indicates a close fit, .08 or less indicates a fair fit, and .10 and above indicates a poor fit (Steiger, 1989).

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

Descriptives

Means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum scores for the antecedents of impression management and the intentions to engage in impression management are presented in Table 1. The knowledge measure was fairly restricted with a mean score of 18.46 out of a possible maximum score of 20. Moreover, 77% of the participants scored an 18 or higher on this measure, revealing that there were few individual differences in knowledge. In examining the pattern of correlations (see Table 2), it appears as if the knowledge measure does not correlate in a meaningful way with the other variables, which, as discussed below, limits the usefulness of this measure in the rest of the analyses.

Scores on the target personality test (The KeyPoint Job Fit Assessment) in both the honest and simulated applicant condition are presented in Table 3. Paired t-tests revealed significant differences ($p < .001$) between these scores such that average scores in the simulated applicant condition are higher than average scores in the honest condition. The size of these differences ranges from a low of .25 standard deviation units for the trait of assertiveness to a high of .87 standard deviation units for the trait of achievement striving and the impression management questionnaire.

These findings are consistent with previous literature that has generally found traits related to conscientiousness (in this case dependability and achievement striving)

and emotional stability (stress tolerance) to be the most susceptible to faking while traits such as assertiveness and extroversion are less so (e.g., Merydith & Wallbrown, 1996; Ross, Bailey, & Mills, 1997), though all these traits are fakable to a certain degree. The size of the differences between the honest and faked condition is also consistent with differences between applicants and incumbents (e.g., Ellingson, et al., 2001; Rossé, et al., 1998) observed in the literature, indicating that the simulated applicants in the present study behaved similar to actual applicants.

However, perhaps more informative than the average size of the differences are the variations in differences. As shown in Table 3, differences between honest and faked conditions ranged from negative to positive, indicating that some people actually obtained lower scores in the simulated applicant condition than they did in the honest condition. However, most other people raised their scores significantly.

Reliability

Internal consistency reliability estimate for all study variables are presented along the diagonal in Table 2. As demonstrated in the table, the reliability was generally adequate for all measures used in the study. The reliability of the difference scores was calculated using the formula presented by Crocker and Algina (1986). Two of these coefficients, achievement striving and the IMQ, are .64, which approaches an acceptable level. However, the remaining four reliability coefficients are all .50 or less, indicating that the reliability of these differences was unacceptably low.

Test of Hypotheses

Measurement models. Because the reliability of the difference scores was generally low, it was not appropriate to use any one difference score to operationalize

faking behavior. However, because the difference scores had moderate to high inter-correlations, it was hypothesized that a single underlying latent variable might account for the shared variance between these variables. A confirmatory factor analysis using the difference scores as indicators of a general faking factor was conducted. Error terms for the achievement striving and dependability difference scores were allowed to correlate because achievement striving and dependability are both part of the larger construct of conscientiousness. Standardized factor loadings and residuals for the indicators are presented in Table 4. Overall, the latent variable appears to be well specified by the indicator variables ($\chi^2 = 21.8$, $df = 8$, $p < .001$, $CFI = .98$, $RMSEA = .08$), and therefore this general faking factor will be used in the structural model to represent faking.

The measurement model for the impression management strategy, operationalized by the intentions measure, was tested using the seven items from the intentions measure as indicators. Error terms for item 4 (I intended to make myself look as good as possible on the test) and item 5 (I intended to make myself look very good on the test) were allowed to correlate because these items had very similar wording. Standardized factor loadings and residuals for this model are presented in Table 4. Overall, the latent variable appears to be well specified by the indicator variables ($\chi^2 = 44.13$, $df = 13$, $p < .001$, $CFI = .98$, $RMSEA = .08$), and therefore this general intentions factor will be used in the structural model to represent the impression management strategy.

The measurement models for the antecedents of the impression management strategy, presented in Figure 4, were tested altogether (with the exception of the knowledge measure, which was tested in the structural model as a single indicator). In the figure, the small circles on the left of the indicators represent error terms for each of

the observed variables. The numbers inside the circles are standardized residuals; squaring this number provides the percentage of variance in the observed variable that is not accounted for by the factor. The latent variable for perceptions of the situation was indicated by three homogeneous item clusters (HICS) instead of the individual items. These HICS were derived for the present study based on the content of the perceptions items. The first HIC consisted of the first three items from the perceptions measure and reflected a belief that the situation was important enough to warrant engaging in impression management. The second HIC consisted of the next three items from the perceptions measure and reflected the belief that one was able to achieve a higher score through faking. This cluster is similar to the notion of perceived behavioral control. The last HIC consisted of the final four items from the perceptions measure and reflected beliefs about other's attitudes toward faking. This cluster is similar to the notion of subjective norms. Error terms for the first and second clusters were allowed to correlate because these two clusters reflected beliefs about one's self whereas the third cluster reflected beliefs about others.

The latent variable for willingness to engage in impression management was indicated by three scales: Self-monitoring, Lack of Rule-consciousness, and Machiavellianism. Although self-monitoring was initially hypothesized to contribute to one's ability to fake, the self-monitoring scale was completely unrelated to the knowledge measure, and therefore, it is possible that self-monitoring is better defined as a reflection of one's willingness to fake. Moreover, although lack of adjustment was initially hypothesized to contribute to one's willingness to fake, this variable did not relate to the other indicators, and therefore, this indicator was dropped from the analysis.

Opportunity to engage in impression management was earlier defined as having low standings on the desirable traits of conscientiousness and emotional stability. Because conscientiousness and emotional stability are conceptually unrelated, two latent variables were used to capture opportunity to manage impressions. The conscientiousness variable was indicated by four theoretically derived HICS. The first reflected a tendency to be neat (e.g., "Like to tidy up"). The second reflected a preference for order and planfulness (e.g., "Do things according to a plan"). The third reflected dutifulness (e.g., "Neglect my duties"), and the fourth reflected detail orientation and perfectionism (e.g., "Am exacting in my work). The emotional stability variable was indicated by three theoretically derived HICS. The first reflected anger and hostility (e.g., "Get angry easily"), the second reflected anxiety (e.g., "Worry about things"), and the third reflected moodiness (e.g., "Change my mood a lot").

When testing the antecedents measurement model, all latent variables were allowed to covary except for conscientiousness and emotional stability because these two characteristics are conceptually unrelated. The model provided a fair fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 238.28$, $df = 59$, $p < .001$, CFI = .89, RMSEA = .08), and all path coefficients were significant at $p < .05$.

Structural model. Given that all the measurement models fit fairly well, the full structural model as hypothesized in Figure 1 was tested. In the model, ability to manage impressions was indicated by the overall score on the knowledge measure. Because this was a single indicator latent variable, the factor loading was defined by the square root of reliability and the error variance was defined as one minus the reliability. The full model, including standardized path coefficients, is presented in Figure 5. In the figure, small

circles on the side of the endogenous latent variables represent the standardized disturbance terms. The numbers inside the circles represent prediction error; squaring this number provides the percentage of variance in the latent variable not accounted for by the predictors in the model. Path coefficients indicated with an asterisk (*) are significant at $p < .01$. Overall, the model provided a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 842$, $df = 311$, $p < .001$, CFI = .90, RMSEA = .06).

Hypotheses were tested by examining the structural path coefficients in the model. Hypothesis 1, that perceptions of the situation would relate to the impression management strategy, was supported as indicated by the significant path coefficient between these two variables. Hypothesis 2, that ability to fake would be related to impression management strategy, was not supported. The path coefficient between these two variables was near zero and was statistically non-significant. A Wald test indicated that this parameter could be dropped without affecting the model. Hypothesis 3, that willingness to fake would be related to impression management strategy was not supported. Although the path coefficient between these two variables was significant, it was negative, and in the opposite direction predicted. This seemingly counterintuitive finding is discussed in greater detail below.

Hypothesis 4, that opportunity to manage impressions would be related to the impression management strategy, was supported. Both low conscientious and emotional stability were significantly related to intentions to manage impressions. Hypothesis 5a, that the impression management strategy would be related to faking behavior, was supported as indicated by the significant path coefficient between these two variables.

Mediated Relationships

Given the high positive relationship between the perceptions variable and the willingness variable and the perplexing negative relationship between willingness and the impression management strategy variable, it seemed reasonable to assume that willingness to manage impressions was operating through perceptions of the situation to affect the impression management strategy. Previous literature has suggested that perceptions about the importance of the behavior, the belief that one has the ability to engage in the behavior, and subjective norms are most proximal to intentions to engage in the behavior (Fisbein & Ajzen, 1975). Therefore, the effect of willingness to manage impressions on the impression management strategy was theorized to be mediated by perceptions of the situation. Following the recommendations of Baron and Kenny (1986), mediation was tested by first examining the relationships between the predictor (willingness) and the mediator (perceptions), and the mediator and the dependent variable (impression management strategy). These path coefficients of .43 and .83, respectively, were both significant ($p < .001$). Finally, the relationship between the predictor (willingness) and the dependent variable (intentions) was examined. This path coefficient of .40 was also significant ($p < .001$), setting up the necessary prerequisites for mediation.

Following the recommendations of Holmbeck (1997), mediation was tested using a two-step process. First the fit of the mediated model (willingness to perceptions to strategy) was evaluated (see Table 5 for a summary of fit statistics). Next, this same model was evaluated by adding a direct path from willingness to intentions. Difference in chi-square values and degrees of freedom were then tested for significance (a non-

significant difference would indicate that adding a direct relationship between the predictor and the dependent variable does not improve the fit of the model). This difference was non-significant, indicating full mediation.

Hypothesis 5b stated that the impression management strategy would mediate the relationship between the antecedents and faking behavior. This second hypothesized mediated relationship was tested in the same manner described above. First the prerequisites for mediation were tested. With the willingness variable now affecting the impression management strategy variable through the perceptions variable, the path coefficient from opportunity to manage impressions (as operationalized by low conscientiousness) was reduced to .05, which was nonsignificant, and the ability to manage impressions remained nonsignificant. Therefore, only perceptions of the situation and opportunity to manage impressions (as operationalized by low emotional stability) were significantly related to the mediator (impression management strategy, and only these two predictors were included in further testing. As shown in Figure 5, the relationship between the mediator and the dependent variable (faking behavior) was significant ($p < .001$). Lastly, the paths from the predictors to the dependent variable were tested and found to be significant ($p < .01$), providing the necessary prerequisites for mediation.

Mediation was then tested with the same two-step process outlined above separately for each predictor. As shown in Table 5, when the path from low emotional stability to faking behavior was added, the chi-square difference test was nonsignificant, indicating full mediation. However, when a path was added from perceptions of the situation to faking behavior, the chi-square difference test revealed a significant

improvement in fit, and therefore, this relationship is not fully mediated. It may be that the relationship between perceptions and faking behavior is partially mediated by the impression management strategy, and this hypothesis will be explored further in the next section.

Model Respecification

Taken together the results outlined above suggest that the original model be respecified as presented in Figure 6. The revised model reflects the findings outlined above: ability to manage impressions and opportunity to manage impressions (as operationalized by conscientiousness) are not significantly related to the impression management strategy and were therefore removed. The effect of willingness to engage in impression management on the impression management strategy is mediated by perceptions of the situation, and the effect of perceptions of the situation on faking behavior is partially mediated by the impression management strategy. This model provides a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 576$, $df = 200$, $p < .001$, CFI = .91, RMSEA = .07) and is more parsimonious than the initial hypothesized model.

To further explore the nature of the impression management strategy as a partial mediator of the relationship between perceptions and faking behavior, the model in Figure 6 was reevaluated after removing the path from perceptions to the impression management strategy. Removing this path caused a significant decrease in fit ($\Delta \chi^2 = 228.56$, $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .0001$), which suggests that the impression strategy does serve as a partial mediator of this relationship.

IMQ as a Substitute for Faking

Earlier it was noted that the IMQ, a faking detection scale imbedded in the target personality measure, was included in this study because these types of measures are sometimes the only means for an organization to detect faking. To assess the adequacy of the IMQ as a substitute for faking, the model presented in Figure 6 was reanalyzed with the IMQ scores in the simulated applicant condition as the indicator for the faking behavior variable. This factor was indicated by three HICS (derived by randomly assigning 5 items to each cluster) from the IMQ. This model fit nearly as well as when personality difference scores were used to define faking ($\chi^2 = 548.63$, $df = 144$, $p < .001$, $CFI = .90$, $RMSEA = .08$), indicating that scores on this measure may be an adequate substitute for more direct measures of faking.

Summary

In summary, these results provide support for the notion that faking behavior is most proximately predicted by intentions to fake, which, in turn, is most predicted by perceptions of the situation (defined as belief that the situation merits faking, that one has the ability to fake, and that faking is a common and acceptable behavior) and opportunity to fake as operationalized by low emotional stability. Perceptions of the situation are preceded by willingness to fake, which is comprised of several personality characteristics, including high Machiavellianism, low rule-conscientiousness, and high self-monitoring. Moreover, scores on a traditional paper-and-pencil measure of faking may approximate more direct measures of assessing faking. Implications for these findings are discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

In an effort to integrate prior literature on the psychological processes underlying faking behavior, a new model of impression management strategy was proposed. In the initial model, faking behavior was preceded immediately by the impression management strategy, which was preceded by several antecedents: perceptions of the situation, ability to fake, willingness to fake, and opportunity to fake. Perceptions of the situation consisted of three components: individuals' beliefs that the situation is important enough to merit faking, belief in one's ability to fake, and beliefs about the subjective norms surrounding faking. Ability to fake was defined as knowledge of how to obtain a favorable score and the trait of self-monitoring, willingness to fake was defined as Machiavellianism, low rule-consciousness, and low adjustment, and opportunity to fake was defined by one's initial standing on the desirable traits of conscientiousness and emotional stability.

This model was evaluated by first testing the measurement models to ensure adequate representation for the hypothesized latent variables. Based on findings from the data, the ability to fake variable was respecified to include only the knowledge measure and the willingness variable was respecified to include self-monitoring and to exclude lack of adjustment. The resulting willingness variable was indicated by self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and lack of rule-consciousness. Taken together, these three indicators paint the picture of an individual who is able to change his or her behavior in accordance

with the situation and who is willing to be manipulative and break rules in order to achieve this goal. This description is consistent with Snell et al's (1999) description of willingness to engage in impression management. Although lack of adjustment is conceptually unrelated to self-monitoring, Machiavellianism, and lack of rule consciousness, it may still be related to faking behavior or the impression management strategy. Future research should explore this possibility further.

Once measurement models had been established, hypotheses were tested with structural models. The first hypothesis, that perceptions of the situation would be related to impression management strategy was supported. The second hypothesis, that ability to manage impressions would be related to the impression management strategy was not supported. This finding is consistent with McFarland and Ryan's (2001) finding that knowledge of what a test measures does not influence faking. A likely explanation for why this relationship was not found in the present study may lie in the fact that the knowledge measure (the sole indicator for ability) was too easy. As noted previously, the vast majority (77%) of participants scored an 18 or higher on the measure, leaving very little room for individual differences.

In hindsight, the items used for the knowledge measure were probably too transparent. Moreover, the items on the target personality measure were also very transparent, making it relatively easy for individuals to increase their scores if they so desired. Given that the personality measure used in the present study is typical of personality measures used in employment settings, it may be that ability to fake on a self-report personality measure is not an important determinant of faking behavior because nearly anyone would have the ability to fake in this situation. However, when more

subtle employment tests are used such as structured interviews and situational tests where the “right” answer is less clear, ability to engage in impression management might be more important and have a larger impact on the impression management strategy.

The third hypothesis, that willingness to engage in impression management would be related to the impression management strategy, was partially supported. The willingness variable was related to the impression management strategy through the mediating effects of perceptions of the situation, a relationship that is supported theoretically as well as empirically. The perceptions measure used in the present study reflects a reaction to a single situation. Because the situation was relatively similar for all the participants (i.e., pretend you are applying for your dream job), differences in perceptions were affected by individual differences in personality. Moreover, perceptions are more proximal to behavior than are personality traits, so it makes sense that these traits would influence behavior through more proximal processes.

Hypothesis 4, that opportunity to fake (operationalized here as low scores on emotional stability and conscientiousness) would be related to impression management strategy, was partially supported: low emotional stability was related to the impression management strategy, but low conscientiousness was not. These mixed findings may have occurred because of the difficulty in separating the effects of the personality characteristics from the absolute level of the characteristic. As noted earlier, McFarland and Ryan (2000) found that more conscientious and emotionally stable people faked less. One explanation is that conscientious and emotionally stable people are simply more honest. Another explanation is that individuals who score high on desirable traits like

conscientiousness and emotional stability have less opportunity to improve their scores further by faking.

In the present study, conscientiousness was highly related to individual differences in willingness to fake, and had little direct affect on the impression management strategy. In contrast, emotional stability was only weakly related to willingness to fake, and it had a small but significant affect on the impression management strategy. These results may have occurred because conscientiousness was conceptually more related to willingness than emotional stability. Had the willingness variable included lack of adjustment, it is likely that emotional stability would have shown a larger relationship with this variable, and lack of emotional stability may not have related significantly to the impression management strategy. In the present study, it is impossible to completely disentangle the effects of personality from the effects of opportunity to increase one's score through faking and thus further research into this question is needed. If the definition of opportunity is broadened to include characteristics of the test itself and the testing context, then opportunity to fake may be a more important determinant of faking.

Hypothesis 5a was supported; the impression management strategy was significantly related to faking behavior, though this result needs to be interpreted with caution given that intentions to fake were measured after the actual faking behavior occurred. Hypothesis 5b was partially supported. The effects of low emotional stability on faking behavior were fully mediated by the impression management strategy and the effects of perceptions of the situation on faking behavior were partially mediated by the impression management strategy.

Taken together, these findings suggested that the initial model be revised, and the revised model was presented in Figure 6. In short, this model suggests that people who have a lack of rule consciousness and emotional stability, who are concerned about presenting a positive image and who are willing to manipulate others to attain this goal are more likely to believe that faking is not only possible, it's acceptable. Moreover, these individuals are more likely to plan on faking on a pre-employment personality test and then follow through on this plan.

Contributions

The findings in the present study make several unique contributions to the faking literature. First, the model proposed in this study integrates concepts from two distinct, yet complimentary models proposed by McFarland and Ryan (2001) and Snell et al. (1999). Like the McFarland and Ryan model and consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), the revised model proposes that faking behavior is most proximately predicted by intentions (impression management strategy), which, in turn, are preceded by attitudes about the behavior (perceptions). Additionally, consistent with Snell et al's model, individual differences in personality traits also predict faking behavior. However, the revised model presented in Figure 6 demonstrates that individual personality traits affect faking behavior through the mediating processes of perceptions of the situation and the impression management strategy.

In addition to proposing a new model for impression management strategy, the present paper is the first to test this type of model using structural equation modeling. This analytic strategy overcomes difficulties with path analysis and regression (Klem, 1995; Maruyama, 1998) such as assumptions about the perfect measurement and

specification of the latent variables. Moreover, this strategy allows for the identification of latent variables that may explain underlying relationships among observed variables. In the present study, support was found for two new latent variables reflecting a willingness to engage in impression management strategy and faking behavior. The identification of these variables provides support for the notion that a) faking is a broad behavior that is not specific to any one situation and b) individuals differ in the degree to which they will engage in this broad behavior.

Included in the latent variable for willingness to engage in impression management strategy were individual differences in self-monitoring. Although self-monitoring has long been theorized to relate to faking behavior, thus far there has been little support for this hypothesis (e.g., McFarland & Ryan, 2000). This lack of support in previous literature may be because the relationship between self-monitoring and faking was tested directly. The present study suggests that these effects are mediated by one's beliefs about faking (i.e., that faking is acceptable and possible) and by the impression management strategy, and these mediated relationships have enhanced our understanding of the psychological processes underlying faking behavior.

Implications for Organizations

The findings in the present study have three main implications for organizations. First, the identification of individual differences in the propensity to engage in impression management implies that a measure could be constructed to screen people who are more likely to fake in a variety of settings. This measure might include questions about self-monitoring, low rule-consciousness, and Machiavellianism. Though this measure could also be faked, there is some evidence that self-monitoring is more faking resistant than

typical personality traits (Furnham, 1986). This type of measure would be subtler than a lie scale and could help “flag” individuals who are predisposed to engage in impression management so that self-reports from these individuals could be interpreted with extra caution (similar to the way lie scales are often used in personality settings). Moreover, this measure could be used to identify people who are likely to attempt to distort their responses in a variety of formats – not just on personality tests.

Second, as suggested by McFarland and Ryan (2000), organizations may mitigate the effects of faking by altering people’s attitudes and beliefs. Given that the effects of individual differences in the propensity to fake are fully mediated by perceptions of the situation, altering these perceptions may prevent faking. Previous research has already demonstrated that warnings about detection can slightly reduce faking (Dwight & Donovan, 1998). Perhaps the effects of these warnings can be strengthened by altering perceptions about the efficacy of faking (i.e., that good detection methods are in place and that fakers will be caught and disqualified) and the subjective norms about faking (i.e., that is unacceptable and uncommon). Many efforts to control faking thus far have been focused on the detection of faking through lie scales. However, these results suggest that a more proactive approach may be more effective than a reactive approach. That is, perhaps the solution to the faking problem is to prevent it in the first place rather than to fix it after it occurs.

One application of this idea may be to use computer technology to screen responses for distortion while applicants are completing the assessment. If the applicant gives too many socially desirable responses, he or she is interrupted by the computer and told “It appears as if you are not responding to this questionnaire honestly. Please ensure

your answers accurately reflect your perception of yourself.” While this technique is still experimental, it holds great promise for deterring dissimulation.

A final implication for organizations surrounds the use of response distortion scales. Earlier it was noted that these scales are not useful in reliably detecting fakers or in making score corrections. In the present study, when the IMQ was substituted for faking behavior in the model, it worked nearly as well as when actual faking behavior was used as the outcome. Therefore, it may be that lie scales do work better than previously thought. Although it is unlikely that lie scales can be used to accurately identify everyone who is faking, they may be useful in “flagging” individuals who are potentially dissimulating. Future research needs to compare traditional lie scales with a more subtle personality scale designed to detect the propensity to engage in impression management as described above.

Limitations and Future Research Needs

As with any study, there were a number of limitations in the present study that warrant discussion. First, this was a laboratory study with a student sample. Although pains were taken to ensure participants were in a frame of mind that was similar to actual applicants, it is unknown whether actual applicants would behave in a similar manner. The sample was also limited in that participants were largely young, educated, female Caucasians with limited work experience, which is not representative of the workforce as a whole. Thus it is unknown whether older, more experienced individuals would respond in a similar manner. Moreover, the homogeneity of the sample did not allow for examining possible gender or ethnic differences. Future research should examine

whether the model evaluated in the present study is invariant for men and women and across different ethnic groups.

The limitations of student samples reinforce the need to replicate this research in actual applicant populations. However, given the design of the present study (where individuals take the assessment in both an honest and applicant condition), it would be difficult to replicate this experiment with actual applicants. Perhaps the best approach would be to use a design in which applicants are first tested in an actual employment selection setting, and then tested as incumbents. It may be difficult, however, to get honest reports of intentions to fake from people outside of a research setting

A second limitation concerns the nature of the impression management strategy. In the present study, the impression management strategy was defined by a single measure of intentions. Necessarily, this measure was narrow in scope and attempted only to ascertain the participants' intentions to fake in the present study. However, given that broad personality traits have low predictive power for single instances of behavior (Epstein & O'Brian, 1984), it may be fruitful to examine the relationship between individual differences in the propensity to fake and impression management strategy across a variety of situations. Future research needs to evaluate how people approach selection situations other than personality tests such as interviews and situational exercises and how this approach affects behavior in these situations.

Closely related to this last point is the need for a better understanding of the impression management strategy itself. Although the intentions measure adequately identified individuals who were consciously trying to distort their responses, the measure says little about the manner in which people distorted their answers. Some people may

have intended to present the best possible image knowing full well that it was not an accurate description of their personality. Others might have distorted their responses but rationalized the distortion by thinking that they are really that good in a job setting. Because the intentions were actually measured after the faking behavior, it is difficult to tell how accurately the measure captures people's actual intentions just prior to the behavior. Therefore, it may be fruitful to conduct a verbal protocol study to capture individual thoughts and beliefs while they engaging in the actual faking behavior.

Another limitation concerns the use of difference scores to operationalize faking behavior. Similar to past research (e.g., McFarland & Ryan, 2000; 2001) faking behavior was operationalized by differences in scores between honest and simulated applicant conditions. However, the use of difference scores has been severely criticized because of problems with reliability and validity (e.g., Edwards, 1994; Edwards & Parry, 1993), and the reliability of the difference scores in the present study was indeed low. Moreover, low reliability necessarily limits the relationships of the difference scores to other variables.

In the present study, this problem was overcome by treating each difference score as an indicator of a latent faking variable. Combining the difference scores in this way provided a more powerful measure of faking behavior that was substantially related to other factors in the model. However, defining faking now as a latent variable changes slightly the way we think about faking. No longer is it just a situation-specific behavior, but rather a habitual behavior that varies according to the individual. Future research needs to examine the extent to which this behavior remains consistent across different situations.

Lastly, the present study did not examine self-deception, which may be another major source of error in prediction based on personality testing. Self-deception is presently neither well defined nor well measured; however, it has the potential to negatively affect the validity of personality testing in employment. Even when individuals respond honestly, their perceptions of their personality traits might not match other's perceptions. In this instance, the predictive power of personality testing is diminished. Future research needs to examine discrepancies in self and other perceptions, individual differences that contribute to these discrepancies, and the impact of these discrepancies on the validity of personality testing in employment settings.

Summary and Conclusions

Despite the above limitations, the findings of the present study have several important implications: a) people differ with regard to how much they will fake on a personality test in an employment setting with some faking substantially and others faking very little or not at all, b) the extent to which an individual fakes is determined by the person's attitudes and personality characteristics, and c) faking may be prevented by altering people's beliefs. As with any latent variable model, the final model proposed in the present study needs to be cross-validated with other samples, and if possible, applicant samples. Moreover, other factors undoubtedly have an impact on one's impression management strategy and need to be included in the future models of this strategy. Hopefully, the models presented in the present study can provide a beginning framework for future theory and research in this area.

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Appendix A – Background Questionnaire

Directions: The following information is being gathered for research purposes only. Please answer the questions to the best of your ability.

Age: _____

Sex: ___ Male ___ Female

Classification (year in School)

- ___ Freshman
- ___ Sophomore
- ___ Junior
- ___ Senior
- ___ Other

College GPA: _____

Race/Ethnicity

- ___ Asian
- ___ Black/African American
- ___ Caucasian
- ___ Hispanic/Latino
- ___ Native American
- ___ Other (please specify)

Are you currently working? ___ Yes ___ No

If yes, how many hours do you work per week on average? _____

How many years/months of previous work experience do you have (including your current job)? _____

In what type of job has the majority of your past or current work experience been (e.g., clerical, sales, etc.)? _____

Appendix B

Perceptions of the Situation Questionnaire

Instructions: Reflect back upon that last scenario in which we asked you to imagine that you were taking a personality test in order to get a job. Please share your thoughts and feelings about that situation. Please read each statement below and indicate how much you agree with it by marking your answer sheet in accordance with the following scale:

A	B	C	D	E
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1. It was important for me to perform well on the personality test in order to be more competitive for the job I wanted.
2. I didn't really care about how well I did on the personality test.
3. The thought of getting a desirable job was enough of an incentive for me to try and do well on the personality test.
4. I think that exaggerating my good qualities on the test would lead to a better score.
5. I felt confident that I could increase my score on the personality assessment.
6. I felt I could increase my score on the personality assessment without being detected by the lie scale.
7. Other people probably faked their answers on this personality test to get a better score.
8. In a real employment setting, most people would not hesitate to fake on an employment test if it increased their chances of getting hired.
9. Faking on a personality test in order to get a job is not a big deal.
10. Other people would think less of me if they knew that I faked on this test to try and get a better score.

Appendix C

Knowledge Questionnaire

Instructions: Please read each of the statements below. Imagine that you were trying to answer these questions in such a way as to present a very positive image to an employer. Indicate on your answer sheet what the "right" response would be in order to achieve the best score possible.

***A = The best response would be to say that you "strongly agree" with this statement.
B = The best response would be to say that you "strongly disagree" with this statement.
C = The best response would be to say that you neither agree nor disagree with this statement.***

1. Waste my time.
2. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
3. Change my mood a lot.
4. Seldom get mad.
5. Am not easily bothered by things.
6. Rarely get irritated.
7. Do things in a half-way manner.
8. Am exacting in my work.
9. Get irritated easily.
10. Continue until everything is perfect.
11. Do things according to a plan.
12. Get angry easily.
13. Neglect my duties.
14. Often feel blue.
15. Shirk my duties.
16. Panic easily.
17. Follow a schedule.
18. Have frequent mood swings.
19. Get upset easily.
20. Like order.

Appendix D

IPIP Items Used to Measure Rule-Consciousness and Adjustment

1. **Oppose authority.**
2. **Resist authority.**
3. **Try to follow the rules.**
4. **Am easily discouraged.**
5. **Am not easily frustrated.**
6. **Respect authority.**
7. **Believe in one true religion.**
8. **Believe laws should be strictly enforced.**
9. **Seldom feel blue.**
10. **Have frequent mood swings.**
11. **Feel comfortable with myself.**
12. **Like to stand during the national anthem.**
13. **Use swear words.**
14. **Am relaxed most of the time.**
15. **Readily overcome setbacks.**
16. **Often feel blue.**
17. **Feel desperate.**
18. **Know how to get around the rules.**
19. **Dislike myself.**
20. **Break rules.**

Appendix E

IPIP Items Used to Measure Opportunity to Engage in Impression Management

1. **Shirk my duties.**
2. **Like order.**
3. **Pay attention to details.**
4. **Am always prepared.**
5. **Follow a schedule.**
6. **Get irritated easily.**
7. **Change my mood a lot.**
8. **Make plans and stick to them.**
9. **Am exacting in my work.**
10. **Continue until everything is perfect.**
11. **Have frequent mood swings.**
12. **Waste my time.**
13. **Am easily disturbed.**
14. **Do things according to a plan.**
15. **Leave a mess in my room.**
16. **Grumble about things.**
17. **Find it difficult to get down to work.**
18. **Neglect my duties.**
19. **Leave my belongings around.**
20. **Take offense easily.**
21. **Worry about things.**
22. **Get stressed out easily.**

23. Often feel blue.
24. Love order and regularity.
25. Get angry easily.
26. Feel threatened easily.
27. Get overwhelmed by emotions.
28. Like to tidy up.
29. Get chores done right away.
30. Seldom get mad.
31. Seldom feel blue.
32. Am relaxed most of the time.
33. Do things in a half-way manner.
34. Often forget to put things back in their proper place.
35. Rarely get irritated.
36. Get upset easily.
37. Panic easily.
38. Am not easily bothered by things.
39. Make a mess of things.
40. Get caught up in my problems.

Appendix F

Impression Management Questionnaire

Directions: Please use your answer sheet to indicate how much you agree with the following statements:

- 0 = Strongly Disagree
- 1 = Disagree
- 2 = Neither Agree nor Disagree
- 3 = Agree
- 4 = Strongly Agree

1. At times, I've eaten so much that I felt uncomfortable.
2. I've made a few decisions in the past that I now regret.
3. There are things about me that no one knows.
4. I've never done anything to hurt someone else's feelings.
5. I don't exaggerate my good points just to impress other people.
6. There are some people that I just don't get along with.
7. I haven't ever said anything unkind about someone behind his or her back.
8. I've done some things in the past that I've never told anyone about.
9. I enjoy hearing a little gossip about others now and then.
10. In the past, I have told "white lies" to avoid getting into trouble.
11. I've never done anything to someone else that would be considered unkind.
12. I don't repeat gossip that I've heard about others.
13. I have some bad habits that my friends and family don't even know about.
14. When I get angry, I'm always able to keep my temper.
15. I would never lie just to get what I want.

Table 1***Descriptive Statistics***

Scale	Minimum Maximum		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
	Values	Values		
Perceptions of the Situation	4	40	23.86	5.96
Ability to Fake				
Self Monitoring	25	79	50.24	9.42
Knowledge	7	20	18.46	2.24
Willingness to Fake				
Machiavellianism	8	58	35.14	7.91
Lack of Rule-Consciousness	1	33	16.02	6.49
Lack of Adjustment	0	33	15.01	6.19
Opportunity to Fake				
Low Conscientiousness	3	62	29.97	11.56
Low Emotional Stability	2	70	35.62	13.26
<i>Intentions to Fake</i>	0	27	10.91	6.45

Note: N = 489

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all Study Variables

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Perceptions of the Situation	.79													
2. Self Monitoring	.19	.69												
3. Knowledge	.02	.06	.76											
4. Machiavellianism	.31	.34	.01	.72										
5. Lack of Rule Consciousness	.18	.16	-.05	.49	.80									
6. Lack of Adjustment	.14	.12	.00	.21	.09	.81								
7. Lack of Conscientiousness	.13	.22	-.07	.34	.45	.13	.90							
8. Lack of Emotional Stability	.16	.10	.03	.21	.10	.77	.02	.92						
9. Intentions to Fake	.71	.17	.00	.29	.19	.20	.18	.21	.90					
10. Impression Management - Faked	.28	-.09	.03	-.09	-.07	-.06	-.08	-.13	.40	.85				
11. Impression Management - Honest	-.27	-.28	.02	-.41	-.29	-.32	-.27	-.44	-.22	.45	.69			
12. Achievement Striving - Honest	-.15	-.10	.03	-.20	-.27	-.14	-.39	-.07	-.13	.06	.16	.78		
13. Achievement Striving - Faked	.34	.00	.03	-.04	-.08	.01	-.14	.07	.42	.56	.01	.48	.84	
14. Assertiveness - Honest	-.05	-.01	-.07	.02	.19	-.30	-.01	-.13	-.10	-.04	-.04	.19	.07	.84

Note: Correlations above .08 are significant at the .05 level (one-tailed). Alpha coefficients are along the diagonal. Reliabilities for difference scores were calculated using the formula presented by Crocker and Algina (1986).

Table 2 (continued)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all Study Variables

Scale	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15. Assertivness Faked	.22	.05	-.01	.10	.27	-.17	.10	-.05	.21	.22	-.10	.10	.36	.74
16. Dependability - Honest	-.12	-.16	.01	-.24	-.36	-.04	-.56	-.04	-.17	.11	.23	.43	.22	-.03
17. Dependability - Faked	.32	-.02	.06	-.06	-.18	.06	-.31	.09	.34	.50	.07	.21	.65	-.04
18. Extroversion - Honest	-.09	.15	.03	-.19	-.12	-.22	-.04	-.10	-.14	-.11	-.02	.19	.02	.35
19. Extroversion - Faked	.20	.15	.05	-.12	-.06	-.15	.03	-.05	.16	.19	-.08	.12	.37	.24
20. Stress Tolerance - Honest	-.08	-.06	-.04	-.10	.02	-.46	.02	-.54	-.15	.12	.30	.17	.05	.34
21. Stress Tolerance - Faked	.32	.03	.05	.01	.09	-.21	.09	-.27	.31	.54	.12	.05	.49	.19
22. Impression Management Difference	.52	.12	.02	.23	.15	.19	.13	.21	.61	.71	-.31	-.06	.58	-.01
23. Achievement Striving Difference	.48	.10	-.01	.15	.17	.14	.23	.14	.54	.50	-.14	-.48	.54	-.11
24. Assertivness Difference	.36	.08	.08	.11	.08	.20	.15	.12	.42	.34	-.08	-.14	.37	-.43
25. Dependability Difference	.48	.15	.05	.20	.20	.10	.27	.14	.55	.43	-.18	-.23	.48	-.02
26. Extroversion Difference	.36	-.03	.02	.12	.10	.13	.09	.07	.38	.38	-.07	-.12	.41	-.20
27. Stress Tolerance Difference	.44	.09	.09	.11	.08	.24	.09	.25	.50	.48	-.17	-.12	.50	-.13

Note: Correlations above .08 are significant at the .05 level (one-tailed). Alpha coefficients are along the diagonal. Reliabilities for difference scores were calculated using the formula presented by Crocker and Algina (1986).

Table 2 (continued)

Pearson Correlation Coefficients for all Study Variables

Scale	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
15. Assertiveness - Faked	.85												
16. Dependability - Honest	-.09	.72											
17. Dependability - Faked	.19	.58	.78										
18. Extroversion - Honest	.21	.03	-.05	.81									
19. Extroversion - Faked	.36	.02	.25	.71	.79								
20. Stress Tolerance - Honest	.24	.09	-.02	.21	.12	.74							
21. Stress Tolerance - Faked	.44	.03	.38	.05	.29	.57	.82						
22. Impression Management Difference	.31	-.06	.48	-.10	.27	-.11	.47	.64					
23. Achievement Striving Difference	.26	-.19	.45	-.16	.25	-.12	.44	.64	.64				
24. Assertiveness Difference	.29	-.08	.31	-.21	.14	-.16	.31	.42	.50	.42			
25. Dependability Difference	.31	-.45	.47	-.08	.25	-.11	.38	.59	.70	.43	.40		
26. Extroversion Difference	.14	-.01	.36	-.54	.21	-.15	.28	.46	.53	.47	.42	.28	
27. Stress Tolerance Difference	.25	-.05	.45	-.17	.20	-.38	.54	.65	.62	.51	.55	.46	.50

Note: Correlations above .08 are significant at the .05 level (one-tailed). Alpha coefficients are along the diagonal. Reliabilities for difference scores were calculated using the formula presented by Crocker and Algina (1986).

Table 3

Paired Sample T-Tests for Mean Personality Test Scores in Honest and Simulated Applicant Conditions

Scale	Honest		Simulated Applicant		Diff	Min Diff	Max Diff	t-value	d
	M	SD	M	SD					
Achievement Striving	28.61	6.05	34.03	6.34	5.42	-5	29	18.93*	0.87
Assertiveness	26.95	6.90	28.62	6.51	1.68	-11	25	7.57*	0.25
Extroversion	29.53	6.75	32.00	5.82	2.47	-14	23	11.25*	0.39
Dependability	31.53	5.58	35.24	5.66	3.71	-8	24	15.96*	0.66
Stress Tolerance	27.52	5.54	31.79	6.11	4.28	-10	26	17.46*	0.73
Impression Management	22.71	6.30	29.17	8.49	6.46	-10	39	17.87*	0.87

*Note: * p < .001*

Table 4***Standardized Factor Loadings and Residuals for Faking and Intentions Measurement******Models***

Latent Variable/Indicator	Factor Loading	Residual
Faking Behavior		
Achievement Striving Difference Score	.81	.59
Assertiveness Difference Score	.62	.79
Dependability Difference Score	.71	.70
Extroversion Difference Score	.62	.79
Stress Tolerance Difference Score	.79	.62
IMQ Difference Score	.79	.62
Intentions		
Item 1	.84	.54
Item 2	.87	.50
Item 3	.87	.50
Item 4	.51	.86
Item 5	.51	.86
Item 6	.72	.69
Item 7	.89	.47

Note. All factor loadings are significant at $p < .001$.

Table 5

Chi-square Difference Tests for Mediated Models

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δ df
Willingness – Perceptions – Strategy				
Step 1	299.45	61		
Step 2	296.39	60	3.06†	1
Opportunity – Strategy – Faking Behavior				
Step 1	217.12	100		
Step 2	213.98	99	3.14†	1
Perceptions – Strategy – Faking Behavior				
Step 1	445.74	146		
Step 2	431.37	145	14.37*	1

Note. † $p > .05$, * $p < .01$. Step 1 = mediated model. Step 2 = mediated model with path added from independent variable to outcome variable.

Figure Captions

Figure 1. Antecedents and outcomes of impression management strategy.

Figure 2. Snell et al.'s (1999) model of applicant faking.

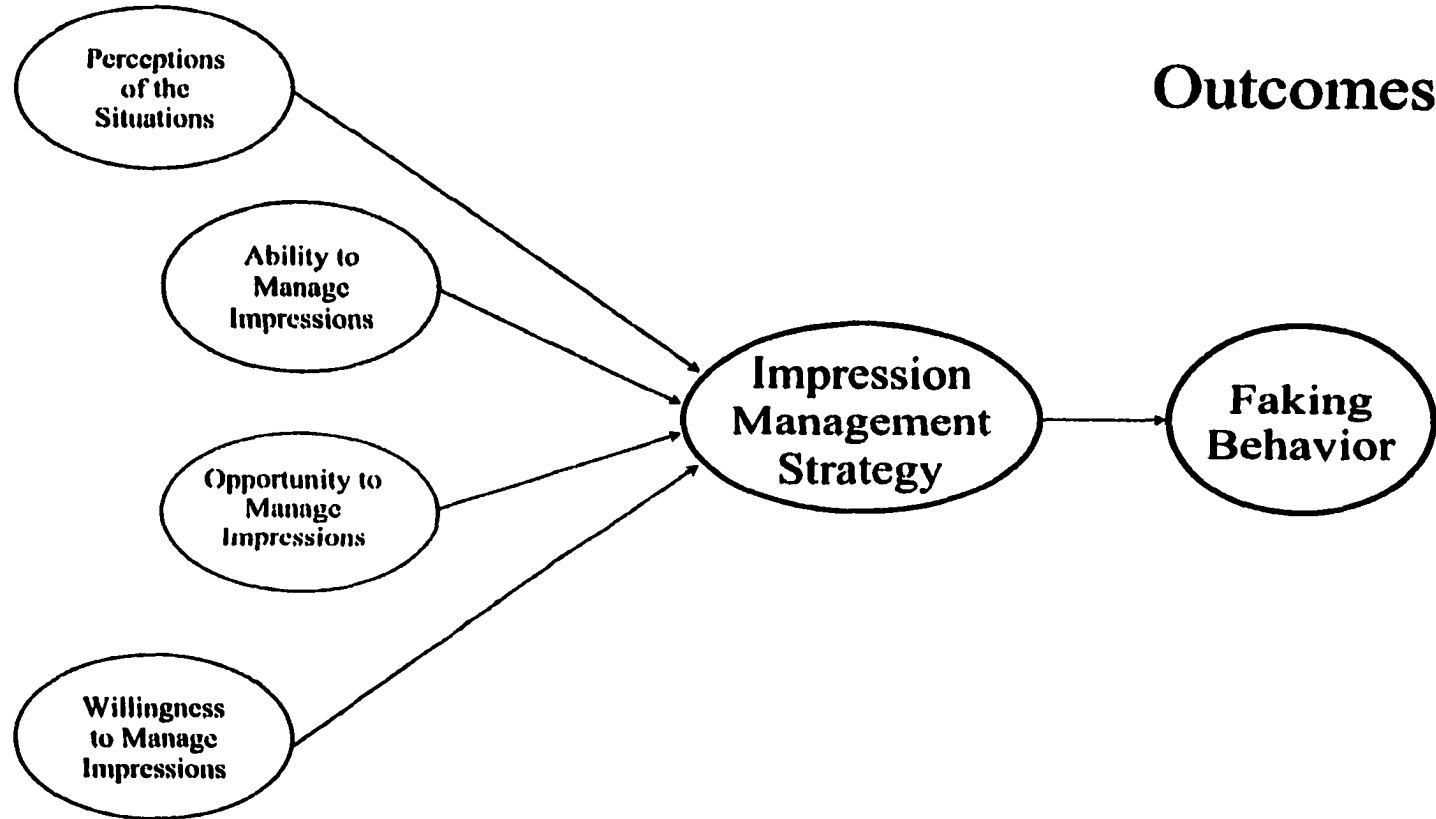
Figure 3. McFarland and Ryan's (2001) model of applicant faking.

Figure 4. Measurement model of the antecedents of impression management strategy.

Figure 5. Structural model of the antecedents and outcomes of impression management strategy.

Figure 6. Revised structural model of the antecedents and outcomes of impression management strategy.

Antecedents



Outcomes

