The Intercultural Hiring Interview: Applying Uncertainty Reduction Theory to the Study of Nonverbal Behavior between U.S. Interviewers and Indian Applicants

Aparna Hebbani   Lawrence R. Frey
University of Queensland at Ipswich   University of Colorado at Boulder

Using uncertainty reduction theory, this study examined the effects of the similarity/ dissimilarity of interviewers' and interviewees' nonverbal behaviors exhibited during an intercultural hiring interview on interviewers' perceptions of and hiring decisions about interviewees. Mock hiring interviews were conducted between Indian graduate student interviewees and Caucasian U.S. professionals who served as interviewers. Videotapes of the interactions were coded for the amount and similarity of nonverbal behaviors displayed by participants, and interviewers rated their attributional confidence and the perceived hireability of each applicant. Regression analyses showed that across the interviewers, attributional confidence was a significant predictor of interviewees' hireability and, at the individual interviewer level, some nonverbal behaviors (facial expressions, eye contact, and forward lean) predicted hireability. The results have implications for organizations attempting to increase the diversity of their workforce and for future research on intercultural hiring interviews.

A number of factors over the last few decades have laid the foundation for the dramatic metamorphosis being experienced in the U.S. workplace in terms of a wider representation of workers' race, gender, national origin, age, and ethnicity, among other characteristics (see Limaye, 2000). Accordingly, U.S. organizations increasingly are and will have to recruit, retain, and promote culturally diverse employees. Organizational leaders, then face the task of interviewing applicants (the principal means of hiring; Bell, 1989; Morgan & Cogger, 1980) from various cultures whose customs, values, and views may differ quite extensively from theirs.

Diversity raises important issues for interviewers and applicants in the hiring interview context. Differences in language, race, class, and culture, and their combined effects, can create communication problems between interviewers and applicants. One salient problem is that interviewers may assume that certain behaviors and their meanings (specifically, behaviors they enact and meanings they attribute to them) are universal and, therefore, interviewers may interact the same way with interviewees, regardless of interviewees' cultural backgrounds (Sue & Sue, 1977).

Some research has shown that applicants' nonverbal behavior, in particular, can significantly affect the outcome of hiring interviews (e.g., Bovee & Thill, 1989; Fugita, Wexley, & Hillery, 1974; Imada & Hakel, 1977; McGovern & Ideus, 1978; McGovern & Tinsley, 1978; Von Raffler-Engel, 1983; Wexley, Fugita, & Malone, 1975). Hence, this study examines the impact of nonverbal behaviors enacted during intercultural hiring interviews. We first review nonverbal behavior in the (intercultural) hiring interview context, followed by a theory that can explain such behavior in the context and that guided the research question posed for this study.

Nonverbal Behavior in the (Intercultural) Hiring Interview

Klopf (1991) defined *nonverbal behavior* as "communicative behaviors and events that do not involve spoken or written language" (p. 202). Traditional categories of nonverbal behavior include (a) physical appearance, (b) gestures and movement, (c) face and eye behavior, (d) vocal behavior, (e) space, (f) touch, (g) environment, (h) scent and smell, and (i) time.

Most research on nonverbal behavior exhibited during hiring interviews consistently has found that interviewees' "friendly" nonverbal behavior (e.g., making good eye contact, smiling, and nodding the head) is positively correlated with higher evaluations of them by interviewers (e.g., Holmes, 1983; Howard & Ferris, 1996; Imada & Hakel, 1977; McGovern, Jones, Warwick, & Jackson, 1981; Parsons & Liden, 1984). In addition to "appropriate" nonverbal behavior, nonverbal reciprocity is important in the hiring interview context, with applicants displaying cold nonverbal behaviors when interviewers display such behaviors (Liden, Martin, & Parsons, 1993).

These studies, however, do not address the intercultural hiring interview situation, in which the interactants are from different cultures. The research that does exist indicates that communication problems may occur when interviewers or interviewees employ nonverbal behaviors that reflect their cultural practices and do not take into account those endemic to the other person's culture (see Fugita et al., 1974; Mahoney, 1992; Nye, Betancourt, White, & Schacht, 1993; Olaniran & Williams, 1995).

The present study seeks to expand our knowledge by examining the effects of similarity/dissimilarity between interviewers' and interviewees' nonverbal behaviors exhibited during an intercultural hiring interview on interviewers' perceptions of and hiring decisions about interviewees. To accomplish this goal, uncertainty reduction theory (URT), formulated by Berger and Calabrese (1975) to understand initial dyadic interactions, was employed to explain nonverbal behavior, uncertainty reduction processes, and outcomes in intercultural interactions, in general, and the intercultural hiring interview, in particular.

Uncertainty Reduction during Intercultural Interactions

Uncertainty is the primary conceptual construct of URT; as Berger and Calabrese (1975) explained, "when strangers meet, their primary concern is one of uncertainty reduction or increasing predictability about the behavior of both themselves and others in the interaction" (p. 100). *Uncertainty reduction*, therefore, refers to the ability of strangers to accurately predict how each other will behave during an encounter and to explain that behavior.

Theorems 10 and 11 of URT suggest that the more similar the nonverbal behaviors are of those in an initial interaction, then the more their uncertainty will be reduced and, consequently, the greater their liking for one another will be (Berger & Calabrese, 1975). Research by Exline (1971) and Mehrabian (1971) shows that persons who like each other demonstrate greater nonverbal affiliative expressiveness toward one another than those who dislike each other, which URT would attribute to increases in similarity leading to reduced uncertainty and increased liking. In addition, Exline's research also found that people who were attracted to each other, in contrast to those who were not, demonstrated higher levels of

eye contact, an increased number of head nods, more hand gestures per unit of time, and more frequent displays of pleasant facial expressions.

Although no research directly supports similarity in nonverbal behaviors between interviewers and interviewees in an intercultural hiring interview reducing participants' uncertainty, research does show a relationship between similarity and uncertainty reduction. Although most researchers utilizing URT have explained initial dyadic interactions between (mainly, White, middle-class) U.S. citizens (Gudykunst & Nishida, 1984), Gudykunst (1983) and Gudykunst and Nishida (1984, 1986) shows the applicability of URT in *high-context cultures*, which privilege nonverbal communication (see Beebe, Beebe, & Redmond, 2008). Extending that research, Gudykunst, Yang, and Nishida (1985) contrast two high-context cultures (Japan and Korea) with the United States, a *low-context culture* that relies more on verbal communication. They have found that attitudinal similarity, interpersonal attraction, frequency of communication, and use of an interactive uncertainty reduction strategy (asking the person direct questions and disclosing to get the other person to talk) had positive effects on attributional confidence. Attitudinal similarity, interpersonal attraction, and the interactive strategy were also positively correlated such that when interactants perceived themselves to be similar and were attracted to one another, they engaged in increased disclosure and cross-examination. Their results were consistent with Berger and Calabrese's (1975) reasoning, in that (a) attributional confidence was positively affected by cultural similarity and (b) interpersonal attraction and attitude similarity were positively correlated, such that being culturally similar was associated with decreased uncertainty, and attitudinal similarity was associated with increased attraction. Behavioral similarity (verbal and nonverbal), however, was not analyzed in the study.

Although URT helps to explain intercultural initial interactions, the theory has not been studied in the intercultural hiring interview context, an important type of initial interaction, nor has it been used to examine the role of nonverbal behaviors in reducing interactants' uncertainty and increasing their liking of one another. The present study seeks to fill this gap in the literature.

Research Question

As the literature reviewed suggests, diversity raises important issues for interviewers and applicants in the intercultural hiring interview context. In line with URT, because of nonverbal behavioral differences between interviewers and interviewees from different cultures, especially those from high- and low-context cultures, some level of uncertainty probably exists for both interactants during an intercultural hiring interview. The intercultural hiring interview, thus, offers a valuable site for exploring relationships between nonverbal behavior, uncertainty reduction, and assessments of applicants made by interviewers.

Research shows that applicants displaying appropriate, positive nonverbal behaviors are rated as more similar to, and liked more by interviewers, compared to applicants who display negative behaviors and are rated unfavorably. Moreover, relationships exist among nonverbal behavior, levels of uncertainty, and liking, in general. The present study extends these findings to the intercultural hiring interview context, investigating whether similar or dissimilar nonverbal behaviors displayed by interactants affect interviewers' uncertainty and

their subsequent assessments of applicants' hireability. Hence, the following research question was posed:

RQ1: Is the degree of similarity or dissimilarity in nonverbal behaviors exhibited by interviewees and interviewers from different cultures related to the amount of uncertainty experienced by interviewers and to interviewers' decisions about whether to hire interviewees?

Methods

Research Participants

Two types of research participants were employed: interviewers and interviewees. Per institutional review board guidelines, their written permission was acquired prior to participation.

Interviewers. Two U.S. Caucasian males who worked in human resources and conducted hiring interviews served as interviewers. In line with Gudykunst's (1985) research, both participants had experience interviewing candidates from other cultures. They were told that the study was about how well universities were preparing students for job interviews, so as not to sensitize them to their own or to interviewees' nonverbal behavior. One interviewer met with seven Indian male interviewees and the other met with eight interviewees. Only Caucasian male interviewers were employed because (a) using male and female interviewers (and interviewees) might raise the confounding variable of gender differences and (b) including interviewers from more than one racial group could produce interracial differences.

Interviewees. Interviewees were recruited from a mid-South U.S. university and were from India because (a) there has been a rapid influx of Indian immigrants into the U.S. workforce (Rao, 2000) and (b) nonverbal communicative behaviors differ significantly between Indians and those from the United States. Graduate students were contacted and solicited via the university's Indian Student Association's web site to serve as interviewees for a "generic" job interview; the advertisement was a modified version of that used by Van Der Vorm (1995). Graduate rather than undergraduate students were solicited because (a) not many Indians come to the United States for their undergraduate education due to lack of funding and (b) those in undergraduate programs are probably U.S.-born Indians. To increase ecological validity, only Indian M.A. students participated because they are more likely than Ph.D. students to seek jobs outside academia. These students had been in the United States less than three semesters, meaning that they probably had not completely assimilated into U.S. culture and did not fully understand "appropriate" norms of U.S. nonverbal behavior. Fifteen male Indian M.A. students participated.

Procedures

Mock hiring interviews were conducted in the university's television studio. Interviewees were given a job description to help them prepare for the interview, and they were asked to bring a one-page resume for the interviewer and to come professionally dressed (as for an actual hiring interview). The interviewer and interviewee were seated facing one another, as is typical in hiring interviews. Interviewers asked their own questions, as they would in a real

interview. The interviews were videotaped using two stationary video cameras, and a split-screen approach was then used to make the images appear next to one another on the videotape.

The interviews averaged 16.5 minutes in length (*SD* = 4 minutes 40 seconds); the shortest interview lasted 10 minutes and the longest interview lasted 30 minutes. After the interview, interviewees received written feedback about their performance from the interviewer in the form of a brief evaluation sheet; this procedure was adapted from Van Der Vorm's (1995) study.

Data-Collection Methods

Data collection involved: (a) coders rating the nonverbal behaviors exhibited during the interviews and (b) interviewers completing questionnaires immediately after each interview regarding their level of attributional confidence toward the applicant and his hireability.

Coders. Four communication graduate students were trained to rate the nonverbal behaviors exhibited by interviewers and interviewees on the instruments explained below before independently coding the videotapes. Two coders rated the seven interviews conducted by the first interviewer and two coders rated the eight interviews conducted by the second interviewer.

The rating form first asked coders to use a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Not at All*, 2 = *Some*; 3 = *A Little*, 4 = *Much*, 5 = *A Lot*) to assess five key nonverbal behaviors displayed by interviewees and interviewers: (a) professional dress, (b) hand gestures, (c) facial expressions, (d) eye contact, and (e) body lean. Coders then used this scale to assess the degree of similarity/dissimilarity of these five nonverbal behaviors displayed by interviewees and interviewers. These nonverbal behaviors were chosen because U.S. Americans and Indians demonstrate some significant differences and similarities in their use (see Bosrock, 1994; Morrison, Conaway, & Borden 1994, 2001; Sims, 1999, 2000) and because of their potential relevance to the hiring interview situation (in contrast to other nonverbal behavior, such as touch, smell, and time). These behaviors were grouped into three categories – (a) professional dress; (b) hand gestures and body posture (forward lean); and (c) facial expressions and eye contact.

To assess the reliability of coders' ratings, Pearson Product Moment correlations were computed between each set of coders across their ratings. There was a significant positive correlation between the coders rating the first interviewer, $r(103) = .77$, $p < .001$, and between those rating the second interviewer, $r(118) = .62$, $p < .001$. Discrepancies between coders were resolved by a communication graduate student who served as a third coder.

Factor analyses then were performed on the codings of the items of the nonverbal behavior (NB) scale and on the nonverbal similarity (NS) scale items, to see whether the items could be reduced to a smaller set of factors. The factor analysis of interviewees' nonverbal behavior showed that three items – hand gestures (.85), facial expressions (.80), and forward lean (.76) – loaded onto one factor (and not on the second factor) that explained 53.2% of the variance, and the other two items – professional dress (-.87) and eye contact (.82) – loaded onto the second factor (and not the first factor) that explained 21.2% of the variance; together, these two factors accounted for 74.4% of the variance. The factor analysis of the nonverbal similarity of the interviewees and interviewers showed that three items –

professional dress (-.74), hand gestures (.86), and eye contact (.66) – loaded onto one factor (and not the second factor) that explained 39.3% of the variance, whereas the other two items – facial expression (.88) and forward lean (.89) – loaded onto the second factor (and not the first factor) that explained 31.1% of the variance; together, these factors accounted for 70.4% of the variance. The analyses, thus, did not yield similar factors for the nonverbal items across the scales; moreover, for both scales, one item loaded negatively on a factor, making the interpretation of any summed score on that factor virtually meaningless. Given these results, the five items of each scale were treated separately.

Questionnaires. Following each interview, interviewers completed a questionnaire that assessed their attributional confidence (AC; the inverse of uncertainty) about each candidate and his perceived hireability. AC was measured using a modified version of Gudykunst and Nishida's (1986) 12-item scale. The three items selected measured interviewers' AC in predicting interviewees' (a) general behavior, (b) likes and dislikes, and (c) answers given to the interviewer's questions. Interviewers rated these items using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *Almost Never*, 2 = *Rarely*, 3 = *Sometimes*, 4 = *Most Times*, 5 = *Almost Always*), with higher scores indicating a higher degree of AC about the applicant. A factor analysis revealed that these three items loaded (general behavior = .89, likes and dislikes = .73, and answers to questions = .86) onto one factor (labeled "attributional confidence") that explained 69.7% of the variance. The summed score on these items was used in all subsequent analyses.

The written assessment asked interviewers to evaluate interviewees with respect to (one item each): (a) a task dimension (would be a valuable asset to the organization), (b) a social dimension (would use socially appropriate behavior in the workplace), and (c) applicants' hireability. Each item was rated using a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating more agreement. A factor analysis revealed that these three items loaded (task dimension = .91, social dimension = .75, and hireability = .90) onto one factor (labeled "hireability") that explained 74.0% of the variance. The summed score on this factor was used in all subsequent analyses.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Nonverbal behavior scale. The mean and standard deviation for the items of the NB scale are provided in Table 1. An analysis of variance procedure (treating both ratings for interviewees and interviewers and for the five items as repeated measures) demonstrated a significant effect for person, with interviewers ($M = 3.69$, $SD = .63$) engaging in more of the five nonverbal behaviors than did interviewees ($M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.10$), $F(1, 14) = 15.79$, $p < .005$. There also was a significant effect for nonverbal behaviors, with professional dress ($M = 3.74$, $SD = .53$), eye contact ($M = 3.63$, $SD = .98$), and forward lean ($M = 3.50$, $SD = .42$) higher than the other two nonverbal behaviors, and facial expressions ($M = 3.00$, $SD = .83$) higher than hand gestures ($M = 2.40$, $SD = .94$), $F(4, 56) = 20.04$, $p < .001$. There was also a significant interaction effect between person and nonverbal behaviors, with (a) interviewer professional dress ($M = 5.00$) higher than all the other nonverbal behaviors; (b) interviewer forward lean ($M = 4.13$) and interviewer eye contact ($M = 4.00$) higher than the remaining nonverbal behaviors; (c) interviewee eye contact ($M = 3.26$) higher than interviewee hand

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Items of the Nonverbal Behavior Scale
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| Nonverbal | Interviewees | | Interviewers | |
Behavior Items	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Professional Dress	2.47	1.06	5.00	.00
Eye Contact	3.26	.88	4.00	1.07
Hand Gestures	2.53	1.41	2.27	.46
Facial Expressions	2.93	.96	3.07	.70
Forward Lean	2.87	1.19	4.13	.92

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gestures ($M = 2.53$), interviewee professional dress ($M = 2.47$), and interviewer hand gestures ($M = 2.27$); (d) interviewer facial expressions ($M = 3.07$) higher than interviewee professional dress and interviewer hand gestures; and (e) interviewee facial expressions ($M = 2.93$) and interviewee forward lean ($M = 2.87$) higher than interviewer hand gestures, $F(4, 56) = 11.62$, $p < .001$.

Nonverbal similarity scale. The mean score and standard deviation for the items of the NS scale first were computed. An analysis of variance procedure (treating ratings on the items as repeated measures) showed no significant difference between the five items (forward lean $M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.22$; eye contact $M = 2.80$, $SD = .68$; facial expressions $M = 2.80$, $SD = .68$; professional dress $M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.08$; hand gestures $M = 2.33$, $SD = .98$).

Attributional confidence scale. The mean score for the summed AC scale across all interviews was 10.67 ($SD = 1.88$). Mean scores of the three items were: (a) 3.47 ($SD = .64$) for how easy it was for interviewers to predict interviewees' behavior, (b) 3.73 ($SD = .88$) for how easy it was to predict interviewees' likes and dislikes, and (c) 3.47 ($SD = .74$) for how easy it was to predict interviewees' answers to questions.

Hireability scale. The mean score for the summed hireability scale across all interviews was 10.73 ($SD = 1.98$). Mean scores of the three items were: (a) 3.47 ($SD = .74$) for task (b) 3.93 ($SD = .46$) for social, and (c) 3.33 ($SD = 1.05$) for the hireability dimension.

Regression Analyses

To answer the research question, bivariate correlations between all variables were first computed (see Table 2), followed by regression analyses and some follow-up analyses. Significant correlations were found between: (a) facial expression behaviors and (1) hand gesture behaviors, (2) eye contact behaviors, and (3), eye contact similarity; (b) eye contact behaviors and professional dress behaviors; (c) professional dress behaviors and professional dress similarity; (d) forward lean similarity and (1) forward lean behavior and (2) facial expression similarity; and (e) AC and hireability.

Multiple linear regression analysis was then conducted, using scores on the NS items and the summed AC scale as independent variables and scores on the summed hireability scale as the dependent variable. AC was a significant predictor of hireability, $R = .551$, $R^2 = .303$, $F(1,13) = 5.658$, $p < .03$; the five items comprising the NS scale were not significant predictors.

Table 2: Bivariate Correlations between Variables

Variables	Dress B	Gesture B	Face B	Eye B	Lean B	Dress S	Gesture S	Face S	Eye S	Lean S	Attrib. Conf.
Gesture B	.20										
Face B	.31	.77**									
Eye B	.54*	.45	.53*								
Lean B	.17	.43	.43	-.02							
Dress S	.90**	.08	.26	.43	-.02						
Gesture S	.39	.07	.25	.30	.16	.47					
Face S	.14	.20	.31	.34	.41	.13	.11				
Eye S	.14	.20	.64*	.45	.14	.23	.43	.38			
Lean S	.14	.19	.25	-.02	.70*	-.04	-.14	.62*	.10		
Attrib. Conf.	.41	.10	.03	.27	.24	.11	.30	-.06	-.06	.23	
Hire.	-.07	.08	.08	-.16	.32	-.16	.45	-.26	-.04	.16	.55*

B = items on the nonverbal behavior scale, S = items on the nonverbal similarity scale
*$p < .01$ ** $p < .001$

To further understand the relationship between interviewees' nonverbal behavior and hireability, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted using interviewees' scores on the items of the NB scale and on the AC scale as independent variables and scores on the hireability scale as the dependent variable. AC, again, predicted hireability, $R = .551$, $R^2 = .303$, $F(1,13) = 5.658$, $p < .03$; none of the items of the NB scale were significant predictors.

A regression analysis then was conducted to see whether scores on the items of the NB scale and on the NS scale predicted AC. None of these items predicted AC; hence, AC did not mediate the relationship between nonverbal behaviors or nonverbal similarity and hireability.

Although the nonverbal variables did not predict AC or hireability, differences between the interviewers and their interviewees on these variables might have obscured such effects. Therefore, the data for the two interviewers were analyzed using *t*-tests to investigate differences between them on the items of the two nonverbal scales. As Table 3 shows, there were significant differences between the two interviewers with respect to the NB scale items of eye contact, forward lean, and facial expressions, with interviewer 2 engaging in more of these behaviors. However, there were no differences between the interviewees of each interviewer on the NB scale items, although both eye contact and forward lean demonstrated a trend ($.05 < p < .10$), with interviewer 2's interviewees engaging in more of these behaviors. Finally, there were no differences between the two interviewers and their interviewees on the NS scale items.

Given the differences between the interviewers for the NB scale, separate regression analyses were conducted for each interviewer using scores on the NB items, NS items, and AC scale as independent variables and scores on the hireability scale as the dependent variable. As Table 4 demonstrates, eye contact from the NB scale and facial expressions from the NS scale predicted hireability for interviewer 2; facial expressions and forward lean from

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and t-values for the Two Interviewers on the Items of the Nonverbal Similarity Scale

| Nonverbal Similarity | Interviewer 1 | | Interviewer 2 | | |
Items	M	SD	M	SD	t-value (13 df)
Professional Dress	5.00	.00	5.00	.00	0
Eye Contact	3.12	.64	5.00	.00	-8.17**
Hand Gestures	2.12	.35	2.43	.53	-1.48
Facial Expressions	2.62	.52	3.57	.53	-3.80*
Forward Lean	3.38	.52	5.00	.00	-9.00**

*$p < .01$ ** $p < .001$

Table 4: Hireability based on Nonverbal Behavior, Nonverbal Similarity, and Attributional Confidence per Interviewer

| Independent Variables | Interviewer 1 | | | Interviewer 2 | | |
	R	R^2	F (prob.)	R	R^2	F (prob.)
Dress B	.064	.004	.025 (.88)	.357	.127	.720 (.43)
Gestures B	.252	.063	.406 (.55)	.506	.256	1.720 (.25)
Face B	.675	.455	5.016 (.07)	.741	.549	6.079 (.06)
Eye B	.284	.081	.053 (.50)	.850	.723	13.020 (.02)
Lean B	.670	.449	4.883 (.07)	.530	.281	1.951 (.22)
Dress S	.067	.004	.027 (.88)	.357	.127	.729 (.43)
Gestures S	.468	.219	1.686 (.24)	.014	.000	.001 (.98)
Face S	.340	.116	.784 (.41)	.850	.723	13.030 (.02)
Eye D	.238	.057	.360 (.57)	.599	.359	2.796 (.16)
Lean S	.440	.194	1.441 (.28)	.477	.228	1.473 (.28)
Attrib. Confidence	.298	.089	.585 (.47)	.488	.238	1.564 (.27)

df = 1, 6 for interviewer 1; 1, 5 for interviewer 2
B = items on the nonverbal scale, S = items on the nonverbal similarity scale
Direction positive in all cases

the NB scale were marginally significant (.05 < p < .10) for predicting hireability for interviewer 1. For both interviewers, AC no longer significantly predicted hireability.

Separate regression analyses then were conducted for each interviewer to see whether the NB scale items and NS scale items predicted AC. None of the 10 items significantly predicted AC for either interviewer; hence, AC was not a mediating variable between nonverbal behaviors or nonverbal similarity and hireability for either interviewer.

Discussion

Given the increased use of intercultural hiring interviews in organizations, especially between members of low- and high-context cultures (such as the United States and India, respectively), this study examined the nature and effects of nonverbal behaviors enacted during such interviews. The theoretical perspective of uncertainty reduction was used to understand whether and how interactants' nonverbal similarity/dissimilarity related to the amount of uncertainty interviewers experience about interviewees and their subsequent hiring decisions. This section discusses the findings obtained, identifies limitations and suggestions for future research, and examines some potential practical implications of the findings.

Nonverbal Similarity/Dissimilarity, Attributional Confidence, and Hireability in the Intercultural Hiring Interview

As expected from prior research, three nonverbal behaviors – professional dress, eye contact, and forward lean – differed between interviewers and interviewees with respect to the amount displayed; the other two nonverbal behaviors – hand gestures and facial expressions – were displayed equally. Overall, scores for the amount and similarity of these nonverbal behaviors were in the middle range of the scale, meaning that interactants did not display a lot of these behaviors and that their behaviors were not viewed as being very similar.

With regard to differences between interviewers and interviewees, both interviewers were judged as being more professionally dressed than their interviewees, which probably stems from interviewees being requested to dress professionally but not to wear a suit; alternatively, "professional dress" may mean something different for the Indian interviewees than for the Caucasian coders. Differences also were obtained for eye contact and forward lean, with interviewers demonstrating more of these behaviors than interviewees. No differences existed, however, between the amount of hand gestures displayed by interviewees and interviewers, although their hand gestures were not rated as being similar per se. A review of the videotaped interactions suggests that interactants engaged in different types of hand gestures; for example, interviewers often used hand gestures to regulate the conversation by indicating turn-taking moves, whereas interviewees frequently used them to describe something (e.g., illustrating computer setup). Similarly, although the amount of facial expressions displayed by interviewers and interviewees was comparable, coders did not perceive them as being similar. One reason for this lack of similarity may be because interactants' facial expressions were not always in synchrony; for instance, when interviewers smiled, interviewees did not immediately smile back.

Most important, across interviewers, none of the five nonverbal behaviors displayed, nor the similarity of those behaviors, predicted interviewers' AC or interviewees' hireability. AC, however, predicted hireability, such that as interviewers' AC about interviewees increased, interviewers were more likely to recommend hiring them. This relationship between AC and hireability decisions is in line with URT. For instance, axiom 7 asserts that decreases in uncertainty produce increases in liking, whereas increases in uncertainty produce decreases in liking. Hence, increases in interviewers' AC about interviewees should increase interviewers' liking of them and interviewers' subsequent decision to hire them.

The lack of significance between the amount and similarity of nonverbal behavior and AC and hireability might be explained by interviewers concentrating on other aspects of interviewees. The most likely explanation, in line with URT, is that they were influenced by interviewees' verbal behavior. Axiom 1 of the theory asserts that as verbal communication between interactants increases, their AC increases, and theorem 5 predicts that the amount of verbal communication exchanged is positively related to their liking of one another. Given the verbally intensive nature of an interview, interviewees' verbal behavior should have a significant effect on interviewers' AC about interviewees and decision to hire them. Such an emphasis on interviewees' verbal rather than nonverbal behavior is in line with Riggio and Throckmorton (1988) and Stewart and Cash (2000), who suggested that applicants' success in a hiring interview strongly depends on their verbal responses, and that nonverbal behaviors play a more minor role.

The male gender composition of the dyads also may have influenced the extent to which interviewees' verbal behavior affected interviewers' AC and hireability decisions. Sanders (1989) showed that men depend primarily on others' verbal behaviors (self-disclosure and verbal interrogation) to increase their AC about them, whereas women depend primarily on nonverbal immediacy behaviors. Different results, therefore, may have been obtained had the dyads been comprised of females or of males and females.

Another reason why interviewers may have focused more on interviewees' verbal rather than their nonverbal behavior is because the interviewers came from a low-context culture (the United States), where people rely on verbal behavior to convey meaning. In comparing interviewees who were judged by interviewers to display good verbal skills versus those who needed more practice, t-tests showed that the two groups of interviewees did not differ in their nonverbal behaviors but did differ with respect to interviewers' perceptions of their hireability, with those demonstrating good verbal behaviors being perceived as more hirable ($M = 12.29$, $SD = 1.16$) than those who needed more practice ($M = 9.38$, $SD = 1.32$), $t(13) = 4.55$, $p < .001$. In addition, the difference was marginally significant for AC, with interviewers' AC being higher for those demonstrating good verbal behaviors ($M = 11.57$, $SD = 1.76$) compared to those who needed more practice ($M = 9.88$, $SD = 1.45$), $t(13) = 1.00$, $.10 < p < .05$. Thus, interviewees' verbal behavior appears to explain interviewers' AC and perceptions of interviewees' hireability better than interviewees' nonverbal behaviors did.

Finally, interviewees' paralinguistic cues (e.g., pitch, rate, accent, and volume of the voice) may have influenced interviewers' AC and perceptions of interviewees' hireability (for more on paralanguage see Chaney & Martin, 2000), and interviewees' display of positive and negative paralinguistic cues may have affected interviewers' perceptions of them. As possible evidence, interviewers' written feedback and their scores on the AC scale suggested that their AC was high for applicants who "showed interest" or "a willingness to learn," which might be conveyed via paralinguistic cues.

Although none of interviewees' nonverbal behaviors or the similarity of those behaviors between interviewers and interviewees predicted AC or hireability across interviewers, this does not mean that nonverbal behavior did not play a role in these intercultural hiring interviews, as a different picture emerged when the data for each interviewer were analyzed separately. Although both interviewers were equally professionally dressed, interviewer 2 engaged in more of the remaining nonverbal behaviors (eye contact, hand gestures, facial expressions, and forward lean) than did interviewer 1, and these same differences were

evidenced by those interviewed by interviewer 2 compared to those interviewed by interviewer 1. Such nonverbal reciprocity is in line with Liden et al.'s (1993) finding that when interviewers displayed warm nonverbal behavior, interviewees reciprocated that behavior. Three of the five nonverbal behaviors (eye contact, hand gestures, and forward lean) displayed by interviewer 2 also were seen as more similar to his interviewees than they were for interviewer 1 and his interviewees. Thus, interactants varied in the amount and similarity of the nonverbal behavior they displayed.

Analysis of the data for each interviewer demonstrated predictive relationships between some of interviewees' nonverbal behaviors and interviewers' perceptions of interviewees' hireability. Specifically, eye contact, facial expressions, and forward lean predicted (to varying degrees) hireability, whereas hand gestures and professional dress did not. More specifically, applicants' eye contact and the similarity of facial expressions between interviewers and interviewees predicted hireability for interviewer 2, facial expressions were a marginally significant predictor for each interviewer, and forward lean was a marginally significant predictor for interviewer 1. Therefore, each interviewer placed some emphasis on applicants' facial expressions but also took into account unique nonverbal behaviors (eye contact in one case and forward lean in the other case). Such unique emphasis may explain why, when the data for the interviewers were combined, the analysis failed to show any relationship between the amount or similarity of nonverbal behavior and hireability.

Finally, as was the case with the combined data for the two interviewers, there was no relationship between nonverbal behavior and AC at the individual interviewer level. Neither interviewees' nonverbal behaviors nor the similarity between interviewees and interviewers predicted AC for either interviewer. In addition, AC did not predict hireability for either interviewer, despite doing so when interviewers' data were combined. One explanation for this finding may be a "reduction of variability" at the individual interviewer level, as interviewer 1 had lower scores on the AC scale (from 7-12) than did interviewer 2 (from 10-14); consequently, the scores for interviewer 2, by themselves, perhaps were not strong enough to achieve statistical significance. When the data were combined, however, AC could and did demonstrate a strong enough predictive relationship with hireability.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

Although the results showed relationships between nonverbal similarity/dissimilarity, attributional confidence, and hireability, they need to be viewed in light of potential validity threats. Those limitations, in turn, suggest future research directions.

First, only five nonverbal behaviors were assessed, and there are many other behaviors that could be studied. In particular, as previously noted, paralinguistic cues are an important behavior that affects interactants and may well affect those in intercultural hiring interviews.

Second, the measurement of whatever nonverbal behaviors are studied needs to be refined further. The NS scale was global in nature, asking only the extent to which the nonverbal behaviors of interviewers and interviewees were similar without specifying exactly how they were similar or dissimilar. Future research should pinpoint types of nonverbal similarity and dissimilarity displayed and the relative effects of each type on outcomes.

Third, interviewers' verbal behaviors were excluded but they appear, based on post-hoc analyses, to have affected interviewers' AC and perceptions of interviewees' hireability.

Future research should focus on the effects, both separate and combined, of verbal *and* nonverbal behaviors on AC and hireability (see Burnett & Motowildo, 1998; Peterson, 1997).

Fourth, the procedures simulated intercultural hiring interviews, but it is unclear whether such a simulation is similar to actual interviews. Interviewers and interviewees may have behaved differently than in a real interview because there was no possibility of hiring someone, and, therefore, the stakes were much lower than in a real interview (see Eder & Harris, 1999). Future research, thus, should study actual intercultural hiring interviews.

Fifth, moving to the natural context and refining how nonverbal behaviors are assessed may mean using qualitative in addition to quantitative methods. Eder and Harris (1999) argued that "qualitative research methodologies such as verbal protocol analysis should be especially useful for exploring differences in decision processes across interviewers. These methodologies provide broad, descriptive information about the decision-making process" (Eder & Harris, 1999, p. 253).

Sixth, the sample characteristics undoubtedly limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition to the small number of participants, differences at the interviewer level suggest the idiosyncratic nature of these interviews. Interviewers also had experience interviewing minority applicants, in line with Gudykunst's (1995) research, but that may have made them culturally sensitive to applicants' nonverbal behaviors, not letting differences between their nonverbal behaviors and those of applicants affect their AC and perceptions of applicants' hireability. Future research should assess whether there are differences between interviewers (and interviewees) who have had intercultural interviewing experience versus those who have not.

The mean scores for the nonverbal behaviors also suggest that participants were not very nonverbally expressive. More variation in the amount displayed would help to see whether such behavior plays an important role in this interactional context. Interviewers, for instance, could be matched with interviewees in particular ways if both initially were assessed for nonverbal behaviors. Experimental studies could also be conducted in which nonverbal behaviors of interviewers and/or interviewees are manipulated to see their individual and/or combined effects.

Finally, because participants represented only two cultures, it is not clear whether the findings apply to members of other low- and high-context cultures. Moreover, to rule out interracial differences, only Caucasians served as interviewers and only Indians were interviewees. Gender differences also were ruled out by studying only males, although there are verbal and nonverbal behavioral differences between men and women. This study, therefore, should be replicated with male and female interviewers and interviewees from a variety of other cultures and races to see whether the findings can be generalized to other populations.

Applied Value of the Findings

Despite these limitations, the results contribute to our understanding of the intercultural hiring interview and may have applied value to organizations, those who conduct culturally diverse interviews, and applicants from other cultures seeking employment. The following recommendations are offered tentatively, with the understanding that additional research is

needed to help organizations, interviewers, and interviewees successfully conduct intercultural hiring interviews and hire the best-qualified, culturally diverse individuals.

The results suggest that U.S. organizations can hire the most qualified applicants when their interviewers understand and appreciate that there are often important differences in the behavior of those from the dominant U.S. culture and those from other cultures. In particular, organizational leaders should direct their hiring interviewers to not place too much emphasis on intercultural applicants' nonverbal behavior. For example, if an interviewee from another culture does not display an "appropriate" amount, as defined by U.S. cultural norms, of a nonverbal behavior because of cultural norms guiding that interviewee's behavior, the interviewer, in judging the applicant, should take into account other factors, such as the person's verbal behavior and previous work experience. Moreover, the results suggest that when interviewers display a nonverbal behavior toward interviewees, interviewees reciprocate that behavior but not to the same degree. This lack of full reciprocity, which may not be the case with interviewees from the dominant culture, also should not work against applicants from other cultures.

Organizations conducting intercultural hiring interviews, thus, should make sure that their interviewers are aware of, and appreciate, cultural differences in behavior, but at the very least, not hold them against interviewees from other cultures. Perhaps most important, organizations should not rely solely on interviews from the dominant culture but should employ culturally diverse interviewers. Until such time as there are a sufficient number of culturally diverse interviewers available, however, organizations need to educate interviewers from the dominant culture to understand and appreciate cultural differences in nonverbal and verbal behavior.

Finally, an interview, of course, is a two-way interaction and, therefore, it is incumbent on those seeking employment to be aware of the potential consequences of engaging in nonverbal and verbal behavior during intercultural hiring interviews. The results from this study suggest that interviewees should be attentive to interviewers' nonverbal behavior and try to reciprocate that behavior to some extent. This need for reciprocation applies even more so to those applicants from other cultures who have not had enough time to fully become acculturated to the "norms" of U.S. nonverbal and verbal behavior.

Conclusion

Given the growing diversity of the U.S. workforce, organizations are increasingly conducting intercultural hiring interviews with prospective employees from other cultures. Moreover, "most of the new people coming into [the U.S.] workforce are [from] high-context [cultures], yet most members of management are [from] medium/low-context [cultures]" (Kennedy & Everest, 1991, p. 50). Such differences can create communication problems between those from high- and low-context cultures, especially during an intercultural hiring interview. This study of how nonverbal behavior displayed by interviewers from the low-context culture of the United States and interviewees from the high-context culture of India potentially affects interactional processes and outcomes, will hopefully start to fill the gap in the literature about this important intercultural interactional context. By understanding the dynamics of these interactions and creating more culturally sensitive hiring interviews,

employers will find a wealth of qualified candidates from many cultural backgrounds that they might not otherwise discover.

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