SAFE SPACE:

CONTEXTUAL AND INTERPERSONAL INFLUENCES ON SELF-DISCLOSURE IN

PRE-EMPLOYMENT SECURITY VETTING INTERVIEWS

by

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work completed under the supervision of

Professor Paul J. Taylor and Dr Kirk Luther, and has not been submitted, in whole or in part, for

the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

Abstract

Despite the growing need for security cleared employees, there is a dearth of research in pre-employment security vetting practices. Interviews are perhaps the most vital and subjective aspect of vetting, and this process relies on the candidate's willingness to self-disclose risk-relevant information. This thesis attempts to measure the effects of interview context and interviewer feedback on risk-relevant self-disclosure. Chapters 1 and 2 respectively contain a literature review and the novel methodology used in the experiments.

Chapters 3 and 4 report two between-subject experiments that explored the impact of interview contexts on self-disclosure outcomes. Experiment 1 compared self-disclosure in four contexts: Home, Office, Public, and Online. Results found that Home and Online interviewees self-disclosed at similarly high rates, and both significantly more than Public interviewees. Experiment 2 used a 2x2 factorial design, (Medium: Face-to-face, Virtual-mediated; Location: Home, Office) and found that Face-to-face Home interviewing yielded significantly more self-disclosure over all other conditions. An interaction effect was found for Location, such that Virtual-mediated Home interviewees disclosed significantly more than Virtual-mediated Office interviewees.

Chapters 5 and 6 report two multi-part experiments which compare self-disclosure outcomes in groups that receive (self- and other-generated) information about themselves prior to the interview. Experiment 3 found that experimental groups who received a "profile" about themselves (mobile phone activity or personality traits) self-disclosed more than a control group. Experiment 4 compared self-disclosure outcomes between a control group and a group aware of referee reporting on their personality; no differences in self-disclosure were found.

Chapter 7 presents a summary of the main findings, outlines limitations, and addresses theoretical and practical implications. This work provides evidence for the phenomenological significance of the home as a space conducive to risk-relevant self-disclosure and supports the notion that the personalisation of interviewer feedback can influence self-disclosure outcomes.

Dissemination

Conference presentations

Winters, C. L., Taylor, P. J., Luther, K., & Overmars, G. (TBD). *Influencing self-disclosure in personnel screenings: Findings from four PhD studies.* TBD at ING Headquarters in Amsterdam, Netherlands.

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Terminology

Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception is a coding system developed from Reality Monitoring principles. It is used to quantify unique external, contextual, affective, and internal details in investigative interviewing studies.

Barnum effect refers to the tendency of individuals to give high accuracy to ratings of personality evaluations which are said to be specifically tailored to the individual, however are vague enough to apply widely to people.

Bogus pipeline is a research technique which uses equipment as a means to improve the veracity of self-report, assumingly by decreasing socially desirable responding as the equipment is assumed to have the capacity to discern truthful from non-truthful responding.

Context manipulation refers to altering the physical environment in order to influence interview outcomes.

Counterproductive work behaviour refers to employee work behaviour that harms organisational interests and is posited to result from the interaction of interpersonal disposition and environmental antecedents.

Illusion of knowing-it-all is an interview technique whereby the interviewer presents already known information followed by open-ended questioning in attempt to elicit disclosure that the source might otherwise be less willing to disclose.

Insider threat refers to threats that individuals entrusted within security organisations pose to organisational interests.

Inspect is a mobile device application designed to track basic phone analytics and it was built for the purpose of creating a Bogus Pipeline in Experiment 3.

Modified-Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception is a coding system designed to quantify relevant details in interviews conducted for this thesis. A modification on the original ACID coding system, M-ACID coding uses a simplified scoring mechanism and has been designed for self-disclosure in vetting interviews. Changes to ACID coding are justified by Reality Monitoring principles and are mainly related to the autobiographical nature of the interview, associated linguistic (i.e., first person) narrative, and relevant legal and psychopathological standards pertinent to vetting.

Place attachment is the complex and multidimensional phenomenological attachment that individuals form with meaningful places in their lives.

Place identity, a subconstruct of place attachment, refers to an individual's perception of self as a member of a given place, as rooted in subjective beliefs, meanings, and emotions associated with that environment.

Place dependence, a subconstruct of place attachment, refers to an individual's functional attachment to a place based on environmental characteristics which serve to satisfy the individual's needs.

Reality Monitoring is a cognitive model proposed by Johnson and Raye (1981) which posits that genuine memories are experienced (and therefore, expressed) differently than fictional (imaginative) memories. Researchers have proposed strategies aimed to improve deception detection based on RM's foundational framework.

Security vetting is the process that individuals undergo in order to obtain a security clearance that is necessary for security sensitive employment.

United Kingdom Security Vetting is a UK government agency responsible for carrying out national security vetting.

Abbreviations

ACID Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception

ANOVA Analysis of Variance

ANCOVA Analysis of Covariance

CMC Computer Mediated Communication

GAO Government Accountability Office (US)

FtF Face-to-face

HEXACO-PI-R HEXACO Personality Inventory Revised

HEXACO-O HEXACO Personality Inventory Revised-Observer Report

HUMINT Human Intelligence

IOS Inclusion of Other in Self Scale

M-ACID Modified-Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception

MOD Ministry of Defence

NAO National Audit Office

SD Standard Deviation

SE Standard Error of the Mean

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences

STS Sensitive Topics Survey

STS-V2 Sensitive Topics Survey-Version 2

STQ Sensitive Topics Questionnaire

STQ-V2 Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 2

STQ-V3 Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 3

STQ-V3R Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 3 Revised

TIPI Ten-Item Personality Inventory

UKSV United Kingdom Security Vetting

URCS Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale

USIS United States' Investigation Services

VMI Video-mediated interview(ing)

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my ancestors; to my grandfather, who inspired my curiosity through

his pedagogy, to my great-grandmother, whose gift provided me comfort on my hardest days,

and to my other greats who crossed the Atlantic, survived a pandemic, and overcame challenges

to build a better future.

Epigraph

"We are all differently abled from one another and, context – which is socially constructed –

often decides what will be protected and indulged"

Andrew Solomon

Chapter 1 General Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This thesis had four objectives. The first objective was to pioneer research on pre-employment security vetting by creating an ethical research paradigm for self-disclosure of relevant information. The second objective was to develop a codified system to quantify relevant self-disclosure. The third objective was to determine the influence of different contextual environments on self-disclosure of risk-relevant information. The fourth objective was to explore the role of interviewer feedback of self- and other-reported personal information on relevant self-disclosure. The third and fourth objectives relate to the personalisation of both environmental space and interviewer feedback. They explore whether manipulation of these factors influences self-disclosure of risk-relevant information.

1.2 Security Vetting in Practice

1.2.1 What is "vetting"?

A pre-employment screening process, or vetting, refers to the procedural checks that a candidate undergoes as a means of validating their identity, ensuring their integrity, and assessing whether they pose a risk to an organisation (Brooks et al., 2010; Zwitter, 2010). Vetting is typically conducted at recruitment, although it can be conducted later in 'aftercare' procedures when changes in duties, responsibilities, lifestyle, or circumstances require (Brooks et al., 2010; Ministry of Defence [MOD], 2020). The use of pre-employment vetting is crucial for protecting the operation of high security organisations such as security and intelligence agencies (Colaprete, 2012). One goal of the vetting process is to identify personal vulnerabilities and motivations to commit organisational harm that stem from factors such as disgruntlement,

financial gain, ideological motivation, and ego or self-esteem (Charney & Irvin, 2016; Herbig, 2008; Kirkpatrick, 2008; Shaw & Fischer, 2005; Shaw et al., 2009). Vetting also seeks assurances that the candidate is not susceptible to extortion, blackmail, and/or bribes (Kühn & Nieman, 2017; MOD, 2021). Less common, but still important, is identity verification and loyalty to the State. Vetting is an ongoing process that is used to identify red flags or behavioural anomalies that indicate pressures and opportunities to rationalise motivations for dishonest behaviour. Thus, it is important that vetting interviewers obtain detailed and accurate information to protect against insider threats.

1.2.2   *Security vetting in the United Kingdom*

The United Kingdom Security Vetting (UKSV) is the central organisation responsible for carrying out vetting in the United Kingdom. UKSV replaced separate bodies to bring consistency and efficiency to a process that had previously been carried out by individual departments (National Audit Office [NAO], 2018). Current UK government guidelines require Enhanced Security Check (eSC), Developed Vetting (DV), and Enhanced Developed Vetting (eDV) clearance seekers to undergo a detailed interview with a trained investigating officer. Additionally, some checks require interviews with both professional referees and personal referees who have known the candidate for an extended period.

Validating identity and ensuring integrity involves a thorough background investigation, including a review of the candidate's criminal, educational, financial, and psychological histories (MOD, 2018a). Personnel security controls such as background checks, references, and national security vetting interviews are in place "to confirm the identity of individuals (employees and contractors) and [to] provide a level of assurance as to their trustworthiness, integrity and

reliability" (Cabinet Office, 2018, p. 5). According to the UKSV Guidance on the vetting

interview process (MOD, 2017; 2018a), candidates are contacted by the vetting officer directly

via phone or email. Candidates are allowed to request a vetting officer with certain

characteristics (e.g., someone of their own age profile, ethnic group, or sex) if it makes them

more comfortable discussing specific topics. Interviews typically take place within normal

working hours, and they can last over three hours. Candidates are asked to travel to a local hub to

interview, as to better manage UKSV's high demand for services (MOD, 2017).

UKSV Guidance reports the following as key themes for vetting interviews: loyalty,

honesty, reliability, and vulnerabilities that could lead the candidate to being bribed or

blackmailed; wider family background (relationships and influences); past experiences of drug

taking (if any); financial affairs; general political views; foreign travel; and hobbies (MOD,

2017; 2018a; 2021). The MOD's website notes that "some of the questions are intrusive but are

asked because we are trying to find out if [the candidate] is vulnerable to pressure." Candidates

are told to be honest and that a clearance "will be refused or subsequently withdrawn on the

grounds of lying or withholding information." Detailed and accurate self-disclosure is thus

crucial to a successful vetting interview.

1.2.3   Why study vetting practices?

The increased need for individuals to gatekeep and manage sensitive data has resulted in

increasing demands for employee vetting (NAO, 2018; U.S. Government Accountability Office

[GAO], 2017). Historically, face-to-face interviewing was preferred for the most sensitive

vetting cases in the UK and the US (MOD, 2017; U.S. Department of State, 2021). However,

backlogs of unprocessed background investigations have led UK and US agencies to declare

personnel security screenings as a high-risk security issue (Mihm, 2019; NAO, 2018). The US

National Background Investigation Bureau reported a backlog decrease of approximately

120,000 in 2018, which they credited to measures aimed at increasing efficiency, such as

temporarily allowing video-mediated interviewing (VMI) and telephone interviews (Mihm,

2019). Similarly, the UK Government Security Board temporarily allowed some interviews to be

conducted over the telephone during 2018 and 2019 (NAO, 2018). The GAO has called on

oversight agencies to prioritise reducing the backlog by conducting evidence-based reviews on

the timeliness of background investigations (Mihm, 2019). Since March 2020, several agencies

waived the requirement of face-to-face interviewing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Bunn and Sagan (2016), rapidly expanding demands for security-cleared

employees has strained resources and may be responsible for oversights in the system. For

example, in 2011, whistle-blower and former Fieldwork Director for US Investigations Services

(USIS), Blake Percival, filed a lawsuit alleging USIS had fired him for not ordering his

subordinates to submit background investigations to the US government before they had been

completed (Percival, 2020). In October 2013, shortly after high profile security incidents of those

cleared by USIS, including Edward Snowden and Aaron Alexis, the Department of Justice joined

Percival in a civil lawsuit that citing USIS had fraudulently submitted at least 665,000

incomplete background investigations for clearance (*United States of America ex rel. Blake*

Percival v. U.S. Investigation Services, Inc.). During that time, USIS was the largest processor of

background investigations on behalf of the US Office of Personnel Management. In a similar

vein, the UK is facing mounting pressure to quickly identify and mitigate security threats amidst

political uncertainty and constantly evolving legislation concerning the management of sensitive

data (Blagden, 2018; Scott, 2020). Thus, there is a need to find ways to cope with the excessive

pressure on vetting while avoiding ineffective shortcuts and costly incidents.

A common challenge of vetting interviews stems from candidates not providing sufficient

information (Dawson, 2015). There is an absence of research on obtaining full disclosures during

vetting interviews, and good reason to expect that findings from other types of forensic

interviewing studies may not always apply. Vetting interviews are generally the result of self-

promotive and self-initiated practices (i.e., job applications). There is, therefore, a baseline

expectation for candidates to be cooperative and forthcoming throughout the interview process.

This is less often the case in other types of forensic interviews (e.g., suspect interviews). Like

HUMINT interviews, vetting interviews aim to establish prospective occurrences, but vetting is

less focused on establishing networks of people and events. Like suspect interviews, vetting

interviews focus on past events, but they focus on the individual rather than the event (Hartwig et

al., 2014). In sum, vetting interviews are autobiographical and person-centric in nature.

Candidates produce autobiographical narratives that represent episodic or repeated transgressions

and other risk-relevant information. Risk-relevant disclosures are assessed in terms of context,

severity, repetition/embeddedness (e.g., dependency), recency, and the contrast of available

collateral information. Such an assessment is ultimately used to judge a candidate's suitability

for specific employment (Spilberg & Corey, 2017). Thus, the literature review within this

chapter covers findings from research focused on sensitive self-disclosure. By contrast, the

experimental chapters consider relevant findings from other investigative interviewing studies,

where applicable.

1.3   Findings from Sensitive Self-disclosure Research

Self-disclosure is defined as sharing personal information that is previously unknown by the relational other (Altman & Taylor, 1973; Collins & Miller, 1994). Self-disclosure has many functions, including to initiate and maintain relationships, decrease uncertainty, and increase liking, intimacy, and trust (Canary et al., 1993; Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010; Dindia & Allen, 1992; Tardy & Dindia, 2006). Self-disclosure is considered 'sensitive' when the information makes a person vulnerable to being judged negatively by others (Derlega et al., 1993; Moon, 2000), and is generally considered unfavourable or not socially desirable, depending on the context and/or recipient(s) (Jiang et al., 2020). Several interrelated factors are associated with the propensity to self-disclose. These include individual factors such as affect, gender, ethnicity, personality, and motivation, and social factors, such as the relationship type, perceptions of trustworthiness, likability, similarity to self, and the discloser's perception of the likelihood of reciprocity and risk (Consedine et al., 2007; Coker & McGill, 2020; Dindia & Allen, 1992; Forgas, 2002, 2011; Happ et al., 2016; Hosman, 1987; Ignatius & Kokkonen, 2007; Jourard, 1971; Phillips et al., 2009; Shaffer et al., 1992; Taddei & Contena, 2013; Sprecher et al., 2013).

1.3.1   *Contextual influences on self-disclosure*

A crucial aspect of vetting interviews concerns the creation and maintenance of an environment in which recall is optimal and the interviewee feels safe to disclose. So, what is it within a context that creates a 'disclosure-friendly' environment? The influence of context on self-disclosure has been the focus of research on self-threatening information, confessions, and HUMINT interviews. In investigative interviewing, 'context' refers to environmental elements outside of the interviewer-interviewee interpersonal dynamic (Kelly et al., 2013). 'Contextual

manipulation' is part of the taxonomy of interview methods (Kelly et al., 2013) and is employed

by police agencies as an interview influence tactic (Hoogesteyn et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2019).

Contextual effects have been closely linked to embodied cognition (Wilson & Foglia,

2011), which refers to the behavioural manifestations of cognitive-perceptual metaphors. For

example, lexical (Grecco et al., 2013) and contextual (Dawson et al., 2017) priming of

'openness' can positively affect sensitive disclosure. Similarly, conceptual priming for

attachment security has shown a positive effect on sensitive disclosure (Dawson et al., 2015) and

self-disclosure of hostile out-group attitudes (Davis et al., 2016). Dianiska et al. (2019) tested for

additive effects of priming using conceptual (i.e., activation of associative content), lexical (e.g.,

word cues) and embodiment (e.g., open body posture) primes, and compared these in direct

request versus context reinstatement interviewing approaches across two experiments. They

found that openness primes produced small increases in self-disclosure of illegal transgressions

as compared to closed primes (ds = 0.21-0.29), which fell within the 95% CIs reported in earlier

research. The authors conducted a meta-analysis for the two experiments, which produced a

small significant effect of the openness (as compared to closed) priming. Across both

experiments, the authors found strong effects for context reinstatement on self-disclosure of

illegal transgressions, such that participants who received these instructions disclosed

significantly more than those who received direct request instruction (ds = 0.69-0.79).

Contextual primes, such as lighting and room spaciousness, have been used in self-

disclosure studies and have also produced mixed findings. Some report increased sensitive self-

disclosure in brighter rooms through mechanisms such as perceived spaciousness and the

promotion of a positive mood (Gifford, 1988; Miwa & Hanyu, 2006; Okken et al., 2013). Others

suggest that darkness promotes illusory anonymity or decreases self-awareness, which in turn

increases self-disclosure (Steidle & Werth, 2014; Zhong et al., 2010). Testing the mechanisms of

ambiance priming as stated above, Mehta et al. (2017) found no effect for ambient room lighting

conditions on self-disclosure of a variety of personal topics like money, body, and social issues.

Although Dawson et al. (2017) found positive effects for perceived spaciousness on self-

disclosure, Hoogesteyn et al. (2019) failed to replicate their finding.

Studies on the effects of subtle environmental effects on self-disclosure, such as priming,

are highly variable (Cesario, 2014) and should be interpreted with caution, since the effects of

perceptual metaphors often produce small effects that do not replicate (e.g., Bower, 2012;

Hoogesteyn et al., 2019; Verschuere et al., 2018). Accordingly, the context experiments

(Experiments 1 and 2) in this thesis did not manipulate environmental variables such as room

size, lighting, and furniture, and instead gave focus to the phenomenological significance of

place and space.

1.3.2   *Medium and anonymity*

Virtual mediums with visual anonymity have been found to facilitate sensitive

disclosures (Joinson, 2001; Joinson & Payne, 2007; Joinson et al., 2011; Opendakker, 2006),

promote perceived intimacy between speakers (Jiang et al., 2011; Tidwell & Walther, 2002;

Walther, 2006), and lead to idealised evaluations of the conversation partner, especially when

communication is asynchronous (Walther, 1996). Sproull and Kiesler (1988) claimed that

computer mediated communication (CMC) reduces social context cues and communicators feel a

greater sense of anonymity as a result. The perception of anonymity is a driver for negative self-

disclosure. For example, Joinson (2001) found that (relative to face-to-face conversation) a

heightened sense of private self-awareness and feelings of anonymity increased sensitive self-

disclosure over computer mediated communication (CMC), a process known as deindividuation (Joinson et al., 2008; Spears, 2017). In acquaintanceship processes, CMC can lead to greater self-disclosure compared to face-to-face contact (e.g., Jiang et al., 2013). However, this most often occurs in the form of asynchronous communication (Joinson, 2001; Joinson & Payne, 2007; Walther, 1996, 2007, 2010; Walther & Parks, 2002). A loss of public self-awareness and heightened private self-awareness enhances feelings of anonymity, which affords individuals the opportunity to behave in non-normative, or non-socially approved ways. Moreover, this finding has been demonstrated in research examining disclosing information concerning embarrassing, socially stigmatising, and illegal behaviours on the Internet (Hian et al., 2004; Joinson et al., 2008; Misoch, 2015).

1.3.3 *Sensitive self-disclosure in surveys*

Sensitive questions, even in online questionnaires, are prone to dishonest responses (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Studies have given attention to the importance of participant non-adherence and lack of attention to instructions in sensitive topics surveys (Joinson et al., 2008; John et al., 2018; Vésteinsdóttir et al., 2019). In a series of nine studies on randomised response techniques (RRTs; i.e., techniques that makes the researcher blind to the 'real' response; Warner, 1965), John et al. (2018) concluded that RRTs often failed to elicit honest responses due to respondents' non-adherence to instructions when they were instructed to endorse an item (which is untrue for them) chosen at random. Non-adherence to instruction in RRTs tends to occur for true denials and stems from participants' fear that their responses would be misinterpreted as 'endorsed', and thus, viewed as undesirable. Similarly, Aronow and colleagues (2015) conducted a series of web-based experiments on sensitive behaviour using RRT combined with direct

questioning. The authors found that under an assumption of monotonicity (i.e., participants who do not engage in a given sensitive behaviour will not falsely confess to it), direct questions will reveal reliable information. Thus, while RRTs are very useful from a methodological standpoint to increase the accuracy of base rates of given sensitive behaviours and attitudes, they are unlikely to be readily adopted in vetting, as there is a strong emphasis on the reliability of individual responses and the vetting process is inherently a test of integrity and compliance.

Others (e.g., Bullock et al., 2011; Lyall et al., 2013) suggest using direct questioning in conjunction with item response and list experiments to improve detection precision in eliciting truthful responses. Indeed, increasing questionnaire length by using questions with varying levels of severity can result in greater overall endorsement of items of interest. However, this method is prone to contextual effects. For example, earlier research suggests that using 'forgiving' words in questioning decreases socially desirable responding (Abelson et al., 1992; Catania et al., 1996). Yet, this effect has mainly been shown for young adults under 25 years old (Peter & Valkenburg, 2011). Adjusting questions to reflect the perceived social norm has shown the strongest and most consistent effects on respondents' propensity to self-report socially undesirable information (Näher & Krumpal, 2012). This can be difficult to accomplish cross-culturally, however, even for cultures that share similar backgrounds (Andreenkova, & Javeline, 2019).

Vésteinsdóttir et al. (2019) conducted three studies demonstrating the importance of contextual priming in sensitive surveys. They found that preceding target questions with embedded questions about honesty, as a proxy of 'honesty messaging,' led to significant increases in socially undesirable responding on the target questions in all three studies (ds ranging from 0.17-0.34 for sum scores). The authors emphasised that to intentionally create context effects between questions on honest responding and target questions, it is best to place

the questions on honest responding right before the target questions, and to make them seem as similar as possible to the target questions. Questions presented in a least-to-most intrusive order can suppress a willingness to disclose relative to when they are presented in a most-to-least threatening order, however, this effect is absent when respondents are primed to think about their privacy (Acquisti et al., 2012). In line with this idea, the interviewer feedback Experiments 3 and 4 examined endorsements of closed-ended ('direct questioning') risk-relevant questions from "pre-screening" web-based surveys and combined this with analogous open-ended questioning in a later interview. Questions were conceptually grouped and presented in a least-to-most threatening order.

1.3.4   *Social influences on self-disclosure*

Self-disclosure is multidimensional. Intrapersonal variables such as gender, mood, and personality all influence the propensity to self-disclose. Interpersonal dynamics or factors external to the self, such as social context (e.g., doctor's office, work) and relationship type (e.g., parent, partner, stranger), tend to be more strongly related to sensitive self-disclosure concerning specific topics (e.g., drug taking, mental health problems, sexuality). Outside of the scope of expected discloser-recipient relationships and appropriate contextual antecedents, disclosers sometimes point to situational attributes related to their speaking partner's behaviour, which they use to justify their disclosure (Bazarova & Walther, 2009; Robins et al., 1996).

Reducing uncertainty. Feelings that affect self-disclosure, such as trust and privacy, can be moderated by context (Joinson et al., 2011). Predictability about a person is a crucial element for developing trust (Rempel et al., 1985), which is often an antecedent for sensitive self-disclosure (Knight, 2014; Wheeless & Grotz, 1977). The Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger

& Calabrese, 1975) posits that people are motivated to self-disclose as a means of reducing

uncertainty in relationships. Studies have shown self-disclosure serves as a function of

uncertainty reduction in computer-mediated communication (CMC) and this effect is at least

partially due to the reduction of available cues (Antheunis et al., 2012; Bargh & McKenna, 2004;

Joinson et al., 2008; Tidwell & Walther, 2002). Initial and subsequent self-disclosure as a vehicle

for uncertainty reduction is commonly seen in studies of previously unacquainted pairs (Gibbs et

al., 2011; Misoch, 2015; Shaffer et al., 1991; Taddei et al., 2010; Tidwell & Walther, 2002).

Self-disclosing as an uncertainty reduction strategy in CMC leads to greater liking, trust, and

reciprocal self-disclosure in relationship formation and maintenance (Anderson & Emmers-

Sommer, 2006; Sheldon, 2009; Tidwell & Walther, 2002; Walsh et al., 2020). Increasing

reciprocity tends to escalate the disclosure of intimate or sensitive content (Altman & Taylor,

1973; Reis & Shaver, 1988), and CMC exchanges intensify or expedite this process as opposed

to face-to-face exchanges (Joinson 2001; 2008; Jiang et al., 2011).

　　　　Liking and perceived similarity. People tend to show greater projection to in-groups than

out-groups (Clement & Krueger, 2002; Krueger & Zeiger, 1993), and their behaviour resulting

from these stereotypes may be driven by motivational components (Ames, 2004). Perceived

similarity influences the degree of attraction to a conversation partner (Montoya et al., 2008;

Tidwell et al., 2013), and it has been shown to promote liking and closeness, which are both

associated with promoting self-disclosure in initial interactions (Collins & Miller, 1994; Croes et

al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2011; Sprecher et al., 2012; Newman, 1981; Sprecher et al., 2013).

Perceived similarity's influence on attraction has also been demonstrated in CMC interactions

(Antheunis et al., 2010), and using avatars as conversation partners (Hooi & Choi, 2013).

Further, studies of stranger dyads have shown that incidental and highly similar attributes, such

as sharing the same name or birthday can lead individuals to comply with requests from authoritative strangers (Burger et al., 2004; Guéguen et al., 2011). Guéguen et al. (2013) found that when a male and female researcher recruited opposite-sex participants on the street to participate in an interview about highly intimate sexual behaviour, participants who were told that they had the same name as the interviewer were willing to answer more questions than those in groups who did not, and this finding was consistent across assessor-participant sex-pairings.

Power-imbalanced dyads. Self-disclosure reciprocity from a more powerful person may bring benefits to the relationship (Audet & Everall, 2010; Ryan et al., 2016; Jiang et al., 2020); however, turn-taking sensitive disclosure is not often the norm in professional relationships. Research focusing on sensitive self-disclosure from a less to more powerful party largely relates to criminal confessions (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 1999; Kassin & Gudjonsson, 2004), child-to-parent disclosure (Dotterer & Day, 2019; Rote & Smetana, 2018), patient-to-practitioner disclosure of drug use or symptoms (Clark et al., 2016; Kumar et al., 2020; Okken et al., 2013; Penalba et al., 2019), disclosure of victimisation to authority (deLara, 2012; Näsman, 2019), and the disclosure of concealable stigmatised identities or histories to employers, health practitioners, and other professionals (Camacho et al., 2020; Durso & Meyer, 2013; Flett, 2012; Newheiser et al., 2017). Studies of supervisor-student clinician relationships have shown that a strong supervisory alliance increases a student's willingness to self-disclose negative information (Mehr et al., 2015; Spence et al., 2014; Staples-Bradley et al., 2019), and these relationships are underpinned by the student's trust in the supervisor (Knight, 2014), supervisor's respect for the student's agency and privacy, assurances against negative evaluations (Mehr et al., 2010; Mehr et al., 2015), and feedback validating why specific disclosures were beneficial (Knight, 2014; Yourman, 2003). Indeed, privacy assurances, trust, and perceived validation were common

antecedents to sensitive self-disclosure in the power-bonded pairs mentioned above and these antecedents are important predictors in determining whether socially stigmatising information is disclosed at school and work (Flett, 2012; Putnam, 2000; Quinn & Chaudoir, 2009; Weiss et al., 2020). In power-imbalanced dyads, sensitive self-disclosure from the less powerful person typically functions with the goal of improving their condition or outcome. However, unlike the power-imbalanced examples, less is known about sensitive self-disclosure in types of interviews such as vetting, where the motivations in both parties are known and the lack of an established relationship serves the truly unbiased role that the interviewer is expected to adopt.

1.3.5   *Demographic influences on self-disclosure*

Personality. Research has not found consistent evidence of sensitive self-disclosure correlates across personality traits (e.g., "Big Five" and HEXACO). This is attributable to the multifaceted nature of disclosures, interpersonal dynamics, and the social and cultural antecedents in which they occur. In general, however, specific traits such as sensitivity to rejection (Ksionzky & Mehrabian, 1980), shyness (Zimbardo, 1977), low sociability (Schmidt & Fox, 1995), and avoidance (Emery et al., 2018) have been associated with low self-disclosure. Conversely, traits such as affiliative tendency (Ksionzky & Mehrabian, 1980; Lee & Kim, 2014), flexibility (Neimeyer et al., 1979; Park et al., 2016), and androgyny (Maheshwari & Kumar, 2008; Shaffer et al., 1991) are associated with high disclosure. Research on more general traits, such as neuroticism, shows mixed findings (Marciano et al., 2020; Stanley & Bownes, 1966), though it has been linked to inappropriate self-disclosure in terms of failure to appreciate reciprocity norms (i.e., disclosing too much or too little; Chaikin et al.,1975).

Further, context can moderate the influence of personality traits on self-disclosure. Extraversion is associated with both frequency and accuracy of self-disclosure on social networking sites (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2002; Chen et al., 2016; Tsai et al., 2017; Wang & Stefanone, 2013). Caci and colleagues (2019) found that openness to experience and extraversion were positively associated with breadth of self-disclosure on social networking, while both agreeableness and conscientiousness were negatively associated with self-disclosure breadth. Openness has also been positively associated with depth of self-disclosure and self-disclosure of experiences on social networking sites (Amichai-Hamburger & Vinitzky, 2010; Caci et al., 2019). Caci et al.'s findings are in line with previous research demonstrating that social media sharing accurately reflect users' personality traits as expressed in the real world (e.g., Back et al., 2010; Gosling et al., 2011; Seidman, 2013).

Gender. The pattern of sensitive self-disclosure between genders is inconsistent across studies, in part due to many confounding variables, such as gender of the recipient, goal of the interaction, reciprocity, and specific disclosure topics (Consedine et al., 2007; Franco et al.,1984). Women from Western societies tend to disclose more to strangers upon first meeting compared to men (Cunningham, 1981; Franco et al., 1984). This is especially the case when they are told that the purpose of the acquaintanceship is social (i.e., getting to know one another; Shaffer et al., 1992). Shaffer and Ogden (1986) found that men tended to provide increased self-disclosure when they believed that the purpose is to work with an individual. An experiment that focused on same-sex expressive/social versus collaborative/instrumental self-disclosures found that sex role identity (i.e., self-professed femininity and masculinity) is a better predictor of self-disclosure than gender (Shaffer et al., 1991). The authors found that femininity promotes intimate self-disclosure to same-sex acquaintances when the purpose of the interaction is social

(i.e., building an acquaintanceship), and that androgynous individuals provided more intimate self-disclosure across all contexts (sex pairing as same- versus opposite-sex, and purpose of interaction as expressive/social versus collaborative/instrumental), compared to individuals with traditional sex role identities. In a study of 5,042 individuals, Horne and Johnson (2018) found that traditional gender roles were not associated with self-disclosure in intimate relationships and that women both espoused more egalitarian views than men and self-disclosed more than men. The authors found that relationship efficacy (i.e., beliefs in one's ability to achieve desired relationship outcomes) contributed as a strong predictor of self-disclosure, and when added to the primary regression model of being female, childless, and having disclosed in the past, it accounted for 34% of variance in self-disclosure. Further, women have been found to use self-disclosure more often than men as a negotiation strategy in opposite-sex friendships (Leaper, 2019). Because research on sensitive self-disclosure and gender differences has mostly focused on relationship building, experiments in this thesis include some exploratory analyses on gender as it relates to self-disclosure in vetting interviews.

Culture, ethnicity, and out-group disclosure. Culture, ethnicity, and other visible markers of social identity can play a part in self-disclosure decisions as in-group members are generally seen as trustworthy and competent (e.g., Leach et al., 2007). A cross-cultural study of 16,939 individuals from 39 countries found that people from countries with higher relational mobility (i.e., generally Western or individualistic cultures) reported self-disclosing at higher rates than those in countries with low relational mobility (Thomson et al., 2018). A general finding within cross-cultural research is that self-disclosure is seen as a social commitment device (Kito et al., 2017; Schug et al., 2010), whereby both inter- and intragroup self-disclosure is related to maintaining or strengthening bonds. Consedine et al. (2007) compared self-

disclosure among U.S.-born African Americans and European American young adults ($M_{age} = 21$ years) across 7 topics and 10 different relationship dyads. They found interaction effects among gender and target, such that women tended to disclose more than men to lovers/partners, female friends, mothers, and siblings, and men disclosed more than women 'distant targets' such as co-workers, neighbours, and strangers. Interaction effects were also found for ethnicity and target, such that African Americans disclosed less to lovers/partners, friends, and fathers than European Americans. High (vs. low) income was a significant predictor of self-disclosure in general and an interaction effect was found such that lower income uniquely contributed to lower general self-disclosure in both men and African Americans. Men disclosed more about sexual experiences, however, the authors found no gender nor ethnic differences for disclosing 'taboo' topics, such as shameful experiences or trauma.

Cross-ethnic outgroup contact significantly reduces prejudice and self-disclosure can be a driver of this process (see Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Imai and Imai (2019) found that international students in Japan who voluntarily self-disclosed to their hosts were less likely to be influenced by prejudice, and this in turn ameliorated feelings of depression and loneliness, which further encouraged self-disclosure. In a study that compared self-disclosure in "Anglo" and Mexican-Americans questioned by similar and cross-ethnic interviewers, Franco et al. (1984) found that cross-ethnic pairings resulted in greater self-disclosure for both groups. However, both groups self-disclosed to Anglo men at similarly high rates, and Mexican-American men disclosed less about money to a Mexican-American woman assessor. In a similar vein, Ureche et al. (2015) compared self-disclosure in dyads of adolescent clients matched with either a similar-race assessor or a different-race assessor. The authors found no differences for self-reported substance use among the two groups of dyads, however, they found that youth matched with a

similar race assessor reported significantly fewer ADHD symptoms. The results of these studies suggest that in-group stereotype threat may exist for certain disclosure.

1.3.6   *Findings from candidate selection studies*

Whilst threats and national security needs have evolved over time, human intelligence (HUMINT) gathering techniques related to personnel selection have rarely been investigated. Empirical research on the topic of vetting has generally been limited to risk-specific realms (e.g., financial, substance use, disciplinary), and has been retrospective in nature (e.g., Aamodt, 2004; Becton et al., 2019; Kühn & Nieman, 2017). American studies have focused on cybervetting and behavioural indicators of insider threat (see Stebbins et al., 2019). Studies of police officer screenings have examined correlates of disciplinary action and identifying predictors of misconduct, such as histories of substance use and offending, impulsivity, and aspects of positive emotionality (Spilberg & Corey, 2017; Sellbom et al., 2021). Recent research has given focus to the predictive utility of personality assessments in job screenings as it relates to organisational citizenship and counterproductive work behaviours (Canagasuriam & Roulin, 2021; Pletzer et al., 2021). Other personnel selection studies have focused on organisational selection practices as they relate to a candidate's accountability for past behaviour, credibility, honesty, and impression management (e.g., Krylova et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Tomlinson & Carnes, 2015; Tsai et al., 2010). High conscientiousness has consistently been reported in meta-analyses (see Pletzer et al., 2021) as a desirable trait for candidate selection, but there is a lack of information concerning the role of personality on self-disclosure during vetting interviews.

1.4 Thesis Overview

Chapter 2 of this thesis outlines the methodology, including ethical and safety considerations, protocols for the management of sensitive data, questionnaire development and revision decisions, and the interview coding scheme development and rationale. Chapters 3 and 4 (Experiments 1 and 2, respectively) of this thesis compare self-disclosure outcomes between different places and spatial contexts (i.e., location and medium). Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis compare self-disclosure outcomes in a control group versus groups that received interviewer feedback of self(target)-generated information (Experiment 3), and other(referee)-generated information (Experiment 4). Chapter 7 provides a summarisation of findings, including limitations of these experiments and implications for future research.

Chapter 2   Methodology

Due to the sensitive nature of the experiments within this thesis, the methodology represented a significant part of my PhD experience (e.g., the development of the interview coding scheme and adjusting experiments due to ethical concerns). Thus, this chapter presents my approach to conducting sensitive research using a novel vetting paradigm. The first section addresses ethical issues, including the mitigation of risks and managing sensitive participant data. The second section considers the creation and evolution of online questionnaires and interview schedules. The last section gives attention to self-disclosure measures and the development of a coding scheme for quantifying participants' disclosures.

2.1   Conducting Sensitive Research: Ethical Protocols and Data Management

The acquisition and storage of sensitive autobiographical data presents ethical and methodological issues. Research is deemed sensitive if it has the potential to create a threat for those involved, including the researcher, and/or if the identification of participants is likely to result in stigmatisation or harm (Lee & Renzetti, 1993). The data collected for this thesis focuses on participants' past and present risk-related behaviours, which may be embarrassing, unethical, or illegal. Thus, the potential for participant anxiety and negative feelings are greater than in most psychological research.

In developing my experiments, I considered participant privacy and wellbeing, data processing and storage, interviewer safety and wellbeing, and when to break confidentiality if care concerns arose. Alongside following Lancaster University's guidance on these issues, my approach also drew on medical research on sensitive disclosures, which considers participant distress and confidentiality (Gadd, 2004; Holloway & Freshwater, 2007; Lakeman et al., 2013).

2.1.1   Interviewer safety

Fieldwork guidance. It was necessary to develop fieldwork guidance as Experiments 1 and 2 involved collecting data outside of laboratories. To prepare for data collection, I undertook web-based trainings on risk assessments and fieldwork hazards, to ensure competency in handling threats, abuse, or compromising situations (Lancaster University, 2016; Universities Safety and Health Association, 2018). I then completed, for each experiment, a generalised Record of Risk Assessment.[1] The Risk Assessment required listing significant hazards, and then, determining for each hazard: a) who might be harmed, b) the appropriate controls, and c) how to action those controls. My experience as a clinician in correctional institutions assisted in the formation of risk assessment and increased awareness of lone working risks, as professional judgment and de-escalation trainings served to enhance safety awareness.

Experiments 1 and 2 involved lone working in other people's homes. The risk assessment for attending participant homes was carried out in three stages: (1) the Record of Risk Assessment, which evidenced thoughtful consideration within experiment design; (2) the Home Interview Protocol Checklist,[2] which was referenced when approaching and entering participant's homes; and (3) whilst in the participant's home, maintaining awareness of potential interpersonal and physical hazards.

The hazards I considered included kidnapping, assault, poisoning/drugging, illness, trips/falls/accidental injuries, theft, and stalking. Controls for these risks included not accepting consumable items, keeping belongings within reach, maintaining a reasonable distance from others, looking for potential weapons, especially those that appear out of place (e.g., a knife in the living room), avoiding wearing items around the neck, declining requests for personal

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[1] See Appendix A.1.
[2] See Appendix A.2.

information, and remaining vigilant of concerning emotional behaviours (e.g., anger,

inappropriate laughter). Ensuring optimal risk reduction focused on preparatory actions, such as

examining a map and public transport timetables prior to arrival, ensuring mobile phone was at

least 50% charged, and dressing in accordance with risk handling strategies. In the case of threat

to researcher safety, as a first resort, actioning of controls meant ending the research session

immediately, leaving the situation (or de-escalation if escape was unlikely), and notifying

supervisors and authorities. No threats to interviewer safety occurred during these experiments.

On arriving at each participant's home, I completed the Home Interview Protocol

Checklist, and, in line with the Nominated Safety Person Protocol,[3] sent an SMS message to the

safety person (either my supervisor or a close friend) to indicate completion of risk assessment

and start of the experiment. Within one hour, I called (or texted) the safety person with the

designated code word (or phrase) to indicate that I was safe, and that I had either left the home,

or the experiment was not yet completed. I was required to call with the code word every time I

had safely left the participant's property.

2.1.2   *Safeguarding and distress protocols*

Potential for harm in sensitive research. A basic principle of conducting ethical research

is the mitigation of potential harm and distress caused to participants (Lakeman et al., 2013;

Warne & McAndrew, 2010). The British Psychological Society (BPS) stresses the importance of

harm minimisation and states that psychologists should consider the standpoints of all who could

be affected by research, avoiding "risks to psychological well-being [...] and the invasion of

privacy or dignity" (2014, p. 11). Acknowledging power imbalances with sensitivity, assessing

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[3] See Appendix A.3.

unavoidable risks for severity, and creating robust risk assessments are part of mitigating these risks (BPS, 2014).

A major consideration for these experiments was the consequentiality of the research and thus, the justification for possible participant discomfort. As the experiments sought to emulate vetting interviews, the potential gains for participants were lower than real-life vetting, but so were the potential losses. As the stakes were scaled to the experiment, the emotional consequences of participating became a salient concern; I anticipated reactions from feelings of embarrassment and minor anxiety to amusement and relief. For example, in their review of 46 studies involving sensitive disclosures, Jorm and colleagues (2007) found that a minority of participants (<10%) in both clinical and non-clinical samples reported some form of distress following participation. However, only four studies assessed the role of research experience in causing distress (by way of pre- and post-participation psychiatric interview), and these found that distressful feelings did not increase post-participation, and some distressful feelings actually decreased (*cf.* Lakeman et al., 2013; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). Moreover, despite the high prevalence of reported distress across all studies, 65-100% of participants reported positive effects of participation. There was also evidence of positive consequences in studies that assessed the long-term effects of participation (e.g., reported increased feelings of wellbeing) (see Jorm et al., 2007).

To address the concern for potential participant distress, I developed a distress protocol and participant debriefs that addressed negative reactions. Further, in line with the National Medical and Health Research Council's (2007) suggestion that researchers investigating sensitive topics should be trained in psychotherapy, my experience as a clinical and forensic treatment provider was considered a protective factor. Finally, I assessed the potential for power

imbalances and invasion of privacy. As both an ethical and methodological requisite, participants were required to be unacquainted with me in any capacity, including student-teacher relationships.

  Safeguarding vulnerable persons. All persons working on behalf of Lancaster University are regarded as being in positions of trust and are consequently responsible for taking action to safeguard individuals from perceived, alleged, and suspected abuse and neglect, as well as experiences that may lead to self-harm (Lancaster University, 2016). In the context of this research, researchers had a duty of care for safeguarding not only research participants, but those peripherally involved in research, such as people identifiable in participant disclosures and participants' household members. Over the course of the experiments, I followed protocols for managing participant distress, privacy, and confidentiality, all of which were adapted from earlier research and/or developed by me and my supervisors for the purpose of these experiments. I identified one participant as potentially vulnerable prior to participation, as evidenced by their inability to understand emailed instructions, and thus inability to provide informed consent. The potentially vulnerable participant was thanked for their interest, debriefed, and I explained why they were ineligible to participate.

  Distress management. Awareness of participant distress and managing potential reactions is an important aspect of sensitive interview research. My Participant Distress Protocol[4] followed the guidance of Haigh and Witham (2015), which itself drew on Draucker et al.'s (2009) protocol for sensitive qualitative studies. The protocol required that the interviewer remain cognisant of four indicators of acute emotional distress: "(a) statements or behaviours that suggest that the interview is too stressful, (b) statements that reveal a participant is

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[4] See Appendix A.4.

considering hurting himself or herself, (c) statements that reveal that a participant is considering

hurting someone else, or (d) statements that reveal a participant might be in danger if another

person found out about the interview" (Draucker et al., 2009, p. 349).

During the experiments, one participant was identified as distressed during participation

in the interview. However, the source of distress was stated as a pre-existing issue that was

unrelated to research participation. The source of the distress was, however, related to the

participant's time constraint for participation in the experiment. In this case, I asked the

participant if they wished to end participation and the participant agreed. The participant was

thanked, debriefed, compensated, and followed up with one week later. The participant's data

was destroyed and not included in analyses.[5]

An oft overlooked aspect of sensitive interview research is the potential for researcher

distress, for example, resulting from an exposure to upsetting stories (Anderson & Hatton, 2000;

Dunkley & Whelan, 2006). My Interviewer Distress Protocol (adapted from McCosker et al.,

2001; see Haigh & Witham, 2015) is outlined in Appendix A.5. As part of this protocol,

regularly scheduled debriefing took place during weekly and bi-weekly supervision meetings.

Privacy management. Fieldwork locations present potential privacy issues because they

included a public space and shared home locations (i.e., participants living with others). All

home-based participants were asked to prepare a quiet and private place for the interview, and to

inform co-dwellers in advance if they felt they would need privacy. All Skype-interviewed

participants were asked to use headphones or earbuds when interviewing, and the interviewer

always wore earbuds. Prior to the Skype interviews, the interviewer stated she was alone and

reiterated that the call would be only audio, and not video, recorded. Further, during home-based

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[5] This case is mentioned in Chapter 6.

Skype interviews, the interviewer asked participants which room they were using and whether they felt they had privacy. Participants interviewed in a public space were asked if they knew in the vicinity at the beginning and at end of the interview. Experiments 1-3 also included an Office-based condition, however, the risk that participants might see a person whom they know (e.g., in the lobby of the lab space) was no greater than daily life. Noise within the Office was inaudible to people in the lobby.

Confidentiality management. Confidentiality assurances tend to promote honest responding in sensitive studies (Singer et al., 1995). The assurance of confidentiality in these experiments were paramount for participant security and comfort. The Participant Information Sheet stated my commitment to confidentiality, including whom and under what circumstances individuals other than myself would have access to a participant's data. The confidentiality assurance was made for all types of disclosure, including mental health information, and illegal behaviours (e.g., pirating software, procuring illicit substances, shoplifting), so long as the reported behaviour or feelings did not present a risk of harm (e.g., stalking, suicidal ideation, involving children in criminal activity). Participants were made aware of this limit through examples, as illustrated below:

Int: *"Have you ever received any warnings or cautions from law enforcement?"*

R: **"Yes, the police come to my house all the time because my partner and I fight."**

Int: *"Have you ever habitually used any addictive substances, such as alcohol or drugs?*

R: **"Yes, I'm currently addicted to heroin."**

Further, I re-iterated these limits immediately preceding each interview, saying "*keep in mind that confidentiality must be breached if you express risk of harming yourself or others.*" Participants were made aware that duty of care reporting would be relayed to supervisors, the

Head of the Psychology department, legal authorities, and/or relevant custodians. Participants were also made aware that if a confidentiality breach was necessary (and only if I felt that doing so would not endanger anyone), then every effort would be made to discuss the issue with them first. Any communicated expression, regardless of whether it was recorded, was subjected to this limited confidentiality assurance.

Throughout the experiments, confidentiality was breached on four occasions: once each in Experiments 1 and 2, and twice in Experiment 4. All four breaches concerned participant mental health disclosures that indicated risk to self. One disclosure that necessitated confidentiality breach occurred immediately following participation in the interview, and the other three occurred during the interview. In each case, I discussed the issue with the participant, including inquiring about their current feelings and support. In all cases, I verbally informed the participant that confidentiality would be breached and reported to relevant authorities immediately. For student participants, university mental health services were also contacted, and I sent a follow up email to the participant one week after student contact with services. One confidentiality breach occurred with a non-student community member. In this case, I provided community resource recommendations and followed up via email.

In three cases of confidentiality breach, participant data were included in analyses, as these three risk-related disclosures occurred in a manner that suggested the interviewee felt the disclosure unproblematic to their wellbeing and volunteered current provision of mental health services. In the fourth case, the participant's behaviours and stated concerns warranted ending their participation in the interview, and thus their data were excluded from analysis.

2.1.3   Data management

Data were collected using surveys, participant mobile device data, interview audio recordings, and interview transcriptions. Each of these data collection tools involved unique protocols, which are summarised below.

Face-to-face audio data. Audio recordings of face-to-face interviews were captured on a handheld recording device and transferred to an encrypted computer within one working day. For Experiments 1 and 3, I used an Edirol R-09HR unencrypted audio recording device. In the Costa condition of Experiment 1, a Dual-Headed Lavalier LV20 clip-on mic-splitter was used to isolate sound and help ensure other voices were unidentifiable. Following the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in May 2018, recordings were made on a pin-protected Olympus DS-9500 recorder, which recorded encrypted files.

Skype-based data. The interviewer created a researcher Skype profile for use in Experiments 1, 2, and 4. All interviews were carried out on a password-protected laptop. Interviewee usernames were added as Skype contacts immediately preceding each interview and were deleted at the end of each interview; call and chat history for each participant was similarly deleted. During each experiment, the chat feature was used only when the participant initiated it, or when the call presented technical issues which prevented the participant or interviewer from being heard. Skype calls always used the audio and video features. The Call Recorder for Skype application was used to record only the audio data.

Transcribing and coding. PageSix Transcription Services transcribed most interviews for Experiments 1, 2, and 3. Two volunteer student research assistants transcribed some of the interviews for Experiments 2 and 4, and I transcribed most interviews from Experiment 4. All transcribers were provided with transcribing instructions and non-disclosure agreements, which

required they redact identifying information and destroy the audio files on completion. Audio files submitted to PageSix were encrypted and password-protected. Interrater agreement was used to assess the coding in each experiment. Each of the raters also signed non-disclosure agreements and underwent approximately 40 hours of training in M-ACID with me. Following transcriptions by others, I listened to the audio files and corrected any incoherent or inaudible sections as reported by the relevant transcriber.

Participant pool. Ethical approval was obtained to create a participant pool to facilitate recruitment of community-based (non-student) participants. I advertised the opportunity to participate in a paid Security Vetting Interview experiment with Lancaster University's Psychology Department via flyers at local businesses, a local magazine (*Local Choice*), and Lancaster University's Research Services Office website. Interested participants signed up for the participant pool via email and provided electronic consent to be contacted at a later date. Potential participants were made aware that participation in the pool and the resulting studies was voluntary, and that they could ask to be removed from the participant pool at any time. Participants who did not respond to my invitations to participate (or who declined to participate) in Experiment 2 were later invited to participate in Experiment 4. Participants who asked to be removed from the participant pool were removed immediately and this action was confirmed to them.

2.1.4   *Data retention and use*

Participants' anonymity was protected by storing sensitive data and identifiable data separately. Physical copies of Consent Forms were stored in a locked cabinet in my office on campus and electronic forms were stored on an encrypted H: drive (Lancaster University

network drive). Participant names and contact information were stored on my encrypted and password protected device. Sensitive anonymised data such as response sets were stored in alignment with university requirements for storing sensitive data (H:drive, then Box.com, and later, OneDrive). Participants were instructed not to provide identifiable information about themselves or others during the interview. This was emphasised in Participant Information Sheets, Consent Forms, and verbally. On the rare occasion participants did state identifiable information (e.g., names and online handles), I later redacted this information from the transcripts.

All participant data, including scanned forms, audio files, and data documents (e.g., Excel, Numbers, SPSS) were saved on an encrypted drive, and backed up on a Lancaster University-supported cloud service. At the end of each experiment, I reminded student research assistants of their agreements to destroy physical and electronic copies of audio files and interview transcriptions and in each case, I received confirmation that all data was destroyed.

Participants were made aware that their audio files would be deleted as soon as possible after participating, and no longer than three months after the researcher received the transcription. Three months was a necessary time window to correct transcription errors, which may have gone unnoticed until the coding phase. Participants were informed that their autobiographical information (such as their address) would be stored separately from their data and that it would be deleted as soon as it was no longer necessary for the researchers. Identifying autobiographical data (e.g., participant names, addresses, email addresses, Skype names) were deleted two weeks after data collection.

The Participant Information Sheet notified participants that their data (including anonymised quotes) would be used in this thesis (e.g., for coding training), publication in

scientific journals, and presentations at academic and practitioner conferences where results could inform policymakers. Participants were also told that anonymised aggregate quantitative data would be made open access on Lancaster University's Publications and Research information management system (PURE) and the UK Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) Data Archive. Finally, participants were made aware that my supervisors retain guardianship of the data for ten years before it is destroyed. No participants opted to withdraw their data after completing any of the experiments.

2.2   Procedure and Interview Schedule Development

2.2.1   *Procedure and design elements*

Before participation, participants confirmed that they were at least 18 years old, had not taken part in a previous vetting study, and did not meet the vulnerable criteria described above. Participants were adult students and community members living in Lancaster and surrounding areas. Interviewee participants were informed that they would be asked to participate in an audio-recorded interview and that they would be asked questions of a personal nature that simulate those asked in security vetting interviews. Participants were informed that improving security vetting was a desired application of the research. The Participant Information Sheet provided examples of questions that participants would be asked during the interview, including the types of responses that might necessitate a confidentiality breach. The Participant Pool Information Sheet – used in experiments that drew from a community sample (Experiments 2 and 4) included the following statement:

"Security vetting is the process that candidates go through in order to obtain

security sensitive employment. There is usually an extensive background

investigation and then an interview which involves personal questions. My

research is broadly focused on the interview portion and how we can improve this

process. You will likely be asked to participate in one of these interviews,

however your participation is voluntary, and you are only asked to provide

information to the extent that you feel comfortable. **You will be paid for your**

participation."

Study advertisements made it clear that participants would be paid for their participation,

thus, monetary incentive was expected to be a motivation for participating in these experiments.

Experiments 1 and 3 also provided monetary incentive or SONA credits (however, most

participants accepted payment) in exchange for participation. As such, the motivation for

engagement in the experiments and, thus, motivation for self-disclosure, may have been rooted in

a desire for monetary gain.

Prior to participating in the interview, participants were verbally reminded that their

participation was voluntary and that they could leave at any time, for any reason, without

question or penalty. In all experiments, participants were encouraged to ask questions prior to

participation, and they were asked not to participate if they felt uncomfortable with the proposed

interview content.

Environmental elements. Experiments taking place in an office (Experiments 1, 2, and

3)[6] used the same 2.9m x 2.9m interview room with white walls and one window opposite one

door. Participants interviewing via Skype (Experiments 1, 2, and 4),[7] were asked to interview

only from a computer or tablet to maintain consistency and decrease the potential for

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[6] Experiments 1 and 2 used this room as an experimental group assignment (e.g., "Office"). In Experiment 3, all
interviews were conducted in this room.
[7] Experiments 1 and 2 used Skype as an experimental group assignment (e.g., "VMI"). In Experiment 4, all
interviews were conducted via Skype.

interruptions that can occur when using a mobile device. During Skype interviews, the interviewer sat in front of a white background approximately 50cm away from the screen at eye-level with the camera. Bohannon et al. (2013) found that the perception of eye contact is important for impression formation and building trust between speakers, and that sitting at eye-level with the camera is ideal for promoting mutual eye contact.

 Demographic measures. Demographic measures were always presented prior to the interview. Interviewee participants were asked to specify their age, nationality, gender, native language, and race on the demographic form. To promote inclusivity, blank spaces were provided for the participant to respond to each demographic item. Due to very high nationality heterogeneity in the student samples (Experiments 1 and 3; > 20 nationalities) and a lack of heterogeneity in community samples (Experiments 2 and 4), I did not conduct exploratory analyses on nationality. Due to racial heterogeneity in Experiments 1 and 3, exploratory analyses were conducted comparing "White" and "Underrepresented Groups" in these experiments, with any responses containing the terms "White" or "Caucasian" grouped as "White" and any responses not containing these terms grouped as "Underrepresented Groups".[8] Unless a participant defined themselves as non-cis-gendered (for example, as non-binary or trans-), responses containing "F," "female," "woman," and "cis-woman" responses were grouped as "Women" and responses containing "M," "male," "man," and "cis-man" responses were grouped as "Men."[9]

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[8] APA 7 guidance on bias-free language advocates use of "Underrepresented Groups" or "People of Colo[u]r" when referring to non-White people as a group.

[9] Whilst some data sets resulted from participants who verbally identified as transgendered during the interview, none of the participants indicated themselves as non-cis-gendered on the demographic form, and only a few indicated themselves as "cis-," thus, gender was conceptualised as "Women" and "Men."

Use of personality measures. All experiments included measures of personality. The

Context Experiments (1 and 2) used the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The TIPI was

chosen for brevity and was used to assess the degree that personality traits covaried with self-

disclosure outcomes between experimental group assignments. The Interviewer Feedback

Experiments (3 and 4) used the HEXACO and HEXACO-O (Ashton & Lee, 2009) personality

assessments as interviewer feedback manipulations. The interviewer used these measures to

provide the interviewee with feedback for self-reported (Experiment 3; HEXACO), and

observer-reported (Experiment 4; HEXACO-O) personality traits, and the measures were chosen

for a balance of precision and length (i.e., the tests are extensive enough to cover subscales, but

not too long to cause participant fatigue). Experiment 4 additionally used the HEXACO and

HEXACO-O to test for potential correlates of self-disclosure, as there is evidence of high

convergent correlations ($r > .50$) between self- and observer-reports (Ashton & Lee, 2009).

Post hoc assessments. Findings from Experiment 1 suggested that the addition of post

hoc measures assessing interviewee's appraisal of the interviewer might provide further insight

to the mechanism of self-disclosure. Experiment 3 assessed interviewer liking with a single 7-

point Likert scale rating of the statement (*1 = Strongly disagree*; *7 = Strongly agree*): *1) I liked

the interviewer.*[10] Experiments 2 and 4 included three additional questions, and assessed

interviewees' feelings toward the interviewer using all four statements on a 7-point Likert scale

(*1 = Strongly disagree*; *7 = Strongly agree*): *1) I liked the interviewer; 2) I trusted the

interviewer; 3) The interviewer was considerate;* and *4) The interviewer conducted the interview

at an appropriate pace.* The latter two items additionally served to ensure that the interviewer's

behaviour was appraised similarly across different experimental conditions.

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[10] Experiments 2 and 4 used a local community sample, which necessitated building a large participant pool. Thus,
Experiment 3 sequentially followed Experiment 1.

Interviewer presentation. As the interviewer, I attempted to use a consistent physical appearance, nonverbal behaviours, and interactional style throughout all four experiments. I dressed in business casual, wearing dark trousers with a solid-coloured blouse or jumper. I refrained from wearing anything that obstructed my face and hands, and I did not display any distinguishing features (e.g., unnatural hair colour, facial piercings, tattoos). I also avoided wearing glasses, fragrances, and ostentatious jewellery as even seemingly minor adornments can trigger automatic unconscious evaluations (Fazio, 2001) and may affect an interviewee's memory, mood, and their judgment of the interviewer as honest, likeable, or trustworthy (Guéguen, 2015; Leder et al., 2011; Li et al., 2007; Schiffman, 1974).

I refrained from rapport building during the experiments. Interview studies on sensitive self-disclosure about transgressions typically do not include a rapport-building period (Davis et al., 2016; Sauerland et al., 2013). Moreover, rapport building may be considered manipulative or inappropriate, unless the study is longitudinal, therapeutic, or requires ongoing participant-researcher contact post-data collection (Jorm et al., 2007; Weller, 2017). I attempted to maintain a neutral expression and tone and refrained from expressing personal views (Groves et al., 2009). Besides the structured questions and prompts for further information, I only responded verbally to clarifying questions and refrained from producing empathic responses that might lead the interview to take on a therapeutic orientation (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009; Gregg, 2011; Weller, 2017).

Development of interview schedule. All experiments in this thesis relied on a Sensitive Topics Questionnaire (STQ) that guided questioning. The reasons behind creating a questionnaire rather than using a pre-existing questionnaire were: (1) a lack of availability of an appropriate, validated, and comprehensive questionnaire (most validated questionnaires concern

only a single area pertinent to vetting; e.g., psychopathology); (2) concern that using validated

questionnaires on certain topics may lead to ethical issues (e.g., criminal behaviour, mental

health); (3) most available vetting questionnaires largely comprise disclosure of identity-related

information (address history, social media use), which is contraindicated for these studies; and,

(4) most available vetting questionnaires contain excessive questions related to mature financial

affairs, which may have disproportionately over-represented this theme in this research, and

which were largely irrelevant and/or not salient for the participant age groups in some

experiments.

Focus on topic areas for STQ content relied on published UK government and academic

literature on sensitive personnel selection for employment in roles such as the police, military,

and cybersecurity specialists (American Psychological Association [APA], 2018; Aamodt, 2004;

Brooks et al., 2010; Cunningham et al., 2018; Fischler, 2004; Koepfler et al., 2012; Malouff, &

Schutte, 1986; Mitchell, 2017; MOD, 2017; Spilberg & Corey, 2017; Stebbins et al., 2019). The

precise topics are described in the next section. For ethical and practical considerations, topics

considered overly embarrassing or traumatising (e.g., pornography habits, crime victimisation)

were not included.

Vetting relies on suitability indicators, which assess identity, integrity, and character

(Brooks et al., 2010; Herbig, 2008; MOD, 2017). In general, the STQ included questions relating

to integrity and character. I avoided questions related to identity verification as these seemed to

conflict the anonymity assurances made to participants. Additionally, certain integrity questions,

specifically questions concerning national loyalty, were not used in this research, as emphasis in

this area may have caused disproportionate distress in a multicultural sample.

Similar to self-report surveys and interview questionnaires used in other sensitive self-disclosure research (e.g., Davis et al., 2016; Madon et al., 2012; Mattos et al., 2017; Sauerland et al., 2013), the interview question content in these experiments were compiled based on those used in previously validated studies. The questions were adapted from self-report measures of illegal and norm-violating beliefs and behaviours (Frick & Hare, 2001, Gardner et al., 2007; McCoy & Edens, 2006; Sanches et al., 2016) and risk taking (Blais & Weber, 2006). Additional question content was conceptually based on the UKSV's official forms (i.e., NSV002 Developed Vetting Questionnaire; NSV003 Financial Questionnaire). Consistent with the approach taken by recent research (Davis et al. 2016; Mattos et al., 2017; Sauerland et al., 2013), the interview questions drew on measures of self-reported risk and framed questions in a culturally relevant manner. Question phrasing was led by subject matter experts and examples presented in academic research.

Whilst several dozens of questions were considered, the following criteria were used for selecting question content: 1) ethical appropriateness in terms of a low likelihood of participant identifiability, 2) ethical appropriateness in terms of low likelihood of necessity to breach confidentiality related to duty of care reporting (e.g., excluding questions about violence), 3) ethical appropriateness in terms of low likelihood of evoking participant psychological distress, 4) motivation for socially desirable responding (as opposed to "lighter" topics; e.g., UKSV interviews ask about hobbies), 5) content gauging risk assessment (i.e., transgressions and maladaptive behaviour). The categories were conceptually determined and grouped based on face validity following the selection of appropriate questions. Thirty-seven questions were chosen to ensure sufficient variability of response content and length, and to reduce the possibility of a floor effect.

To increase question comprehensibility and identify ethical issues, the STQ was piloted with 20 adults (mostly British and North American). The STQ comprised 37 questions categorised into six topics: Affiliations, Character, Ego, Irresponsible Behaviour, Social Deviance, and Substance Use. The interview questions began with a closed-ended 'Yes/No' format, usually beginning with *"Have you ever...."* Answers indicating or implying 'yes' were then followed with an open-ended prompt for more information (i.e., *"Please tell me about that"*). At the end of the interview, interviewees were given an opportunity to add any additional information.

In Experiment 1, the STQ contained questions relevant for a student sample (e.g., *"Have you ever cheated on an exam?"*). Subsequent versions of the questionnaire used in Experiments 2, 3, and 4 were reformulated to address issues related to response content, such as rephrasing questions to include a wider range of responses, including clarifying information, and providing relevant examples within items. The questions were also reformatted into new categories. The grouping of questions for categorical analysis is presented within the relevant Chapters. The reliability analysis for Experiment 1 is presented within this Chapter, since it drove the changes in question categories maintained in subsequent studies.

Interview structure and question format. The STQ formed the basis of asking follow-up questions that sought to elicit detail about participants' "Yes" responses. Thus, the experiments used a structured interview approach, which increases standardisation by assisting the interviewer in determining how to address and reduce bias, how to ask narrative-like questions, and how to evaluate response sets (see Levashina et al., 2014). Only affirmative responses were followed by a prompt for more information (e.g., *"Please tell me about that"*), as it would have been inappropriate to prompt further in the case of a denial. The interviewer feedback studies

included a pre-screening yes/no questionnaire (e.g., "*Have you ever used marijuana?"*), and the

subsequent interviews in these studies used a probing, narrative/explanation-seeking approach

(Shepherd, 2007), with the open-ended prompt (*"Please tell me about that"* in response to

affirmation, or *"Please tell me about [question content]"*) guiding free-recall narrative depth and

breadth (Powell & Snow, 2007). Open-ended prompts, or the opportunity to provide context for

a given response, assists in understanding a candidate's behavioural history, even if that

understanding does not affect the hiring party's decision making (Spilberg & Corey, 2017).

2.2.2   Question categories: Experiment 1

According to the MOD (2018a), the following are non-exhaustive areas of concern for

vetting: finances, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual misconduct, illegal or ill-advised behaviour,

compulsive gambling, an illness or condition that may pose risk, institutional rule breaking,

police cautions or convictions, inappropriate use of social media, and misuse of company IT. I

created the following six categories based on UKSV interview topics as relevant (e.g., age

appropriate) and ethically applicable (e.g., inclusive content) for a university sample.

Ego. The questions in this category concerned feelings of self-worth and self-awareness

concerning inappropriate behavioural patterns (e.g., "*Have you ever lied to gain attention?"*).

Because it was necessary to avoid direct mental health questions for ethical and methodological

reasons, the Ego category served to highlight related psychopathological risks. Ego-based

reasoning serves as a foundation for concerning traits such as narcissism and vengefulness, and it

is prevalent in insider threat and espionage cases (Charney & Irvin, 2016; Cunningham et al.,

2018; Shaw & Fischer, 2005).

Irresponsible behaviour. The questions in this category focused on behavioural impulsivity and a disregard of personal obligations. These questions were intended to replace those concerning 'Financial Imprudence,' as university students are less likely to have opportunities for repeated or severe financial delinquency. The questions within this topic addressed dispositional recklessness and affective instability (e.g., "*Have you ever destroyed a meaningful or expensive item out of anger?"*), which are predictive of interpersonal problems (Fischler, 2004; Roberts & Johnson, 2014; Spilberg & Corey, 2017) and, in young people, predictive of poor financial management as an adult (Hopley & Nicki, 2010; Odlaug & Grant, 2010).

Character. This category comprised deceitful and deviant behaviours that are not necessarily or commonly considered illegal, but that would demonstrate compromised integrity, especially relative to organisational interests (e.g., "*Have you ever told a secret you promised not to tell?"*; Official Secrets Act, 1989). Disclosures illustrating severity or high frequency of such behaviours tend to be associated with Dark Triad traits, which are strongly linked to insider threat in security organisations (see Fischbacher-Smith, 2015).

Social deviance. This category comprised questions about deceitful and deviant behaviours, which underscore or allude to a disregard for the law, property, or rights of others (e.g., "*Have you ever vandalised a public place, such as making graffiti or damaging property?"*). Past record of misconduct is one of the strongest predictors of future misconduct (Zamble & Quincy, 2001), and criminal histories point to significant risk (Cuttler & Muchinsky, 2006).

Substance use. The Substance Use questions in Experiment 1 focused on illicit drug use as opposed to the irresponsible behaviours or outcomes related to substance use in general.[11] Substance use is strong predictor of counterproductive work behaviour and dysfunction in security sensitive jobs (Normand et al., 1990; Sarchione et al., 1998), and is related to other risk factors such as financial vulnerability, mental health problems, and disciplinary action (Aamodt, 2004; Okunna et al., 2016; Sarchione et al., 1998).

Affiliations. This category comprised questions that related to questionable loyalties or suspicious connections (e.g., "*Do you know anyone who is, or who has been, in a gang?"*).Wider family backgrounds and other relationships and influences are a key subject in vetting interviews (Her Majesty's Prison & Probation Service, 2018; UKSV, 2018) because those socialised in criminal settings develop attitudes and values that increase their likelihood of offending and other problematic behaviours (Binning & Sherman, 2011; Holsinger, 1999; Losel, 2003).

2.2.3   *Reproposed question categories: Experiments 2, 3, and 4*

After reflecting on the content of Experiment 1's response sets, I redesigned the STQ for the remaining studies. Amendments comprised redefining the question themes to decrease content overlap and reduce the subjectivity of the coding process, as well as removing, adding, and amending certain questions. The basis for the question theme amendment was conceptual, informed by an analysis of internal consistency (see below). For example, responses in the Character and Social Deviance categories were often indistinguishable in terms of conceptual categorisation of the elaborative content, and so they were merged. The following sections outline the amended categories, which were reconceptualised based again on face validity of the

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[11]   These questions were grouped in the Irresponsible Behaviour category.

amended questions. As Experiment 3[12] was conducted prior to Experiments 2 and 4, Experiment

3's questionnaire (STQ-V2) contained 40 questions adapted for a student sample. Experiments 2

and 4's questionnaires included five more questions that broke apart double-barrelled questions

and modified some content to increase inclusivity. Experiment 4's questionnaire (STQ-V3-R)

was nearly identical to Experiment 2's (STQ-V3), with slightly modified phrasing of some

questions to increase potential breadth of responses.

The basis for question amendment was to counterbalance content in other categories, as

well as to replace questions that were removed. Questions were removed for the following

reasons: elaborations revealed that more than 50% of participants misinterpreted or

misunderstood the question[13] and elaborations were largely irrelevant (i.e., > 50% of all response

sets for a given question contained information that was either mostly or wholly considered

irrelevant to vetting).[14] Irrelevant responses could occur for a number of reasons, including

phrasing of the question, lack of salience, participant attempts to avoid addressing the meaning

of the question, and participant professed lack of exposure to content due to age or background.

Questions were modified to consider response content from the previous experiment. For

example, Experiment 1's question: "*Have you ever skipped out on paying for a service such as a*

restaurant, salon, or taxi?" was modified to include '*train*' since, despite the low endorsement

rate for this question, affirmative responses typically included train in the elaboration. The

addition of 'train' within this question led to an increased endorsement rate in the future

experiments. Nevertheless, some questions remained with low base endorsements, which likely

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[12] Experiments 2 and 4 used a local community sample, which necessitated building a large participant pool. Thus, Experiment 3 sequentially followed Experiment 1.

[13] This only occurred for one question, once, in Experiment 1.

[14] This did not affect coding in Experiment 1. The coding scheme still held if the response gauged question content.

had an attenuating impact on effect sizes, as is often the case in personnel selection studies (Sellbom et al., 2007; Tarescavage et al., 2015; Sellbom et al., 2021).

Some questions were modified to include greater avenues for responding. For example, Experiment 1's questions: "*Have you ever said something racist?*" and "*Have you ever used illicit drugs other than marijuana?*" were respectively modified to "*Have you ever said or shared opinions that others might consider racist, sexist, homophonic, xenophobic, or otherwise intolerant?*" and "*Have you ever used other illicit drugs, such as mushrooms, cocaine, amphetamines, MDMA, PCP, LSD, or opiates?*". While Powell and Snow (2007) argued that the absence of specific details in a question is important in eliciting free-narrative recall in sensitive interviews with children, interviewing adults can sometimes require additional prompting. The addition of specificity in these questions led to not only increased response rates, but a wider variety of responses, including an increase in content not provided in the stated examples.

Overall reliability was calculated for STQ question endorsements using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (*KR-20*; Cortina, 1993). While good overall reliability was found for STQ (*KR-20* = .77), examination of the proposed categories yielded poor inter-item consistency. In one sense, the low inter-item consistency was not a concern. Whilst high inter-item correlations might serve to discriminate candidates with severe behavioural issues (e.g., financial, substance use), high internal consistency serves as a stronger justification for validation of the STQ as a composite measure of risk (*cf.* Davis et al., 2016; Mattos et al., 2017; Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Nonetheless, I redesigned the question categories, which resulted in marginally improved reliability, and are mentioned in the relevant experiment chapters. The following categories represent changes to the original interview structure and the questions within from Experiment 1. The following categories were used in Experiments 2-4.

Susceptibility to Pressure. The 'Ego' category was expanded and redefined as "Susceptibility to Pressure" in order to replace items which yielded less relevant response content, with items that relate to the management of emotions and interpersonal conduct, as well as the social management of identity (e.g., "*Have you ever concealed important aspects of your identity from people close to you?*"), which should not be withheld during vetting (Houses of Parliament, 2017).

Affiliations. The content of this category remained largely unchanged from Experiment 1. Some questions were modified to include the possibility of greater endorsements (e.g., "*Have any of your family members spent time in prison?*" was changed to "*Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members spent time in prison?*").

Avoidance of online identification. The UK's Developed Vetting Questionnaire: NSV002 includes questions about various online behaviours, (some of which are better represented by another category, e.g., gambling, or would not be appropriate for these studies, e.g., social media profiles). The questions in this category were new and mirrored those on the NSV002 form that relate to risks involved with concealing identity (e.g., "*Have you ever used technology which masks your identification online, such as The Onion Router?*").

Dishonesty. Due to improved inter-item reliability when combining Character and Social Deviance endorsement ratings from Experiment 1 (*KR-20* = .61), and irrelevant response content that questions from each category yielded, some questions from each previous category were removed, whilst remaining questions were combined to form Dishonesty.

Financial imprudence. Although Experiment 1 initially sought to capture financial imprudence in the Irresponsible Behaviour category, I found that responses justified the addition of this category in the other student study (Experiment 3), and in the two community sample

studies (Experiments 2 and 4). Questions were based on the UK's Financial Questionnaire:

NSV003.

Formal reprimands. This category was largely formed due to qualitative content in

Experiment 1. Participant volunteering of verifiable information in Experiment 1, especially in

the Irresponsible Behaviour category, gave rise to this new category. The Formal Reprimands

category dealt with record of misdeeds in academic, employment, and legal realms (e.g.,

suspensions, arrests). Police recruitment studies demonstrated that previous job terminations and

past disciplinary records are predictive of future disciplinary problems, job termination,

counterproductive work behaviour, and dysfunction, including abuse (Cohen & Chaiken, 1972;

Cuttler & Muchinsky, 2006; Malouff & Schutte, 1986; Staff, 1992).

Substance use. Questions remained similar to those used in Experiment 1, and some

questions grouped in Irresponsible Behaviour from Experiment 1 were added to the Substance

Use category. Some questions were modified to include the potential for a wider range of

responses (e.g., "*Have you used marijuana in the last three years?*" was changed to "*Have you

ever used marijuana?*"). One question was removed due to a floor effect (e.g., "*Have you ever

misused prescription drugs with the intention of obtaining a pleasant feeling?*").

2.2.4   *Question order: Random v. grouped*

Question order effects can have an influence on information disclosure. Rossi and

colleagues (1983) identified five effects of question order that can be mitigated by changing how

a questionnaire is structured. They argued that presenting questions in a randomised order can

deter consistency effects, whereby expectancy leads subsequent questions to be answered in

ways that are consistent with previous questions, and fatigue effect, whereby there is a decrease

in attention over time. Conversely, presenting questions in categories can deter saliency effect (whereby there is incidental forgetting on the basis of lack of introductory cues), a redundancy effect (whereby similar questions are not perceived as 'checks'), and a rapport effect (whereby a sensible order leads to more meaningful engagement).

For Experiment 1, I randomised questions order to deter interviewee perception that responses might guide the line of questioning (Straus, 1979), and to deter consistency and fatigue effects (Rossi et al., 1983). I also sought to minimise demand characteristics that might influence how questions were answered, such as participant beliefs about what the interviewer might *really* be interested in determining (Orne, 1962; Schaeffer, 2000). Indeed, a randomised order might disrupt response sets in sensitive survey research when it comes to disclosure of illegal behaviours. In a survey study on intimate partner violence, Ramirez and Straus (2006) found that a random presentation of items elicited higher endorsement of questions than other types of presentation, such as a least-to-most severe ordering, but only for items about the most severe types of partner abuse.

Subsequent interview questionnaires used in this thesis were organised by interview topic, with questions ranging from least to most severe in order to create a 'context of legitimation' for disclosure (i.e., perceived permissibility of disclosures increases with gradual exposure to increasingly sensitive questions). The ordering was based on the average ranking of question sensitivity per category by 20 European laypeople, who were asked not to rank based on how they felt about the questions, but how uncomfortable they imagined the *average person* would feel answering the question (Bradburn & Sudman, 1979; Acquisti et al., 2012; Coutts & Jann, 2011; Sauerland et al., 2013) in a one-on-one recorded interview. Experiments 2, 3, and 4 thus, grouped questions per category in least-to-most severe order. Experiments 3 and 4 used

self-administered pre-screening surveys in analogue with the interview, as self-administration

tends to increase veracity of reporting on sensitive surveys (Rasinski et al., 1999; Tourangeau &

Smith, 1996).

2.3   Interview Scoring Mechanisms

2.3.1   *Self-disclosure measures*

Two primary measures of self-disclosure were used: (i) questions endorsed, scored as the

total number of affirmative responses, and (ii) details disclosed, scored as the total number of

unique details provided during question elaborations. Details were scored using a modification of

Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception (ACID) interview coding scheme (here forth M-

ACID, Colwell et al., 2007).

2.3.2   *Measuring question endorsements*

A question was considered endorsed if it included any variation of a 'yes' response,

and/or when the participant began elaborating with a response that implied an affirmation (e.g.,

"I guess I used to do that when I was in my teens"). Responses that indicated variations of 'no'

or that did not provide any affirmative information (e.g., *"I'm not sure, maybe, but I don't*

remember") were coded as not endorsed. Uncertain or ambivalent responses were coded as

endorsed only when the participants' conclusive statement was affirmative (e.g., "*Well I don't*

know if it was illegal, because I'm pretty sure it's allowed in my country. I don't think there are

laws against it, but actually I think it is illegal, so yeah."). If a response was vague (e.g., *"I don't*

know"), the response was considered not endorsed. For each study, a research assistant who was

blind to the study aims and hypotheses coded at least 20% of transcripts to assess interrater

reliability for question endorsement.

2.3.3   *Measuring details*

Vetting interviews encourage candidates to disclose sensitive self-related information that

may be at odds with their interests. An important part of this research involved choosing a

coding scheme to quantify relevant information disclosed. As such, a few coding schemes were

considered. Interview Yield Assessment (IYA) was one method considered (Alison et al., 2013).

IYA quantifies frequency of count of points of evidence or items of intelligence (in scales of

Capability, Opportunity, and Motive), as well as codes amount of information (about people,

location, actions, and timing; PLAT) of the activities in question. Because the questions relied on

free recall to autobiographical narrative, IYA was not deemed appropriate for these studies

because judging capability, opportunity, and motive within response sets about individually

varied and highly contextualised transgressions was outside of the scope of this research. Whilst

PLAT was considered as a standalone measure, it was considered overly simplistic in that it

lacks theoretical grounding that is necessary in ascertaining information value.

Because outright fabrication requires cognitive effort (Vrij, Fisher et al., 2008; Vrij et al.,

2015), those seeking to manage the impression they make often rely on lies of omission (Turner

et al., 1975). As I suspected omission to be a common response to the interview questions, the

experiments required a coding scheme capable of identifying and quantifying relevant details. As

such, the Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception (ACID) coding system was chosen as the

ideal coding framework for this research. ACID uses objective scoring criteria to measure

sensory, contextual, and cognitive information (Johnson & Raye, 1981) that studies of Reality

Monitoring and Criteria Based Content Analysis have shown discriminate true from false

accounts (Masip et al., 2005; Vrij, 2015). I underwent approximately 40 hours of self-directed

ACID training, primarily using the Global Institute of Forensic Research training video (Colwell

& Hiscock-Anisman, 2017), practice transcripts, and personal communication with the coding

scheme creator, Professor Kevin Colwell. In this section I describe the original ACID coding

scheme, and then how I modified it to better suit the vetting context.

  ACID. ACID codes words and phrases with four specific detail types: external,

contextual, internal, and affective. External details refer to anything that originates from a

person's senses, what they saw, heard, smelled, etc. (Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017).

Contextual details show relationships in time and space and include prepositional phrases, and

phrases and words which describe interrelationships (amongst objects and people), time, places,

and locations. Internal details refer to the speaker's thoughts and metacognitive statements, and

idiosyncratic or self-referential information that comes from *not* the time of an event in question.

Affective details relate to the speaker's subjective emotions and emotional state. While affective

tend to occur least often compared to the other detail types, early research with ACID

demonstrates that including affective details was useful in discriminating veracity (Colwell &

Hiscock-Anisman, 2017).

  External details and contextual details originate outside of a person, whilst internal and

affective details relate to anything that originates from within the speaker. Modifiers of affective

and internal details are coded as the respective detail type ("*very* (a) *loving* (a)"; "*extremely* (a)

anxious (a)"; "*thinking* (i) *deeply* (i)"; "*overly* (i) *analytical* (i)") because the subjective quality

of an internal experience can only be judged by the speaker. Unlike affective and internal details,

modifiers of external details are not coded ("*really beautiful* (e)"; "*very slow* (e)"), because they

denote a vague quality or quantity, and provide no objective descriptive appraisal.

ACID has been historically used in studies where the topic of deception is known, and the

response content is predictable. When using ACID for Experiment 1, I found that variability in

the content and use of language, particularly in statements containing internal and contextual

details, necessitated modifications to the coding process. Further, because the use of mnemonics

and context reinstatement were absent in my interviews, the mechanism for tallying total details

would be simplified.

Modified-ACID (M-ACID). Because the ACID coding system was developed to examine

narratives which involve event-specific investigations, modifications were necessary to detect

and accurately categorise information that is person-centric. These changes are notably seen in

how combined contextual clauses and self-referential and metacognitive information are coded.

M-ACID's changes are largely reflected by (and an extension of) the theoretical underpinnings

of Reality Monitoring and deception-based research studies.

M-ACID coding occurred in three stages. Stage 1 determined whether a given response

contained *any* relevant (i.e., codable) details. Stage 2 determined whether *specific* words or

phrases within a response were codable. Stage 3 determined the specific detail type (affective,

contextual, external, or internal). This tiered approach guided interrater scoring. Specifically,

interrater agreement was examined at Stage 2 only if coders agreed on the presence of codable

details at Stages 1, and interrater agreement was examined at Stage 3 only if coders agreed on the

presence of codable details at Stage 2.

2.3.4 Stages 1 & 2: Determining response relevance

Like ACID, the most difficult part of coding with M-ACID is determining response

relevance (Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017). For words and phrases to

be considered codable, M-ACID required the information to be: (a) relevant to vetting, that is,

the response must *gauge the intention* of the question or topic asked about, and (b) the first

instance of mention within that question topic (i.e., only unique information was coded). Stage 1

of coding simply determines whether an elaboration contains *any* relevant details. Distinguishing

codable content from an endorsement was a distinct step for three reasons. First, interviewees

occasionally endorsed a question but then decided not to elaborate. Second, interviewees

occasionally offered a denial but then provided a codable elaboration. Third, interviewees

occasionally endorsed a question but then provided an irrelevant elaboration (e.g., Int: *"Have*

you ever compromised your values in order to please someone?" R: *"Oh, yes, all the time."* Int:

"Please tell me about that." R: *"...Um... I guess I sometimes like to go with the trends"*).

Stage 2 determined which specific words or phrases within a response were relevant (e.g.,

Int: *"Have you ever gambled?"* R: "Yes." Int: *"Please tell me about that."* R: *"I've <u>played</u> the*

<u>lottery</u> <u>a few times.</u> I play <u>online</u> <u>poker</u> <u>weekly</u>... and I play poker with my little nephews at

Christmas, but we just play with Cheerios."). Coders were encouraged to carefully consider the

relevance of each statement, in line with M-ACID criteria. The following content was always

considered relevant: professed deception, rule breaking and illegal acts, association with illegal

activities or persons committing illegal acts, reference to current or former psychopathology or

delinquency, reference to proximal or inheritable issues that might affect risk, contradiction of

stated or implied values, reference to risk as it pertains to other question categories, or reference

to verifiable information. Rule breaking and illegal activity was considered codable regardless of whether the interviewee considered their behaviour deliberate, rational, or justifiable. Verifiable information includes financial transactions, electronic communication, web activity, attendance at witnessed events, receipts, school reports, legal documents, and medical files. Further, M-ACID provided question-specific guidance on detail relevance. For example, in response to the question, *"Have you ever been fired or asked to leave a job?"*, the mention of a zero-hour contracts not being renewed was not considered relevant unless the interviewee suggested the outcome was due to their behaviour or job performance.

While ACID requires coding of only the first instance of information, M-ACID allowed coding for first instance per question category, so long as it was relevant to the given question and the disclosure was not simply a repeated narrative. For example, within the Financial Imprudence category, an interviewee may speak about how a former alcohol addiction led to financial problems. Then, when asked questions in the Substance Use category, the interviewee may again refer to alcohol addiction and the interplay of comorbid substance use. The rationale for coding each first instance is that, within a vetting context, re-appearance of risk-relevant information helps illustrate the severity of risk. I retained the first instance rule across questions within the same category because interviewees often provided overlapping answers. For example, in response to *"Please tell me about times you have been fired or asked to leave a job"*, (in the Formal Reprimands category), an interviewee might talk at length about a time he was fired because he was caught stealing, which led to him being arrested and the impact this had on his life. Then, when later asked, *"Please tell me about times you have been arrested"* (again, in the Formal Reprimands category), the interviewee may simply say, *"Yeah, that was about two years ago - the time I already told you about, when I was fired for stealing."* Although new

details can be introduced in subsequent responses, examining details disclosed per question is problematic because initial disclosures can disproportionately exhaust response content to subsequent questions, thus creating a strong question order effect.

2.3.5   Stage 3: Determining detail type

If Stage 2 determined that a word or phrase was relevant, then Stage 3 of coding determined the type of detail; external, contextual, internal, or affective. Words and phrases are not necessarily the same detail type within one response or one interview and could vary based on the question asked and the context of the response. Every detail type is correlated positively with statement credibility, so distinguishing detail type is not as important as noticing that a detail is present (Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017).

2.3.6   Detail type ambiguity

Words and phrases are not necessarily the same detail type within one response or one interview and could vary based on the question asked and the context of the response. Every detail type is correlated positively with statement credibility, so distinguishing the type of detail (e.g., external, contextual) is not as important as noticing that a detail is present (Colwell et al., 2007; Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017). Because language is imprecise and interchangeable in practice, coder ambiguity regarding detail types was expected (Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017). The same word or phrase can be coded differently depending on its meaning and how it is used in speech. A common example of a word with interchangeable detail type is 'had': ["*I had*

(e) *a couch* (e)" (ownership), "*I had a dream* (i)" (cognition), "*I had aches* (a)" (feeling)].

Similarly, the context in which a word is stated and when it is introduced within a block of

speech can have an impact on how it is defined. For example, the term 'post-partum depression'

could be conceived as an external (diagnostic label), contextual (temporal), affective

(experiential), or a combination of two or three of these details, depending on its position in text

and the way it is referenced.

     Uncertainty: Was this question endorsed? Is this statement relevant? Uncertainty

regarding whether a question was endorsed and uncertainty regarding the relevance of details

disclosed were discussed at the weekly/biweekly PhD supervision meetings. The response and (if

applicable, its relevance to vetting) was discussed, and the decision on whether a question was

endorsed and/or whether or not details disclosed were relevant[15] (and thus, codable) was

determined by a 2-3 majority vote. Within the thesis experiments, uncertainty regarding question

endorsements occurred approximately 2% of the time, and uncertainty regarding the relevance of

specific details disclosed occurred approximately 4% of the time.

     M-ACID: Notable changes in scoring for the purpose of this research.[16] Because the

original ACID coding system was developed to examine narratives which involve event-specific

investigations, modifications were necessary to both detect and accurately categorise information

that is person-centric. These changes are notably seen in how combined contextual clauses and

self-referential and metacognitive information are coded. M-ACID's changes are largely

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[15] Note that this method was conservative and time-saving compared to ACID interrater scoring, which encourages coders to discuss all disagreements concerning both statement relevance and detail type and to each resubmit a score post-discussion.

[16] For Colwell's original ACID definitions and scoring rules, see Appendix A.12. For M-ACID coding information not mentioned in this Chapter, see Appendix A.13.

reflected by (and an extension of) the theoretical underpinnings of Reality Monitoring and

deception-based research studies.

Coding within contextual clauses. Contextual details deal with time, place, and

interrelationships of actions that occur outside the self. While ACID often ascribes chunks of

interrelated information within a clause into a single contextual detail (e.g., "*21st birthday party*

(c)"), M-ACID required coding details in a fine-grained manner (e.g., "*21st* (c) *birthday* (e) *party*

(e)") that captured all *new* information related to the event in question. It did so because: 1) in

vetting interviews, any information that provides context or backstory to a disclosure is a risk-

relevant aspect of an individual's history and circumstances, 2) as there is no ground truth,

details that seem inconsequential can be useful indicators of reliability, especially when such

information is verifiable, and 3) fine-grained details tend to be indicators of veracity (Harvey,

2013), and thus are important to capture when embedded within statements.

Internal details: Self-referential information. ACID codes self-referent or idiosyncratic

information, (specifically information that is *not* related to the event in question) as internal

details. M-ACID reflects a modification in self-referential information to only capture details

that reflect the speakers' point of reference to themselves as the subject within a clause. Because

vetting interviews are person-centric, codable statements almost always begin with "I...".

Therefore, coding self-reference as subject pronoun is of little value, because the *person* is

considered the 'event in question.' As the interview questions reference hypothetical events *in*

general as opposed to specific events, M-ACID considers self-referential statements as (i) when

the self is referenced as direct object pronoun (e.g., "he (e) hit (e) me (i)"), and when information

volunteered relates to external associations or cognitions that are peripherally related to the

question. This most often occurred in the form of hypothetical statements, such as elaborations

following denials (e.g., Int: *"Have you ever stolen from an employer?"*; R: *"No, but <u>I would</u>* (i) *<u>if I could get away with it</u>* (i)*"*). Each clause in a sentence serves as one (i) detail (Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017) and past modal verbs are also coded in this way, (e.g., *"Then* (c)*, I realised* (i)*, '<u>I shouldn't have</u>* (i) *done that'* (i),"*) as are hypothetical future conditional (e.g., *"<u>If it meant helping someone</u>* (i)*, I <u>would</u>* (i)"*).

     Internal details: Metacognitive statements. ACID codes metacognitive processes as internal details, which include descriptions of the respondent's internal environment that are not related to mood. Deception studies point to current cognitive operations as linguistic correlates of cognitive processing as opposed to actual speech content (Arciuli et al., 2010; DePaulo et al., 2003). From a Reality Monitoring perspective, current cognitive operations in deception studies can be conceptualised as the real-time construction of imagined events as opposed to experienced events (Masip et al., 2005). While deception studies focussing on Reality Monitoring criteria found truthful eyewitness accounts to contain more current cognitive operations than fabricated eyewitness accounts (Memon et al., 2010), current cognitive operations are less helpful in determining statement veracity when the interviewee is suspect. Indeed, Vrij, Fisher, and colleagues (2008) found current metacognitive processes to be more common in untruthful accounts of suspect interviewees experiencing cognitive load. Ten Brinke and Porter (2012) found that to avoid committing to a concrete version of their story, deceivers often use more 'tentative words' (e.g., guess, think, suppose) than truth-tellers.

     M-ACID therefore excluded coding the respondent's current metacognitive processes. Current metacognitive processes most often occurred in the form of verbal hedges or tentative words (*"Um... I think"*, *"I guess"*, *"I suppose..."*, etc.). These statements were not coded because they provided little or no additive value in reference to the codable information

sandwiched within (e.g., *"I think I started using marijuana when I was 16. I did that every day*

until I was 20, I guess").

Further, M-ACID did not code current metacognitive assumptions or inferences, as

deceivers can rely on thoughts and logic to fabricate *post hoc* justifications for their actions or

explanations for current outcomes (e.g., *"So I cursed out the boss and left on the spot. I suppose*

it was the wisest choice, since they fire someone every week") (Colwell, Hiscock-Anisman,

Memon et al., 2006; Vrij et al., 2004; Vrij et al., 2009). The exception to this rule concerned

coding current metacognitive processes as appraising a continuing behaviour, desire, belief, or

situation. Such statements were generally considered relevant and coded (e.g., *"I shoplift all the*

time. I know it's wrong, but I don't care"; *"I believe in Marxism"*; *"I want to be a police*

officer"). In line with ACID, however, M-ACID codes past metacognitive processes and

operations (*"Then, I remembered I was not allowed to go"; "I thought very hard about it"*).

Initially, in Experiment 1, M-ACID did not include coding inferences (e.g., *"it must have*

been easy") as internal details ["(i)"], since Colwell's conceptualisation of inferential statements

only related to scoring external ["(e)"] and contextual ["(c)"] details (e.g., *"it must have been*

2007, because you could pass through the border without showing ID"). Whilst researchers

argued that cognitive operations in general are more common in untruthful accounts under

cognitive load (Vrij, Fisher et al., 2008; Vrij, Mann et al., 2008), Sporer (2004) and Memon et al.

(2010) found more cognitive operations (including and specifying the definition of inferential

statements as 'cognitive operations') in truthful accounts compared to untruthful accounts. Thus,

as Reality Monitoring criteria lacks coherent operationalisation of "inferences" as cognitive

operation, original M-ACID followed Colwell's conceptualisation of the scoring of inferential

statements as (e) and (c) details only.

Following Experiment 1, I decided to change M-ACID's internal (i) detail coding to include past inferences because 1) these statements were found to assist in illustrating context for relevant disclosures, and 2) these statements sometimes entirely lacked (e) and (c) details (e.g., *"I guessed she must've thought I went too far, because I was banned from the group right after I said that"*). When there were no between-group differences in the production of (i) details in Experiment 1, this amendment to M-ACID to include inferences as (i) details is believed to have resulted in significant between group differences in (i) details in later studies.

2.3.7   Scoring Mechanism

In addition to these changes, M-ACID did not use context reinstatement because its application would have been ethically cumbersome in these types of studies and free recall alone was sufficient for this type of research. Further, whilst early research with ACID explored overall aspects of interviews such as response length (whereby longer interviews are considered more truthful) and type-token ratio (i.e., the degree of lexical variation in speech by dividing the total number of unique words by the total number of words, whereby a lower lexical variation is indicative of truthfulness; Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017), Colwell noted that tallying details is the most important part of the ACID system, and that response length and type-token ratio are best applied in studies which allow a comparison against a standard set of responses (Colwell & Hiscock-Anisman, 2017).

Because there was no 'standard' set of responses with which to compare a single response set, I relied on scoring mechanism for free recall alone, which is based on Reality Monitoring criteria and posits that truly experienced events are encoded in chronological order, with sensory cues, and physical and emotional processes, which are absent for fabricated events (Johnson & Raye, 1981). To allow for self-corrections and additional information, which are

indicative of truthfulness (Vrij, 2000; Vrij et al., 2004), interviewees were given the opportunity

to provide information at the end of the interviews and any information that was volunteered as

corrective was moved to the relevant question during the coding phase. Corrective statements

were almost always offered at the end of the interview or in the response of the question

immediately preceding the last (e.g., *"Oh yeah, for your last question, I also used LSD a few*

times''). Details were summed by both detail type (affective, contextual, external, and internal)

and total number of details within both question categories and interview total.

2.3.8   Verifiable information

M-ACID strongly emphasises coding any information the respondent utters that is

potentially verifiable. Because the vetting process largely concerns cross-referencing sources to

gauge candidate reliability, M-ACID emphasised coding verifiable information that is directly or

indirectly related to the relevant responses. Verifiable information relates to persons/witnesses

involved, financial transactions, online activity, school records, and the like, and they are more

commonly volunteered by truth-tellers compared to deceivers (Hartwig et al., 2007; Nahari et al.,

2014; Harvey et al., 2017).

2.3.9   Exclusions to coding

Neutralisations. In addition to excluding irrelevant details, neutralisations (Sykes &

Matza, 1957) were exempt from coding as they explain why transgressions are possible rather

than why people did them (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003). Neutralisations included justifications

such as denial of injury (e.g., *"I wasn't hurting anyone..."*), rationalisations that serve to protect

an individual from self-blame or the blame of others (e.g., *"I felt taking it was fair because..."*),

and statements seeking to displace, distance, or otherwise abdicate ownership or exempt oneself

from involvement in the behaviour(s), person(s), or event(s) in question (e.g., *"everyone does it"*). For example:

Int: Have you ever talked badly about a friend?

R: *Yes.*

Int: Please tell me about that.

R: *Recently, I had a friend asking to borrow a lot of money, and despite asking myself and quite a lot of other friends for money, almost on a daily basis, all over social media she'd be still going out and still seeing other people, and clearly spending money that she claimed she didn't have; so I felt a bit that she was abusing the friendship, in the sense of, 'Don't need the money, still asking for it.'*

Presumably, the respondent provides some context with reference to the question, but the actual behaviour in question has not been addressed and ownership of committing the behaviour is avoided. Therefore, while this question was considered endorsed, the response was not coded. The only exceptions to this rule included allowing coding for rationalisations that point to risk in another life area (e.g., *"I stole because I needed to support my addiction"*), and rationalisations that point to psychological vulnerabilities such as justification by comparison (e.g., *"if I wasn't doing this, I would be doing something worse"*) and postponement (e.g., *"I just avoided thinking about it"*), which demonstrate a lack of insight, and are associated with dishonesty and criminal thinking styles (Cromwell & Thurman, 2003; Walters, 1995). Further, justifications are strongly related to details disclosed during lies of omission (van Swol & Braun, 2014).

Virtue signalling. Colwell's ACID scheme leaves open the possibility to code virtue signals when they are relevant to information provision. In M-ACID, expressions of virtue signalling, especially as it relates to displacing or counterbalancing relevant content (e.g., *"Even*

though I'm broke, I still give my change to homeless people"), were considered irrelevant and

excluded from coding, unless they included a verifiable and relevant statement (e.g., *"I'm*

struggling financially because I was helping my mum pay off her credit card debt").

     Vocalised pauses and hedges. Vocalised pauses (e.g., *"um," "ah,"*) and other speech

disfluencies are indicative of cognitive load, but they are not helpful in distinguishing honest

from dishonest responding (Arciuli et al., 2010; DePaulo et al., 2003), nor do they provide any

relevant information. Verbal hedges most commonly occur at the beginning and end of

responses, and included phrases such as: *"I don't know if this counts, but...,"*; *"I think that*

maybe, I probably..."; *"Um, ah, I guess you could say I..."*. Accordingly, like ACID, M-ACID

did not code verbal hedges. However, the rationale behind the decision to exclude hedges was

different. ACID does not code verbal hedges because they are "too hard to score" (Colwell &

Aniscock-Hisman, 2017). M-ACID did not code verbal hedges because they appear almost

exclusively as current metacognitive statements.

     The following four experiments used M-ACID to code responses given to both closed-

ended (i.e., yes/no) and open-ended questions during the security vetting interview.

Chapter 3   **Experiment 1. Exploring Question Endorsement and Details Disclosed across**

Four Interview Contexts in a University Sample

3.1 Introduction

Investigative interviewing research has demonstrated interest in the effects of manipulating

context on interviewee behaviour (Brandon et al., 2018; Dianiska et al., 2019; Kelly et al., 2019;

Kelly et al., 2013; Hoogesteyn et al., 2019; 2020). Context in this sense refers to investigators'

intentional manipulation of environmental aspects of the interview as a means of maximising

information provision. Such context manipulation has yet to be investigated in vetting interview

studies. Yet, it is clearly an important consideration. If a vetting interview is undertaken via a

non-traditional platform (e.g., online), the result is a manipulation of context that may impact the

accuracy and amount of information disclosed.

In their taxonomic classification of interview tactics, Kelly et al. (2013) defined context

manipulation as "any technique that does not possess an interactional quality or interpersonal

dynamic that occurs between the operator and the source… altering the physical and temporal

space where the [interview] occurs in order to maximize the probability of a successful outcome"

(p. 171). Studies of context manipulation have typically adopted an embodied cognition

approach. By priming cognitive-perceptual metaphors predicted to subconsciously effect

interviewees' perception (e.g., an open window used to prime feelings of openness), studies have

observed small to medium effects for increased information provision (see Chapter 1, e.g.,

Dawson et al., 2015; Dawson et al., 2017; Dianiska et al., 2019; Grecco et al., 2013; Hoogesteyn

et al., 2019; Okken et al., 2013). For example, Davis and colleagues' (2016) use of self-

(dis)affirmation and mortality salience primes reduced resistance to self-disclose sensitive, criminal, and morally unacceptable behaviour in an anonymous online forum.

However, no interviewing study to date has used primes that are intended to convey interpersonal significance, nor have they focused on comparing disclosure across wholly distinct contexts. Experiment 1 addresses this gap in the literature by examining whether self-disclosure is moderated by the three contexts known to be used in UK security vetting interviews: Office, Home, and Public (MOD, 2017). Office-based interviewing (i.e., interviewing that occurs at a centralised location specified for that purpose) remains the standard location in the UK to conduct vetting interviews (MOD, 2020), but home-based interviewing occurs for some vetting interviews (MOD, 2017a; 2020). Public-based investigative interviews, such as ones that occur in an establishment or venue, are less often conducted but was mentioned on UKSV's website as a potential option for interviewees in 2017. Finally, Experiment 1 also examines a fourth video-mediated interviewing (VMI) context in recognition of this method becoming increasingly popular for selection interviews (see Blacksmith et al., 2016; Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2016). UKSV has also made use of telephone interviews to decrease the pressure of its backlog of unprocessed DV applications (NAO, 2018), but it is unknown whether and to what extent UKSV has made use of video-mediated interviewing.

3.2   Context and Self-disclosure

Central to this contextual manipulation, these spaces afford interviewees varying levels of control over their own privacy, comfort, and identity expression. Of the four contexts, arguably interviewing in public offers the least control of privacy and expression. While the 'stranger-on-the-train' phenomenon may explain specific instances of high disclosure to a stranger in public,

this sort of self-disclosure operates on the assumption that the discloser is unlikely to re-encounter the recipient (Murdoch et al., 1969). Common public spaces, such as the one used in Experiment 1, have the potential to illuminate salient characteristics of social identity and thus no opportunity to be a 'stranger.' For example, a student with bright pink hair may feel a reinforced identity as 'counterculture' in a public setting amongst peers with more normative hair colours, and the student's feelings about this difference may influence self-disclosure strategies for certain questions. Indeed, public settings are associated with decreases in cognitive control, which consequently facilitate stereotyped interaction between individuals with stigmatised traits (Lambert et al., 2003). Thus, the choice for a visibly stigmatised person to reveal (concealable) stigmatising information is dependent on contextual antecedents such as a climate of diversity (Chaudoir & Quinn, 2010; Ely & Thomas, 2001), which can vary based on the specific public setting.

A public place is not only the least private space to conduct an interview, but also perhaps the most impersonal. For example, unlike a quiet laboratory setting that promotes intense one-on-one focus, noise from others talking or the norm of mobile phone presence may promote feelings of informality and inattention. In choosing a public setting, I considered the following factors: accessibility, level of noise, presence of (and proximity to) others, and purpose that the place served. The Costa coffee shop in Alexandra Square on the Lancaster University campus represents a centralised social hub in the public realm, which conferred a relatively similar social backdrop for students and assured some consistency of crowding and noise. As Tumanan and Lansangan (2012) determined in their multidimensional analysis of attachment, coffee shops are a 'third place' for people, second to home and work. Thus, I expected those interviewing in the public space (coffee shop) to disclose the least details.

Compared to a public space, an office room usually affords one-on-one privacy, and sometimes, they are even suited for that exact function (e.g., 'interviewing room'). However, the office place has consistently been identified in the self-disclosure and identity literature as secondary to home in terms of the comfort and psychosocial benefits it affords (Chaikin et al., 1976; Tumanan & Lansangan, 2012; Waxman, 2006). Thus, I expected office-based interviewees to self-disclose more than those interviewed in public, but less than those interviewed in their homes.

An interviewee's home is perhaps the most intimate and comfortable space for interviewing. According to Belk's Theory of the Extended Self (1988), humans incorporate persons, places, and things into their identities (Ladik et al., 2015). The idea that places and personal possessions are part of one's identity have been established in environmental psychology (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), consumer behaviour literature (see Ruvio & Belk, 2013), and personality psychology (Gosling et al., 2002; Gosling, 2008). According to Belk (2010), individuals have an 'atomised self' that radiates into their space by means of tangible objects, which act as a means of identity reinforcement (Belk, 2014a). Indeed, Gosling (2008) postulated that personal spaces such as one's home serve as a rich illustrator of personality to guests, inadvertently disclosing identity claims, feeling regulators (i.e., environment is reflective of how one wants to feel), and behavioural residue.

Thus, the home serves as a strong foundation for self-disclosure because the context affords a great deal of autonomy and communion, as well as comfort and privacy for the interviewee. However, the perceived risk of co-dweller eavesdropping has been shown to negatively influence self-disclosure in sensitive survey interviews (Rasinski et al., 1994; Smith, 1997; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007); this effect is likely to be particularly pronounced in

experiments with undergraduates who typically share accommodation. Thus, I expected those in

the Home condition to disclose more than those in the Public and Office conditions, but less than

those in the VMI condition.

Video-mediated interviewing (VMI) could serve as a cost-effective strategy for vetting as

travel costs would be eliminated. Although users often perceive that they have fewer

opportunities to express themselves in VMIs, and that the interviewer is less personable

(Chapman et al., 2003; Sears et al., 2013), recent research shows that interviewing about

sensitive topics via VMI does not result in reduced rapport (Jenner & Myers, 2019) and that the

paucity of available nonverbal cues can lead to greater efforts to establish or maintain social

attraction, such as varying voice pitch and smiling (Croes et al., 2016). Such social attraction can

reduce uncertainty and increase trust and rapport (see Montoya et al., 2018; Croes et al., 2019).

Moreover, Social Information Processing theory posits communicators naturally compensate for

the lack of available channels to express socioemotional information through a given medium

(Walther, 1992), and that this is often done via expression of social or personal information

(Omarzu, 2000; Chaudoir & Fisher, 2010). Thus, subconscious effort to maintain social

attraction may have a positive impact on self-disclosure in VMI.

A reduction of available social context cues – that is, the reduction of markers of physical

environment and status – has a second benefit, which is that it leads communicators to detect less

individuality in others (Sproull & Kiesler, 1986). From this reduced social cue perspective, the

nature of CMC (as opposed to FtF) tends toward anonymity, which can result in feelings of

deindividuation; (Kiesler et al., 1984; Spears, 2017), and a lower concern for social norms

(Meissner, 2005). While an increased private self-awareness and decreased public self-awareness

led to greater self-disclosure in CMC, this has been demonstrated in CMC settings with visual

anonymity (Joinson, 2001; Misoch, 2015). The mechanism with which self-disclosure increases

via CMC is thus related to loss of social context cues (Reicher et al., 1995). Consequently, loss

of individual identification leads to strengthened in-group identity expression via the relative

anonymity offered in CMC (Spears, 2017). Consistent with this, research has shown that

relational intimacy between strangers increases at a faster rate via CMC as compared to FtF

interviewing (Hian et al., 2006) and CMC fully mediates the association between disclosure and

intimacy relative to FtF (Jiang et al., 2011). Thus, I expect those in the VMI condition to disclose

more than any other condition.

3.2.1   *Current study*

The primary objective of Experiment 1 was to determine whether specific interview

contexts influence question endorsement and the elaboration of relevant details (self-disclosure).

Due to the considerations outlined above, namely, privacy affordances and social context

considerations related to identity expression, I hypothesized that VMI interviewees would self-

disclose most, Home-based interviewees would disclose second most, Office-based interviewees

would self-disclose third most, and those who interviewed in Public would self-disclose least. A

secondary objective of this study was to conduct exploratory analyses in order to better

understand the role of demographic and personality variables on item endorsement and self-

disclosure in vetting-like interviews.

3.2.2   *Hypotheses*

H1. VMI interviewees will endorse most questions, followed by Home interviewees, then

Office interviewees, and Public interviewees.

H2. VMI interviewees will disclose the most details, followed by Home interviewees,

then Office interviewees, and Public interviewees.

3.3   Method

3.3.1   *Participants*

An *a priori* power analysis calculated in *G*power* v3.1.9.2 (Faul et al., 2007) with 80%

power, $\alpha = 0.05$, and $d = 0.50$, suggested a sample size of 128 participants was required.

Participants were undergraduate and postgraduate students at a UK university who did not know

the interviewer. Five participants' data were not included in the analysis, due to their difficulty

understanding the interview questions ($n = 2$) and extremely extensive responding (details

exceeded 1.5 x IQR; $n = 3$).[17] The final sample of 123 participants self-declared as mostly

women (69.9%) and White (59.3%) and had an average age of 21.76 years ($SD = 3.23$).

Participants self-declared as British (50.4%), Chinese (13.8%), Nigerian (9.0%), and a variety of

other, mostly European, nationalities (26.8%). Native English speakers comprised 64.2% of the

sample.

3.3.2   *Design*

The experiment used a between-subjects exploratory design, wherein the independent

variable constituted group assignment to a given interview context. At the point that participants

agreed to participate, a randomiser was used to assign them to an interview condition. Each

participant was assigned to one of four interview contexts, illustrated in Figure 3.1: Home ($n =$

32), VMI (Skype) ($n = 32$), Office ($n = 32$), and Public (Costa) ($n = 32$). Participant response sets

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[17] See Appendix B.3 for the main analyses repeated with the extreme outliers included. No significant variations
were evident.

generated two dependent variables of interest: 1) the total number of question endorsements (0 =

not endorsed, 1 = endorsed) for each of the interview questions, and 2) the total cumulative

number of details disclosed to the interview questions. Linear contrasts within one-way

ANOVAs were carried out for each of the two dependent variables to test for group differences

and the hypothesized disclosure trends.

3.3.3   Materials and measures

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The TIPI (Gosling et al., 2003) has shown good

test-retest reliability and convergent validity with other Big Five indices (Ehrhart et al., 2009). I

used the measure to assess the degree to which personality covaried with self-disclosure.

Sensitive topic questionnaire (STQ). Based on prior research and discussions with

professionals and public accounts of vetting, I developed a 37-item questionnaire that sought to

emulate a vetting interview. Table 1 contains a list of the 37 questions. As can be seen from

Table 1, the questions sought self-disclosure from participants in relation to the following

categories: Affiliations, Character, Ego, Irresponsible Behaviour, Social Deviance, and

Substance Use. I piloted the questionnaire with 20 psychology graduate students.

In addition to the ethical considerations discussed in Chapter 2, interview questions were

selected with the age group of the sample in mind. For example, questions such as "*Have you

ever cheated on an exam?*" and "*Have you broken something and lied about it or avoided

confessing to the owner?*" were used in lieu of questions that would imply the interviewee has an

appreciable career history or mature financial experience on which to reflect.

The interview schedule gave less attention to financial vulnerabilities and mental health

than a typical vetting interview; vetting interviews often entail mature financial issues such as

home purchase history, defaulting on loans and bankruptcy, which are not common issues for

university-aged students. Financial vulnerability was framed as "Irresponsible Behaviour" to reflect risk-related issues pertaining to this sample. Questions implying mental health difficulties were framed as interpersonal issues as it was important to emphasize the exchange as professional rather than therapeutic, and because ego driven needs are a considerable motivation for insider threat (see Michalak, 2011).

3.3.4   Procedure

Participants were recruited for a "Mock Security Vetting Interview study" via Lancaster University's research participation system and flyer advertisements. Participants were informed that the aim of the study sought to address the importance of context in personal information disclosure and that the questions were meant to simulate those asked in security vetting interviews. Potential participants were emailed information about the experiment, the nature of the questions they would be asked, and the limits to researcher confidentiality. The email included the following statement:

> "Have you ever wondered what it would be like to participate in a security vetting interview? You are invited to participate in a research project, which is intended to further our understanding of the importance of context in interviewing. You will be asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire and a brief personality measure. Then, you will be asked personal questions in an interview. The interview will consist of close-ended (i.e., "Yes/No" response) questions concerning matters related to your character, responsibility, drug use, affiliations, and past involvement in criminal acts (i.e., "Have you ever shoplifted?"). Affirmative responses will prompt an additional request for information. You have the freedom

to decline answering any questions you do not feel comfortable answering. Your

interview will be audio recorded and transcribed for your anonymity. <u>Your privacy</u>

<u>and anonymity will be treated with utmost care.</u> Your participation requires one

meeting of approximately 30 minutes. For your participation, you will be rewarded

£7.00 (or you have the option of receiving SONA credits if you are a psychology

undergraduate student). Please email me to request a Participant Information

Sheet."

 Upon providing consent, participants were informed of their interview assignment via email,

including suggested date and time and their random group assignment (i.e., interview context).

Participants were given opportunities to change the date and time of their participation but were

not allowed to change their group assignment. Participants in the Home condition were

interviewed in their on-campus accommodation ($n = 27$, 84.4%) or their private residence ($n = 5$,

16.6%), without other people present in the same room. All participants had lived at their

residence for less than one year prior to the interview. Participants assigned to the Office

condition were interviewed in an office on campus. The office contained a white interview table

(80cm x 140cm) in the centre of the room, with one chair on each side. The interviewee always

sat facing the window with their back to the door. The interviewer always sat facing the

participant. Participants assigned to a Public space condition were interviewed at an on-campus

coffee shop using an available table that was most isolated from other patrons. Participants in

this condition were always asked if they felt comfortable with their distance from others and if

they knew anyone in the vicinity. To isolate responses from background noise, I wore a mic-

splitter and instructed the participant to clip the opposite end of the device onto their clothing,

close to their mouth. Finally, interviews in the VMI condition took place over a Skype video call.

Participants in this condition were asked to confirm that they were alone.[18] Upon meeting with

the interviewer, all participants were again asked to read and sign a paper version of the consent

form. They were then asked to complete a demographic questionnaire and the personality

questionnaire (TIPI) with pen and paper. Interview instructions and questions were listed on a

clipboard I was holding. Interview questions were presented in the same randomised order for

each participant. I read the following instruction and subsequent interview questions (presented

in the chronology listed in Table 3.1) to each participant:

> "I'm now going to ask you a series of Yes/No questions, many of which are
>
> similar to those asked in security screenings. You may answer however you wish
>
> or refuse to answer. If you are refusing to answer a question, please express this by
>
> waving your hand across your path (motion in example) as a motion to 'move on'
>
> or just say 'pass.' If you answer 'yes' to a question, I will prompt you to continue to
>
> talk about it by stating, 'please tell me about that.' Again, if you do not wish to talk
>
> about it further, please just wave your hand (motion in example), or say 'pass.'
>
> When elaborating, please take your time and give as much specific detail as you
>
> feel comfortable. Please remember to not include any names or identifiable
>
> information about yourself or others, and keep in mind that confidentiality must be
>
> breached if you express risk of harming yourself or others. You may ask clarifying
>
> questions. You may refuse to continue at any time, for any reason, without
>
> question or penalty. Do you have any questions before we start? Are you ready?
>
> May I record this?
>
> …

---

[18] I assured participants that I was also alone, and I reminded them that the interview would be audio (not video) recorded.

Would you like to go back and address any of the questions I just asked you?

Would you like to change any of your answers or add detail to any answers you

provided?"

Figure 3.1

Four Interview Contexts

At the beginning of the interview, I confirmed participant's understanding of the

experiment, provided an opportunity to ask questions, and re-confirmed their consent to

participate. Participants then answered demographic questions about their age, gender, ethnicity,

nationality, native language, and length of time in dwelling, followed by the TIPI. They were

told that they would be asked to answer a series of closed-ended yes/no personal questions

similar to those asked in vetting interviews. They were instructed to answer each question

however they wished, with the knowledge that, if they responded in the affirmative, they would

be asked for further information with an open-ended prompt (i.e., "*Please tell me more about*

that"). While closed yes/no questions are not ideal for generating detailed responses (Oxburgh et

al., 2010; Snook et al., 2012), it was important to ask questions in this manner, as there is

otherwise no basis for investigation without making assumptions. For example, if the question

"*Have you ever used cocaine?*" was followed by a denial, interviewer prompts for elaboration

are not useful and might harm rapport.

Participants were told how to skip questions and prompts they did not wish to answer. All

interviews were audio-recorded. After the interview, participants were debriefed, given an

opportunity to express any questions or concerns, and paid £7 for their participation.

3.3.5   *Transcript coding*

I coded all participant response sets using the coding method described in Chapter 2. A

research assistant blind to the study hypotheses coded 26 (20.16%) transcripts to assess interrater

reliability for question endorsement ($\kappa = .92$). My supervisor (KL) coded these same 26

transcripts to assess interrater reliability at three stages: (1) whether or not a response contained

relevant codable details ($\kappa = .91$); (2) whether or not the details in the response (those agreed

upon from Stage 1) were relevant to the question asked ($\kappa = .80$); and, (3) the specific type of

detail (affective, external, internal, contextual) in the relevant responses ($\kappa = .91$). These Kappa

values suggest excellent agreement at each stage (Landis & Koch, 1977).

Measuring endorsements and details: Pre-analysis exclusions. Table 3.1 contains the

percentage of the total sample that endorsed each interview question. A qualitative assessment of

the response sets led to a decision to remove the question, *"Have you ever experienced joy as a*

result of seeing someone cry or express pain?" Of the 12.2% of participants who endorsed this

question, 75.0% interpreted it as an empathic reaction to another's suffering, even after the

interviewer attempted to reframe it to the intended meaning of experiencing schadenfreude,

which is associated with empathic deficits and a propensity toward envy (Porter et al., 2014;

Smith et al., 1996). This misinterpretation cast doubt of the value of the question for the

experimental hypothesis and so it was removed. The exclusion of this question did not affect the

statistical significance of the results. The final questionnaire included 36 questions.

Table 3.1

Number of Participants and Percentage of Sample who Endorsed the Sensitive Topics

Questionnaire as a Function of Question

Question	n	%
1. Have you ever talked badly about a friend?	105	85.4%
2. Do you know anyone who is, or who has been, in a gang?	13	10.6%
3. Have you ever vomited from drinking too much alcohol?	73	59.3%
4. Have you ever cheated on an exam?	33	26.8%
5. Have you ever vandalised a public place, such as making graffiti or damaging property?	14	11.4%
6. Have you used marijuana in the last three years?	36	29.3%
7. Have you ever shoplifted?	20	16.3%
8. Have you ever experienced joy as a result of seeing someone cry or express pain?[19]	15	12.2%
9. Have you ever been fired from a job?	8	6.5%
10. Have you ever pretended to be another person online such as by using a fake name or photograph to identify yourself?	26	21.1%

[19] Excluded from analyses.

11. Have you ever been stopped by the police for something other than a minor traffic violation?	11	8.9%
12. Do you know anyone who has travelled abroad to support a non-peaceful action?	7	5.7%
13. Have you ever illegally downloaded music or videos?	94	76.4%
14. Have you ever missed school, work, or family obligations due to using alcohol or drugs?	14	11.4%
15. Have you ever disclosed something that you promised to keep secret?	57	46.3%
16. Have you ever felt you compromised your credit such as going into overdraft, gambling too much, or maxing out a credit card?	31	25.1%
17. Have you ever had a mental health evaluation?	43	35.0%
18. Have you ever broken something and lied about it or avoided confessing to the owner?	57	46.3%
19. Have you ever lied to gain attention?	45	36.6%
20. Did you or do you have any friends who regularly engage in criminal behaviour?	21	17.1%
21. Have you ever cheated on a partner?	16	13.0%
22. Have you ever made a recording from a mobile device or computer of another person without asking them first?	32	26.0%
23. Have you ever gone through someone's phone without their permission?	44	35.8%
24. Have you ever lied to get someone else in trouble?	21	17.1%
25. Have any of your family members spent time in prison?	13	10.6%
26. Have you ever searched for online information about any of your ex-partners, such as their social media accounts?	70	56.9%
27. Have you ever used any illicit drugs other than marijuana?	9	7.3%
28. Have you ever been dissatisfied with your body?	99	80.5%
29. Have you ever said something racist?	34	27.6%
30. Have you ever attended university while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	25	20.3%
31. Have you ever attended work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	11	8.9%
32. Have you ever misused prescription drugs with the intention of obtaining a pleasant feeling?	4	3.3%
33. Have you ever skipped out on paying for a service such as a restaurant, salon, or taxi?	6	4.9%
34. Have you ever destroyed a meaningful or expensive item out of anger?	18	14.6%

35. Have you ever misused an emergency number?	12	9.8%
36. Have you ever left a job without giving a proper two-week notice?	19	15.4%
37. Have you ever contradicted your own beliefs?	55	44.7%

Note. Preliminary Grouping:

Ego (protection of feelings of self-worth; protection of self-definition)

10, 17, 19, 26, 28, 37

Character (non-criminal deviant behaviour, calculated deceit)

1, 4, 8, 15, 18, 21, 23, 29

Substance Use (sensation seeking)

6, 27, 32

Social Deviance (criminality, disrespect of the law, rules, establishments, or rights of others)

5, 7, 11, 13, 22, 24, 33, 35

Affiliations (suspicious connections; questionable loyalties)

2, 12, 20, 25

Irresponsible behaviour (impulsivity; disregard of obligations or wellbeing)

3, 9, 14, 16, 30, 31, 34, 36

Note. Items 1, 8, 18, 19, 24, 29, 34, 35, and 36 are conceptually based on the Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2001). Items 2, 12, 20, 25, 28, and 37 are conceptually based on Gardner et al.'s (2007) investigation of self-regulation within a deviant peer context. Items 3, 4, 15, and 21 are adapted from the Domain Specific Risk Scale (Blais & Weber, 2006). Items 5, 7, 13, 22, 23, 26, and 32 are adapted from Illegal Behavior Checklist (McCoy & Edens, 2006). Items 6, 14, 27, 30, 31, and 33 are adapted from the Deviant Behavior Variety Scale (Sanches et al., 2016). Items 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, and 36 are conceptually based on the NSV-002 Developed Vetting Questionnaire.

3.4   Results

3.4.1   Hypothesis tests

Questions endorsed. Table 3.2 reports the means and standard deviations of questions endorsed and details disclosed for each interview context. The number of endorsements were examined as a function of interview context to test the prediction that question endorsement would decrease from VMI, Home, Office, and Public (H1). There was a significant main effect of interview context on question endorsement, $F(3, 119) = 4.26$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI

[0.02, 0.17]. Post hoc tests using Tukey's HSD pairwise comparisons revealed that Home interviewees endorsed significantly more questions than both Office interviewees (M_{diff} = 2.98, p = .046, d = 0.75, 95% CI [0.24, 1.27]), and Public interviewees (M_{diff} = 3.11, p = .034, d = 0.74, 95% CI [0.22, 1.25]); no other significant differences were observed. A linear contrast partially supported H1's prediction of decreasing question endorsements across VMI, Home, Office, and Public interview contexts, $F(1, 119) = 9.53$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .074$, 90% CI [0.02, 0.16]. However, while it was predicted that VMI interviewees would endorse the most questions, results indicated that Home interviewees endorsed the most questions, followed by VMI, Office, and then Public interviewees. Importantly, there was not a significant difference in the number of questions endorsed between Home interviewees and VMI interviewees (M_{diff} = -0.41, p = .98).

Table 3.2

Means and Standard Deviations of Questions Endorsed and Details Disclosed as a Function of Interview Context

		Question Endorsement		Details Disclosed	
Condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Home	32	11.31	4.98	134.72	90.17
VMI	31	10.90	5.08	132.94	98.57
Office	30	8.33	4.16	92.80	58.93
Public	30	8.20	3.21	80.60	39.01
Total	123	9.72	4.61	110.85	78.87

Details disclosed. The number of details were examined as a function of interview context to test the prediction that details disclosed would decrease from VMI, Home, Office, and Public (H2, see Table 3.2). There was a significant main effect of interview context on details

disclosed, $F(3, 119) = 4.07$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.18]. Games-Howell post-hoc

tests revealed that Public interviewees disclosed significantly fewer details than both Home

interviewees ($M_{diff} = 54.12$, $p = .017$, $d = 0.79$, 95% CI [0.26, 1.31]), and VMI interviewees

($M_{diff} = 52.34$, $p = .043$, $d = 0.71$, 95% CI [0.17, 1.22]). There were no other significant

differences in details disclosed across contexts. Again, a linear contrast partially supported H2's

prediction of decreasing question endorsements across VMI, Home, Office, and Public interview

contexts, $F(1, 119) = 10.45$, $p = .002$, $\eta^2 = .081$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.18]. Again, while it was

predicted that VMI interviewees would disclose most details, results indicated that Home

interviewees disclosed most details, followed by VMI, Office, and Public interviewees.

Importantly, there was not a significant difference in the number of details disclosed between

Home interviewees and VMI interviewees ($M_{diff} = -1.78$, $p = 1.00$).

3.4.2   *Exploratory analyses*

I conducted three exploratory analyses. First, I examined the utility of question categories

by conducting a component analysis using endorsement outcomes. Second, I explored whether

the differences in question endorsement and details disclosed varied across participants' self-

reported demographic characteristics, including native language. Because ACID was developed

with native English speakers, I compared M-ACID details disclosed among native and non-

native English speakers. Third, I explored the effect of personality traits on self-disclosure

outcomes.

Proposed categories. I first examined the internal consistency of responding to questions

at the category level. While good overall reliability was found for STQ (*KR-20* = .77), an

examination of the proposed categories yielded poor interitem consistency: Affiliations (*n* = 4;

KR-20 = .13), Social Deviance (*n* = 7; *KR-20* = .32), Ego (*n* = 6; *KR-20* = .34), Character (*n* = 8;

KR-20 = .46), Substance Use (*n* = 3; *KR-20* = .48), and Irresponsible Behaviour (*n* = 8; *KR-20* =

.58).

Since examining responses within categories showing such low consistency was unlikely

to be valuable, I investigated the possibility of improving classification. I conducted a nonlinear

principal component analysis using CATPA for SPSS, to explore object plots and vector models.

Variables with a total effect size (VAF) of .25 represents criterion appropriate for analysis

(Linting & van der Kooi, 2012). While model summaries produced ideal VAF for scaling items

on at least three dimensions (VAF = 25.77%; α = .92; λ = 9.28), the VAF per variable per

component was routinely less than the acceptable 20% (Comrey, 1973) for all variables in all

possible models.

I also investigated whether collapsing the categories into two broad dimensions would

improve reliability. I explored collapsing Ego, Irresponsible Behaviour, and Substance Use items

into the proposed dimension "Affective and Behavioural Dysregulation" (*n* = 17; *KR-20* = .66),

and Affiliations, Character, and Social Deviance items into "Antisocial Cognition and

Orientation" (*n* = 19; *KR-20* = .59). As these proposed dimensions only moderately improved

reliability, I did not carry out further analyses on the proposed categorical topics.

Gender. There were no statistically significant differences in the number of items

endorsed by men (*M* = 10.30, *SD* = 5.38) compared to women (*M* = 9.48, *SD* = 4.25), *t*(121) = -

0.90, *p* = .368, *d* = 0.18, nor in the number of details provided by men (*M* = 126.03, *SD* = 85.96)

compared to women (*M* = 104.31, *SD* = 75.21), *t*(121) = -1.41, *p* = .162, *d* = 0.27.

Native language. Non-native English speakers endorsed interview questions (*M* = 9.89,

SD = 5.38) at a similar rate to English speakers (*M* = 9.63, *SD* = 4.16), *t*(121) = -.29, *p* = .120, *d*

= 0.06. A comparison of the number of details disclosed by native (M = 111.05, SD = 77.10) and

non-native (M = 110.48, SD = 82.87) English speakers showed nearly identical levels of detail

disclosure, $t(121)$ = .04, p = .978, d = 0.01.

Race. White people endorsed significantly more interview questions (M = 10.85, SD =

4.69) than Underrepresented Groups[20] (M = 8.08, SD = 4.00), $t(121)$ = 3.41, p = .001, d = 0.62,

95% CI [0.26, 0.99]. White people also disclosed significantly more details (M = 127.07, SD =

87.53), compared to Underrepresented Groups (M = 87.16, SD = 57.14), $t(121)$ = 2.84, p = .005,

d = 0.52, 95% CI [0.15, 0.89]. When examined with covariate Race, the main effect of context

on questions endorsed remained significant, $F(3,118)$ = 3.86, p = .011, η_p^2 = .09, and the main

effect of context on details disclosed remained significant, $F(3,118)$ = 3.76, p = .013, η_p^2 = .09.

Personality. Participants' TIPI scores showed the following internal consistency ratings:

extraversion (α = .78), openness to experience (α = .46), conscientiousness (α = .47),

agreeableness (α = .31), and emotional stability (α = .75). Low Cronbach alphas can be expected

with the TIPI as it is a brief measure for broad domains and maintaining criterion validity is

preferable to good fit (Gosling et al., 2003), and alphas on short scales are not accurate indicators

of item inter-relatedness (Kline, 2000; Wood & Hampson, 2005). Consequently, I continued with

the exploratory analysis, running a series of one-way ANCOVAs with each personality

dimension as covariate. Bonferroni adjustments were used for all post-hoc comparisons.

The main effect of context on question endorsement remained significant when examined

with a covariate of conscientiousness, $F(3,118)$ = 4.87, p = .003, η_p^2 = .11,

agreeableness, $F(3,118)$ = 4.29, p = .007, η_p^2 = .10, emotional stability, $F(3,118)$ = 3.46, p =

---

[20] In accordance with high racial heterogeneity amongst Underrepresented Groups and past research on perceived similarity and self-disclosure, exploratory analyses compared self-disclosure between Underrepresented Groups and White People.

.019, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, openness to experience, $F(3,118) = 4.23$, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, and

extraversion, $F(3,118) = 4.15$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$. The main effect of interview context on details

disclosed remained significant when examined with a covariate of conscientiousness, $F(3,118) =$

4.35, $p = .006$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, agreeableness, $F(3,118) = 4.10$, $p = .008$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, emotional

stability, $F(3,118) = 3.41$, $p = .020$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, openness, $F(3,118) = 4.04$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, and

extraversion, $F(3,118) = 4.00$, $p = .009$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$.

3.5   Discussion

It was hypothesized that VMI interviewees would endorse the most questions and disclose

the most details, followed secondly by Home interviewees, thirdly by Office interviewees, and

Public interviewees would self-disclose the least. Partial support was found for both predicted

linear trends. Against prediction, Home interviewees endorsed the greatest number of questions

and disclosed the most details, whilst VMI interviewees endorsed questions and disclosed details

at the second highest rate. As predicted, Office interviewees endorsed questions and disclosed

details at the third highest rate, and Public interviewees endorsed the least number of questions

and disclosed the least details.

The current experiment found that VMI interviewees endorsed interview questions and

disclosed details comparable to their Home (FtF) interviewee counterparts. The absence of

statistically significant differences in overall disclosures between the Home and VMI conditions

may be due to "location" in these groups being largely conflated. Because interviews for the

Home and VMI conditions took place in student accommodations in close quarters, there was

often a possibility for others to overhear the conversation, although this was less of an issue in

VMI, since participants were asked to wear headphones, decreasing the chances of others

hearing the interviewer's questions. Nonetheless, people present or nearby the participant were sometimes heard and/or seen during both Home and VMI participant interviews.

Similar to Mattos et al. (2017), no statistically significant differences were found for the endorsement of sensitive questions between different interview mediums (i.e., FtF v. VMI) when participants were interviewed from the same location. However, the lack of observable difference in questions endorsed by VMI interviewees as compared to both Public and Office interviewees points to the notion that home-based FtF interviewing may show some advantages over home-based VMI interviewing when asking closed-ended questions about general sensitive topics.

In line with Okken et al. (2012) and Dawson et al. (2017), I expected that a small (i.e., relative to other conditions) and sterile Office setting would inhibit self-disclosure. While I found that both VMI and Home interviewees disclosed details at a rate greater than Public interviewees (ds = 0.71-0.79, respectively), Office interviewees did not disclose details at a rate significantly different from any other group. Similar to recent research (Jenner & Myers, 2019), I found that individuals tended to self-disclose sensitive information at similarly higher rates in private (e.g., Home, Office, home-based VMI) settings as opposed to those interviewed in a Public setting. It was unsurprising that the Public condition consistently yielded the least amount of information amongst groups - this finding was expected due to a lack of privacy, increased self-monitoring, and increased public awareness.

While the Office was the only condition that consistently afforded full privacy to all interviewees, VMI and Home interviewees may have felt a greater perception of control over the space they were occupying. In the VMI and Home groups, the interviewee allowed the interviewer to enter the interviewee's "space", perhaps creating a more power-balanced

exchange in terms of level of autonomy between parties (Davies, 2019). Unlike the Office and

Public groups, VMI and Home interviewees had some degree of control over their interview

space, and ostensibly maintained greater control over the social interaction. It is unknown to

what extent familiarity and comfort with video-mediated communication had on self-disclosure

(e.g., generational cohort effect), as university-aged groups tend to socially interacts via CMC

more often than in-person (Twenge & Uhls, 2019; Walmsley, 2011). Further, the similarly high

level of disclosure in Home and VMI groups may be due to the *micro-geography* produced by

the interview medium (Elwood & Martin, 2009). That is, the interview task was reinforced by

congruent situational antecedents that reinforced identity (e.g., "I am a student, in a student

accommodation, participating in a student activity with another student"). Indeed, student

perceptions of social congruence to facilitators have shown positive effects for student

participation (Yew & Yong, 2014) and have been associated with both sharing social roles and a

relaxed atmosphere (Loda et al., 2019). Finally, it is possible that identity reinforcement via self-

monitoring mechanisms may have produced similarly high levels of self-disclosure in the Home

and VMI groups (e.g., interviewer co-presence in a student accommodation, the use of personal

technical equipment to interview, participant viewing themselves in the Skype window).

3.5.1   *Place attachment and boundaries*

One way to interpret the findings of this initial study is through the lens of Belk's

Extended Self theory, which posits that individuals' possessions (i.e., the objects surrounding

them in their homes) support their sense of self (Belk, 1988). Thus, I suspect that psychologically

supportive elements (e.g., personalisation of space, perceived privacy, comfort) may have

influenced self-disclosure such that those assigned to interview in their Homes or VMI tended to

disclose more than the other groups. Indeed, participants in a recent investigative interview study

rated their home as more comfortable and spacious compared to an office interview condition

(Hoogesteyn et al., 2020). Moreover, participant homes serve as a foundation for rich memory

elicitation and other psychologically supportive elements. Place-dependent psychologically

supportive elements, such as belongingness, psychological security, and control, are collectively

known as *place attachment* (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; 2017a).

Place attachment refers to the degree a person feels emotionally attached to a specific

place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) and it can influence cognitions and behaviours associated with

social operations (see Stedman, 2003). While my results suggest that place attachment may be a

factor involved in increased disclosure, the student sample in this experiment may have not felt

the strongest sense of place attachment to their current homes and communities. For example, a

Lancaster local may more readily feel attached to a given place than a student, as college

students' psychological needs are more often tied to their hometown and the associated kinship

and friendships (Tognoli, 2003). Ethnographers such as Gray (2002) reinforce that delineation of

the home and work (as a secondary or "other") environment might best be explained by

boundary theory (Nippert-Eng, 1996). This proposes that people manage the boundaries between

their work and personal (or 'home') lives by segregating or integrating the domains. Boundary

theory explains that an individual's choice to conceal personal information might reflect a

strategic attempt to manage the transfer of personal information across the boundary between

work and non-work roles (Rothbard et al., 2005). That is, the Home and VMI conditions may

have produced similar levels of comfort and security necessary for self-disclosure (i.e., identity

narrative) to flourish because of the overlap in home-work setting. Because identity roles range

on a continuum of highly integrated to highly segregated (Ashforth et al., 2000), the student

sample and student-centric locations used in Experiment 1 may have resulted in conservative estimates of differences in self-disclosure outcomes across all groups.

The extent the student participants felt place attachment to their interview condition may have affected their self-disclosure. As the sample was comprised of international university students, I did not want to inadvertently bring attention to the temporary nature of their living situation or shift their focus to a distant place they might conceptualise as "home". Home and VMI interviewees had lived in their dwelling for less than a year (e.g., on-campus). While a lack of private ownership does not affect feelings of "at-homeness" per se, feelings of rootedness do affect how at-home a person feels (Windsong, 2010), and rootedness is conceptualised as the level of attachment one has to their hometown in university student samples (McAndrew, 1998). Thus, living in a temporary/new residence may have had a minimising effect to the degree of how rooted or "attached" participants felt to their university-based accommodation, and may have impacted their self-disclosure. However, the effect will likely have been to reduce the degree of attachment (thus, reduced positive elements related to attachment), suggesting that the findings may have produced a conservative estimate of the positive influence that home-based interviewing may have on self-disclosure.

3.5.2   Limitations

This experiment has several limitations.[21] First, the Office is the only setting that afforded a high level of consistency in terms of interview environment. Whilst I attempted to control for environmental variation in other conditions, for example, by always sitting at the same table and chair in the Public setting (Costa), the Home and VMI conditions had considerably greater

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[21] Limitations which are relevant for all experiments are in the general discussion in Chapter 7.

variability regarding room choice, seating arrangement, and lighting, as directed by the participant. Further, Public and Office contexts inherently dictated visibility in public and thus, a more formalised appearance for interviewees. I noticed several Home and VMI interviewees wore pyjamas, gym clothing, or other casual attire with greater frequency compared to the Office and Public interviewees. It is unknown whether home-based interviewing affected interviewees' perception of formality, and whether a perception of formality, thus, affected self-disclosure. Further, some interviewees in the Home and VMI conditions completed the interview from their bed, which may have primed feelings of safety, comfort, intimacy, or vulnerability.

Second, whilst I attempted to control for the presence of others in the Home and VMI conditions by asking participants to interview alone, this protocol was not always able to be followed as noise interruptions sometimes occurred in both the VMI and Home conditions. Potential fear of eavesdropping was apparent in both the Home and VMI conditions, as the audible presence of others in the home often coincided with participants' muttering (presumably embarrassing or severe) disclosures in a lowered, and sometimes more rapid tone of voice, compared to their other responses. Thus, demonstrated effects of Home and VMI self-disclosure outcomes may be conservative due to a potential perception of a lack of privacy apparent in the Home and VMI conditions.

Third, it is possible that self-selection bias resulted in Home participants who were generally more open/unashamed and trusting compared to their public-based peers; (e.g., one participant assigned to interview in the Home condition withdrew from the experiment before the interview due to concerns for their safety). Despite this, the most common reason for attrition that potential participants shared was discomfort with the interview content.

Fourth, cross-cultural variation could have affected disclosure patterns due to exposure to opportunity, moral and legal consequentiality, and idiosyncrasies pertinent to a given culture. For example, in response to a substance use question, a Chinese participant said, *"No, I suppose I didn't have as much opportunity to do these things, not like you Westerners."* As the interview questionnaire was developed based on common norms of risk-relevant issues in Western cultures, this presented problems for generalising its use in a highly multicultural university-aged sample. On a related note, cross-cultural variation within the sample could have resulted in differential effects of the experimental manipulations. Recent research has shown that individuals from countries higher in relational mobility tend to adopt analytic thinking patterns during social interactions and tend to self-disclose to a greater extent as an interpersonal strategy in relationships (Kito et al., 2017; Yuki & Schug, 2020), whereas individuals low in relational mobility adopt more holistic thinking patterns in social situations and tend to pay stronger focus to physical environmental cues (San Martin et al., 2019). Thus, it is possible that contextual manipulation may have had a greater influence on self-disclosure outcomes for individuals low in relational mobility.

3.5.3 Conclusion

Home interviewees tended to self-disclose more than other groups, and at a rate comparable to those interviewing via VMI in their homes. The home promotes an 'extended self' via identity cues, which reinforces identity expression and comfort via the presence of one's belongings (e.g., Belk, 2010; Gosling, 2008; Ladik et al., 2015). It is possible that the home-based interviews promote self-disclosure via place attachment and the psychologically supportive elements it affords (e.g., belongingness, comfort, control, memory elicitation,

privacy). To explore this further, Experiment 2 uses a community-based sample and takes a measure of place attachment in order to examine the potentiating effects of place attachment on self-disclosure across two locations and mediums, and to correct for potential confounds that may have been produced by sample characteristics in Experiment 1.

Chapter 4   Experiment 2. A 2x2 Study of Location vs. Medium and Place Attachment in

a Community Sample

4.1   **Introduction**

Results from Experiment 1 suggest that interviewees disclose more when interviewed at

home (either virtually or face-to-face) compared to publicly embedded locations, such as an

office or a coffee shop. The home environment is conducive to sensitive self-disclosure because

it is generally a more comfortable, more personalised, and more private space. However, since

Experiment 1 found no significant differences in self-disclosure for video-mediated interviewing

(VMI) versus face-to-face (FtF) interviewing, I cannot conclude that it is 'home' per se that is

responsible for the differences in disclosure. Experiment 2, described in this chapter, considers

the effects of personal versus professional locations (i.e., Home v. Office) and attempts to correct

for Experiment 1's suspected confounds by re-examining the role of medium (i.e., FtF versus

VMI) on self-disclosure outcomes and recruiting from a culturally homogenous community

sample. The aim of recruiting from this sample is to eliminate, or at least minimise, any bias

introduced by using a student sample as a community sample is likely to have greater feelings of

place attachment (Hernández et al., 2007; Riger & Lavrakas, 1981; Taylor et al., 1985). Finally,

building on the explanations put forward in Chapter 3's Discussion, I consider the potential

mediating role of place attachment as it relates to self-disclosure across different settings.

4.1.1   *Medium and location as moderators*

Researchers have recently taken interest in identifying the various environmental and

situational factors that are related to influencing online self-disclosure, notably the subjective

perception of privacy via virtual communication (Masur, 2018; Taddei & Contena, 2013;

Teutsch et al., 2018). For example, Frye and Dornisch (2010) examined perceived privacy across

10 different communication mediums and found that the perception privacy was positively

correlated with their comfort with various sensitive self-disclosure. Similarly, in a qualitative

interview study, Teutsch and colleagues (2018) reported that people adapt the private

information they share about themselves based on their perceived level of privacy and that this is

dependent on both communication medium and antecedents such as trust and other-dependent

privacy (i.e., their dependence on the partner to maintain privacy). The authors found that when

individuals report trusting their conversation partner, they also report a similarly high level of

perceived privacy during VMIs and FtF chats. In accordance with high levels of trust and

perceived privacy, most participants admitted that "they would discuss private matters [via VMI]

as openly and extensively as they would in dyadic face-to-face conversation" (Teutsch et al., p.

8).

By contrast, research suggests little impact of interview medium on sensitive self-

disclosure from neutral (e.g., non-personal) locations. In their comparison of self-disclosure of

illegal and immoral transgressions in FtF versus VMI interviews, Mattos et al. (2017) found no

significant differences for number of questions endorsed or the length of time spent on the open-

ended response between groups. In addition, no significant differences were found for

interviewees' self-reported honesty or anxiety. However, their study was limited in that it only

compared the effects of medium based on one location, and there was no measure concerning the

quantity (i.e., details) of self-disclosure. In a qualitative study that compared differences in self-

disclosure outcomes between various contexts (FtF v. VMI) and location (i.e., participant homes,

a coffee shop, an office), Jenner and Myers (2019) examined the experiences of student military

veterans and young women's choices to partake in motherhood. They found that private interviews, whether conducted in person or via VMI, produced similarly high levels of 'exceptional' disclosure, and that VMI-based interviews produced longer audio recordings and were subject to less rescheduling compared to in-person interviews. They also found that participants were more likely to share negative feelings, judgmental attitudes, and stigmatising information when the interview was conducted in private; whereas public interviews produced comparably limited disclosure, included greater instances of politically correct hedging, and had more instances of one-word answers. However, Jenner and Myers' findings were limited in that the study allowed participants to choose their interview context, the sample was highly self-selected, the interview did not focus on transgressions specifically, and the measure of details was based on qualitative methods.

According to Communication Privacy Management Theory (Petronio, 2002), privacy boundaries draw divisions between public and private information, and when people self-disclose private information, they depend on a rule-based management system to control accessibility to that information. Integrated work-life boundaries tend to be characterised by permeability and flexibility (Clark, 2000; Bulger et al., 2007), especially when people work from home (Desrochers et al., 2005). Because Experiment 1 focused on students living in student accommodations on campus, I expected their work-life identities were generally highly integrated (Ashford et al., 2000), and that this may have consequently affected their disclosure strategies to a hindering degree as to maintain impression management. I thus sought to re-examine the effects of interview location and medium by examining group differences using a community-based sample.

4.1.2   Place attachment and willingness to self-disclose

Place attachment refers to the degree a person feels emotionally attached to a specific

place (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Tumanan and Lansangan's (2012) study on place attachment

concluded that a person's attachment to place is physically and socially driven, and in examining

contexts outside of the home, they identified feeling of "home away from home" as the strongest

correlate of place attachment, as compared to seven other socially supportive elements.

Place attachment can be experienced implicitly as 'place dependence' (Brown et al.,

2015; Moore & Graefe, 1994), however, such a measure would be inconsequential for

individuals who may be less appreciative of the positive aspects of their living environment.

Place dependence is thus conceptualised as a place that meets psychological needs, such as

belongingness. As place is part of the lived experience (Low & Altman, 1992), interwoven life

experiences aid in the formation of an individual's identity, and thus, 'place identity' represents

the idea that a person's identity is not easily separated from a place to which one is attached.

Place identity concerns feelings of interconnectedness to one's social environment and it is

typified by the physical environment and the nature of interactions that occur there (Bernardo &

Palma-Oliveira, 2005; Stedman, 2003). Length of residence is a strong predictor of place

attachment, as the longer individuals live in a place, they in turn tend to experience greater

feelings of attachment to it (Hernández et al., 2007; Riger & Lavrakas, 1981; Taylor et al., 1985).

Thus, a community-based sample is expected to report a high degree of place attachment to their

homes.

Scannell and Gifford (2017b) found that simply visualising a place to which one is

attached can facilitate the satisfaction of psychological needs in a needs-threat context. Using a

validated ostracism paradigm, they found that participants who visualised a familiar place to

which they were strongly attached (as opposed to visualising a neutral place) showed higher

post-ostracism levels of satisfaction of sense of belonging, self-esteem, and meaningfulness, but

it did not alter their sense of control. Interestingly, a similar pattern emerged for those who

imagined a non-manipulable space (e.g., bedroom, a small office) as opposed to an

'environmental' space (e.g., park). The authors concluded that a sense control may be an

antecedent to place attachment rather than a need it satisfies. Further, as the home affords

individuals more control than the office, it is possible that additional psychologically supportive

elements (e.g., memory support, security, belongingness) afforded by home-based (FtF and

VMI) interviewing may increase the willingness to disclose self-threatening information.

Accordingly, I expected home-based interviewees to endorse more questions and disclose more

details than office-based interviewees.

As an exploratory measure, I examined potential group differences in interviewer liking

and trust, as these feelings can impact willingness to self-disclose, depending on factors such as

the perception of power, topic intimacy, and privacy (Frye & Dournish, 2010; Knight, 2014;

Sprecher et al., 2013; Taddei & Contena, 2013; Teutsch et al., 2018). I also explored the

interviewee's perception of interviewer's pace and consideration, as checks to ensure interviewer

consistency across conditions.

4.1.3   Current study

Because place attachment is related to increased feelings of comfort and psychological

security (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), I attempted to correct for Experiment 1's confound by

exploring the potential mediating role of place attachment on location in self-disclosure.

In line with previous research (e.g., Mattos et al., 2017; Jenner & Myers, 2019), I predict that medium will not show a demonstrated influence on self-disclosure when participants are interviewed from the Office. In line with Experiment 1, I expected location to significantly influence self-disclosure such that people interviewing from Home would disclose more than those interviewing from the Office. Further, as there is evidence to suggest that individuals prefer sensitive self-disclosure FtF over VMI when communicating with a socially distant person (e.g., acquaintance/stranger; e.g., Teutsch et al., 2018), I suspected that FtF Home interviewees would disclose more than VMI Home interviewees.

4.1.4 *Hypotheses*

H1a. Home-based interviewees will endorse significantly more questions than Office-based interviewees.

H1b. Home-based interviewees will disclose significantly more details than Office-based interviewees.

H2a. Home interviewees will endorse significantly more questions than Office interviewees when interviewed Face-to-Face, but not when interviewed via VMI.

H2b. Home interviewees will disclose significantly more details than Office interviewees when interviewed Face-to-Face, but not when interviewed via VMI.

H3. Home-based interviewees will indicate significantly greater place attachment as compared to Office-based interviewees.

H4a. Place attachment will mediate the relationship between interview location and questions endorsed.

H4b. Place attachment will mediate the relationship between interview location and details

disclosed.

4.2   Method

4.2.1   Participants

A sample of 128 participants were recruited, based on an *a priori* power calculation to

detect a medium effect ($d = 0.50$) with power $= 0.80$ and $\alpha = 0.05$ (*G*power* v3.1.9.3, Faul et al.,

2007). Adults in Lancaster who were unacquainted with the researcher and who had not

previously participated in her studies were recruited to participate. Consistent with Experiment 1,

three participants were excluded from analyses due to extremely extensive responding (details

exceeded 1.5xIQR). The final sample consisted of 125 participants, ranging in age from 18-72

($M_{\text{age}} = 35.5$, $SD = 15.2$) years; 64.2% self-identified as women, 96.0% self-identified as White,

and 97.6% self-identified as British citizens. Educational attainment was diverse, with 10.4%

having completed GCSEs or less, 34.4% completed an A-level qualification, 31.2% completed

an undergraduate degree, and 20.0% completed a postgraduate degree; 4.0% of the sample

indicated "other" education. Participants currently or formerly affiliated with Lancaster

University comprised 39.2% of the sample. A description of self-reported place attachment listed

is Table 4.2.

4.2.2   Design

The experiment used a 2 (Location: Home, Office) x 2 (Medium: FtF, VMI) factorial

design. As in Experiment 1, a randomiser assigned participants to interview in one of four

interviewing conditions. Specifically, participants were interviewed face-to-face in their home

(FtF Home; $n = 32$), via Skype in their home (VMI Home; $n = 32$), face-to-face at Lancaster

University (FtF Office; $n = 32$), or via Skype at Lancaster University (VMI Office; $n = 32$). As in

Experiment 1, participant response sets generated two dependent variables of interest: 1) the total

number of question endorsements (0 = not endorsed, 1 = endorsed) for each of the interview

questions, and 2) the total cumulative number of details disclosed to the interview questions.

Main effects and interaction effects of interview context on the two self-disclosure variables

were assessed using two-way ANOVAs.

4.2.3   Materials and measures

Pre-screening questionnaire. A demographic pre-screening questionnaire was used to

ensure participants met eligibility criteria (e.g., home internet connection, transport to university)

and to consider participant accessibility (e.g., postcode, mobility status) before assigning

participants to a condition. Because homeownership and affiliation can affect feelings of place

attachment, I asked about the participants' home ownership and affiliation with Lancaster

University to deter self-selection bias in group assignment. Further, I enquired about length of

time spent living in Lancaster as this has been a robust predictor of place attachment in previous

research. Alongside the demographic and eligibility criteria questions, participants were asked

the following three questions:

1) Do you own the home in which you currently reside?

2) How long have you lived in your current city (collectively, in years and months)?

3) Have you ever studied or worked at Lancaster University?

Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The TIPI was again used to measure broad

personality dimensions as potential covariates of self-disclosure (Gosling et al., 2003).

VMI pre-interview question. Experiment 1's sample mainly comprised Generation Z, and this generation more often communicates online (e.g., Twenge & Uhls, 2019). This makes it possible that familiarity with a virtual interface (e.g., comfort, digital literacy, perception of privacy) may have affected self-disclosure in the VMI group, as perceived ease of use and greater experience with CMC have both been positively associated with self-disclosure intentions (Frye & Dournish, 2010; Jiang et al., 2011). Because I anticipated a diverse community sample with potentially less exposure to Skype, I asked VMI participants to answer a single Likert-type question about their experience of Skype prior to the interview (i.e., "How would you rate your expertise using Skype on a scale of 1-10 (*1 = no prior knowledge of Skype; 10 = expert*)?").

Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 3 (STQ-V3).[22] Following the analysis of Experiment 1, a cultural sequenced version of the interview (and surveys) was adopted for this and all subsequent Experiments.[23] The result was the Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 3 (STQ-V3), which is a modified version of the STQ and STQ-V2 (Exp. 3) that has been adapted for use with a British adult community sample. The STQ-V3 excludes some questions, and includes modified questions, as well as introduces new relevant questions. Question exclusion was based on low overall endorsement rates, which were primarily attributed to cultural base rate fallacies, and were suspected to have been influenced by researcher nationalities (American and Canadian). For example, "*Have you ever misused prescription drugs with the intention of obtaining a pleasant feeling?*" was removed from the STQ, and "*train*" was added in the STQ-

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[22] Note: The STQ's first revision, STQ-V2, is used in Exp. 3 (Ch. 5), as this Exp. 3 occurred sequentially following Exp. 1. The STQ V1 and V2 were used with student samples. The STQ-V3 and STQ-V3-R (Exp. 4; Ch. 6) were used with community samples and are very similar questionnaires, with the latter only including minor grammatical revisions.

[23] See Chapter 2 for an in-depth explanation.

V3/V2 to the following question: "*Have you ever skipped out on paying for a service such as a salon, restaurant, or taxi?*"). STQ questions which yielded a low overall gauge of categorical intent most often yielded responses which were relevant and coded, however, they did not provide justification for the question to remain in the category. For example, the question "*Have you ever made a recording from a mobile device or computer of another person without asking them first?*" mainly yielded responses such as: *"Yes, sometimes when I'm in public when I use Snapchat, people just end up in my video and I can't be bothered to ask their permission if I'm at a concert or something."* A response such as this one did not gauge categorical intent, which was social deviance (criminality, disrespect of the law, rules, or rights of others).

To be clear, coding elaborations in Experiment 1 only relied on the relevance of information within elaborations. Coding did not depend exclusively on a response gauging categorical intent for two reasons. First, because the STQ was largely composed of novel questions that are typically answered in a private interview, I could not anticipate the breadth of responses, which may have relied on cultural relevance, or the evolution of technological norms, such as the example cited above. Second, the tiered coding scheme dictates coding *any* relevant details in an elaboration, even if the full response included mostly irrelevant information. As such, elaborations such as the example in the previous paragraph are typically considered relevant to security vetting because they demonstrate an individual's willingness to consider *all* self-related information that might be useful to the interviewer, despite the individual's assumptions about the question's meaning, or the ultimate usefulness of the information provided. This logic is especially beneficial for assessing candidate reliability when (otherwise mostly irrelevant) elaborations contain verifiable information, such as digital activity or financial transactions.

The STQ-V3 also included minor modifications of phrasing (for clarity and conciseness). It included the addition of questions that are both suitable for an adult sample and relevant to vetting. The STQ-V3 contains 45 closed-ended questions about seven topical categories. Based on the researchers' coding of endorsements, the STQ-V3 resulted in the following *KR-20* values: Susceptibility to Pressure (8 items; *KR-20* = .46), Affiliations (5 items; *KR-20* = .47), Avoidance of Online Identifiability (4 items; *KR-20* = .49), Dishonesty (8 items; *KR-20* = .35), Financial Imprudence (6 items; *KR-20* = .60), Formal Reprimands (7 items; *KR-20* = .43), and Substance Use (7 items; *KR-20* = .79). As with Experiment 1, a nonlinear principal component analysis using CATPA resulted in non-meaningful factor loadings, therefore, exploratory analyses were not conducted on the proposed categories. Despite the poor inter-item consistency, the STQ-V3 again demonstrated good overall consistency (*KR-20* = .81).

Table 4.1

Number of Participants and Percentage of Sample who Endorsed the Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-V3 as a Function of Question

Question	*n*	%
Susceptibility to Pressure		
1. Have your political beliefs been influenced by individuals or groups you have encountered online?	45	36.0%
2. Have you ever chatted online or messaged over an app about your involvement in illegal activity?	19	15.2%
3. Have you ever concealed important aspects of your identity from people close to you?	39	31.2%
4. Have you ever said or shared opinions that others might consider racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise intolerant?	35	28.0%
5. Have you ever been dissatisfied with your body?	112	89.6%
6. Have you ever destroyed a meaningful or expensive item out of anger?	30	24.0%
7. Have you ever experienced any mental health or psychological issues?	95	76.0%

8. Have you ever compromised your values in order to please someone?	64	51.2%

Affiliations

9. Do you personally know anyone who has been involved in a gang or organised crime?	20	16.0%
10. Do you know anyone who has travelled abroad to support a non-peaceful action, not including military?	5	4.0%
11. Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members *regularly* engaged in criminal behaviour?	36	28.8%
12. Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members spent time in prison?	29	23.2%
13. Do you have any links to individuals or organisations that might be perceived as extremist?	8	6.4%

Avoidance of Online Identifiability

14. Have you ever conducted online transactions with digital or virtual currencies, such as Bitcoins?	11	8.8%
15. Do you have any fake profiles, aliases, or handles that are associated with your online activity, including for social media and gaming accounts?	31	24.8%
16. Have you ever misrepresented personal information about yourself when communicating with an individual or group online?	22	17.6%
17. Have you ever used technology which masks your identification online, such as The Onion Router (TOR)?	21	16.8%

Dishonesty

18. Have you ever used illegal streaming or downloading services?	80	64.0%
19. Have you ever disclosed a secret you promised not to tell?	64	51.2%
20. Have you ever skipped out on paying for a service, such as the train, a salon, restaurant, or taxi?	73	58.4%
21. Have you ever pirated software?	30	24.0%
22. Have you ever shoplifted?	47	37.6%
23. Have you ever cheated on academic work, including both exams and plagiarising, from upper school onward?	17	13.6%
24. Have you ever stolen from an employer?	29	23.2%
25. Have you ever cheated on a partner?	42	33.6%

Financial Imprudence

26. Have you ever gone into overdraft?	91	72.8%
27. Have you ever maxed out a credit card?	23	18.4%

28. Have you ever purchased a product and then attempted to return or sell it because you could not afford it?	21	16.8%
29. Have you ever gambled?	81	64.8%
30. Have you ever been unable to pay a bill?	43	34.4%
31. Have you ever accumulated excessive debt?	40	32.0%

Formal Reprimands

32. Have online administrators ever banned your access to a site or deleted your posts or comments?	24	19.2%
33. Have you ever received a formal reprimand for violating rules at school or university, such as detentions, formal hearings, suspensions, or expulsions?	64	51.2%
34. Have you ever been reprimanded at work due to violating the rules?	27	21.6%
35. Have you ever left a job without giving a proper two-week notice?	37	29.6%
36. Have you ever received any warnings or cautions from law enforcement, excluding minor traffic violations?	18	14.4%
37. Have you ever been fired or asked to leave a job?	27	21.6%
38. Have you ever been arrested?	20	16.0%

Substance Use

39. Has drinking alcohol ever caused you problems?	63	50.4%
40. Have you ever used marijuana?	68	54.4%
41. Have you ever used other illicit drugs, such as mushrooms, cocaine, amphetamines, MDMA, PCP, LSD, or opiates?	43	34.4%
42. Have you ever *habitually* used any addictive substances, such as alcohol or drugs?	57	45.6%
43. Have you ever missed school, work, or family obligations due to using alcohol or drugs?	28	22.4%
44. Have you ever attended school or work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	41	32.8%
45. Have you ever operated machinery, such as a bicycle or vehicle, whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	46	36.8%

Note. Items 1, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, and 42 are conceptually based on the NSV002 Developed Vetting Questionnaire. Items 2, 3, 4, 6, and 35 are conceptually based on the Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2001). Items 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12 are conceptually based on Gardner et al. (2007) investigation of self-regulation within a deviant peer context. Items 18, 20, 24, 25, 33, and 45 are adapted from Mattos et al. (2017)'s study on self-disclosure of transgressions. Items 19, 23, 29, and 39 are adapted from the Domain Specific Risk Scale (Blais & Weber, 2006). Items 21 and 22 are adapted from Illegal Behavior Checklist (McCoy & Edens, 2006). Items 40, 41, 43, and 44 are adapted from the Deviant

Behavior Variety Scale (Sanches et al., 2016). Items 26, 27, 28, 30, and 31 are based on the
NSV003 Financial Questionnaire.

Place Attachment Inventory (PAI). The PAI was used to measure place attachment, or

emotional attachment to place (Williams & Vaske, 2003). This 12-item measure ($\alpha = 0.93$)

includes statements such as "I feel this place is a part of me," and asks participants to rank their

agreement based on a 5-point Likert rating (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*). The PAI

was chosen because if best conceptualised the two major dimensions of place attachment: self-

identification (i.e., place identity) and the capacity of the place to support a person's needs,

goals, and/or activities (i.e., place dependence). Goodness-of-fit indices supported the two-factor

model of place attachment (place identity $\alpha = 0.93$, and place dependence $\alpha = 0.80$).

Post hoc questionnaire. To examine interviewees' feelings about their exchange with the

interviewer, and whether group differences existed between contexts, they were asked to indicate

their level of agreement for each of the following four statements on a 7-point Likert scale (1 =

Strongly disagree; 7 = Strongly agree): *1) I liked the interviewer; 2) I trusted the interviewer; 3)*

The interviewer was considerate; 4) The interviewer conducted the interview at an appropriate

pace. Specifically, I explored whether group differences for items 1 and 2 affected self-

disclosure variables. Items 3 and 4 were used to assess interviewer consistency across conditions.

4.2.4   Procedure

An online participant pool was established via Lancaster University's Research Service

Office website six months prior to the starting the experiment. On receipt of ethical approval, I

contacted the participant pool registrants ($n = 138$) with study information and a link to a

Qualtrics survey, which included the Participant Information Sheet, a request to consent to

participate, and a request that they complete the demographic form and TIPI questionnaire.

Participants were informed that the aim of the study sought to address the importance of context

in personal information disclosure and that the questions were meant to simulate those asked in

security vetting interviews.

Another 81 participants contacted the researcher via email with interest in participating.

These potential participants were not asked to register for the participant pool and were provided

the study information directly. For all participants, the inclusion criteria were (1) lived within the

LA1 postal code area, (2) did not previously participate in a 'Mock Security Vetting study' at

Lancaster University, (3) had an internet connection at home, (4) owned a computer or tablet

with a functioning camera and microphone, (5) were willing to participate in an audio-recorded

mock security vetting interview on sensitive topics, and (6) lived in the UK for the past five

years, both to ensure a similar degree of place attachment, and because this residency

requirement was considered typical for the Security Check screening (MOD, 2017). Finally,

participants had to consent to do any of the following if requested: 1) travel to Lancaster

University to be interviewed, 2) create a Skype account if they did not already have one, and 3)

be interviewed at their home. Participants were informed that they could not select their

interview condition and they were asked not to participate if they might be uncomfortable with

any of the interview conditions.

Of the 219 participants who contacted the researcher with interest in participating, 198

participants consented to participate and completed Part 1. Eighteen participants were ineligible

to participate: five previously participated in (Experiment 1 or 3), five were under 18 years old,

five provided a false email, and three experienced technical issues which prevented their

participation. Of the 180 eligible participants who were invited to interview, 35 did not reply to

the researcher's invitation to interview and 17 withdrew from the experiment via email. The 52

excluded participants had been invited to interview in the following conditions: 20 (38.5%) VMI

Home, 13 (25.0%) VMI Office, 12 (23.1%) FtF Office, and 7 (13.5%) FtF Home.

 On meeting the interviewer to complete the study, the participants ($N = 128$) first

completed the Place Attachment Inventory. VMI interviewees accessed the link via the Skype

chat feature. FtF Office interviewees completed the questionnaire on a university provided

laptop. FtF Home interviewees completed the questionnaire on a mobile device. Then, they

participated in the audio-recorded interview. Interview instructions and questions were listed on

a clipboard I was holding. I read the following instruction and subsequent interview questions to

each participant:

 "When we are done with the interview, I'm going to ask if you could please

 complete a very brief post hoc questionnaire. Are you OK with this? I'm now going

 to ask you a series of Yes/No questions, many of which are similar to those asked in

 security screenings. You may answer however you wish or refuse to answer. If you

 are refusing to answer a question, please express this by stating 'pass.' If you

 answer 'yes' to a question, I will prompt you to continue to talk about it by stating,

 'please tell me about that.' If you do not wish to talk about it further, please say

 'pass.' When elaborating, please take your time and give as much specific detail as

 you feel comfortable. *Please remember to not include any names or identifiable*

 information about yourself or others, and keep in mind that confidentiality must be

 breached if you express risk of harming yourself or others. You may ask clarifying

 questions. You may refuse to continue at any time, for any reason, without question

or penalty. Do you have any questions before we start? Are you ready? May I

record this?"[24]

 ….

We've reached the end of the interview. Are there any questions that you would like

to return to? Is there anything you would like to change or add to your responses, or

any additional information you would like to provide?"

Following the interview, participants completed a brief post hoc questionnaire via a

Qualtrics link. Following participation, all participants were thanked, verbally debriefed,

provided a debrief form, and compensated with a £15 Amazon or Argos voucher.

Participants who travelled to the university were given £5 cash for travel costs.

4.2.5   Transcript coding

 Audio files resulting from STQ-V3 response sets were blinded by one of my supervisors

(KL). Interviews were transcribed verbatim by professional transcription services and a research

assistant. I discerned question endorsements and coded all interviews for details disclosed using

M-ACID, as explained in Experiment 1. A research assistant blind to the purpose of the

experiment coded at least 20% (24) of the blinded interviews. KL ensured that the research

assistant received a counterbalanced distribution of transcripts from each interview group.

Interrater agreement was assessed at four stages: (1) whether or not a question was endorsed ($\kappa =$

.91); (2) whether or not a response contained relevant codable details ($\kappa = .95$); (3) whether or

not the details in the response (those agreed upon from Stage 2) were relevant to the question

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[24] The STQ-V3 interview questions are listed as presented in chronological order in Table 4.1.

asked (κ = .85); and (4) the specific type of detail (affective, external, internal, contextual) in the

relevant responses (κ = .86). Kappa values suggested excellent interrater agreement.

4.3   Results

4.3.1   Preliminary checks

Due to the wide age range of the sample, I tested for an association between age and self-

disclosure. No significant association was found between age and questions endorsed, $r(123)$ =

.07, p = .437, nor between age and details disclosed, $r(123)$ = .05, p = .616. Further, no

associations were found for Skype expertise and questions endorsed, $r_s(60)$ = .17, p = .069, nor

between Skype expertise and details disclosed, $r_s(60)$ = .10, p = .289 in the VMI groups.

4.3.2   Hypothesis tests

Questions endorsed. Consistent with H1a, Home-based interviewees endorsed

significantly more interview questions (M_{diff} = 5.84, SE = 1.66) than Office-based interviewees,

$t(123)$ = 3.50, p = .001, d = 0.62, 95% CI [0.26, 0.98]. Figure 4.1 shows the number of questions

endorsed as a function of interview location and medium. As expected, a 2 (Location) x 2

(Medium) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of interview location, $F(1, 121)$ = 12.38, p

= .001, η_p^2 = .09, 90% CI [0.03, 0.18], with Home-based interviewees endorsing significantly

more interview questions than Office-based interviewees, (M_{diff} = 5.84, SE = 1.66). However,

there was no significant effect of interview medium on questions endorsement, $F(1, 121)$ = 2.92,

p = .090, η_p^2 = .02, nor a significant interaction between location and medium, $F(1, 121)$ = 3.06,

p = .083, η_p^2 = .03. Thus, I did not find support for H2a.

Details disclosed. Shapiro-Wilk's test of normality evidenced positive skewness 1.60 (*SE* = .42) and excess kurtosis 2.57 (*SE* = .82) in the Office VMI group. Assumptions of normality were met for details disclosed for all other combinations of location and medium. To improve data normality, a square root transformation was used to analyse the data and descriptives are reported based on the transformation. Figure 4.2 shows the number of details disclosed as a function of interview location and medium.[25] Consistent with H1b, a 2 (Location) x 2 (Medium) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of interview location, $F(1, 121) = 39.25, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .25$, 90% CI [0.14, 0.34], with Home-based interviewees disclosing significantly more details than Office-based interviewees, ($M_{diff} = 5.48, SE = 0.88$). No significant main effect for interview medium on details disclosed was found, $F(1, 121) = 3.35, p = .070, \eta_p^2 = .03$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.09].[26] Consistent with H2b, there was a significant interaction effect for location and medium, $F(1, 121) = 13.51, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI [0.03, 0.19]. Simple effects analyses with Bonferroni adjustments were used to compare the effects of location within each medium. When interviewed FtF, Home-based interviewees disclosed significantly more details ($M_{diff} = 8.70, SE = 1.23$) than Office-based interviewees, $F(1, 121) = 49.80, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = .29$, 90% CI [0.18, 0.39]. Details disclosed among VMI interviewees did not differ ($M_{diff} = 2.27, SE = 1.24$) between Home-based and Office based interviewees, $F(1, 121) = 3.33, p = .071, \eta_p^2 = .03$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.09].

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[25] For ease of interpretation, Figure 4.2 is reported with non-transformed data.

Figure 4.1

Questions Endorsed as a Function of Interview Location and Medium
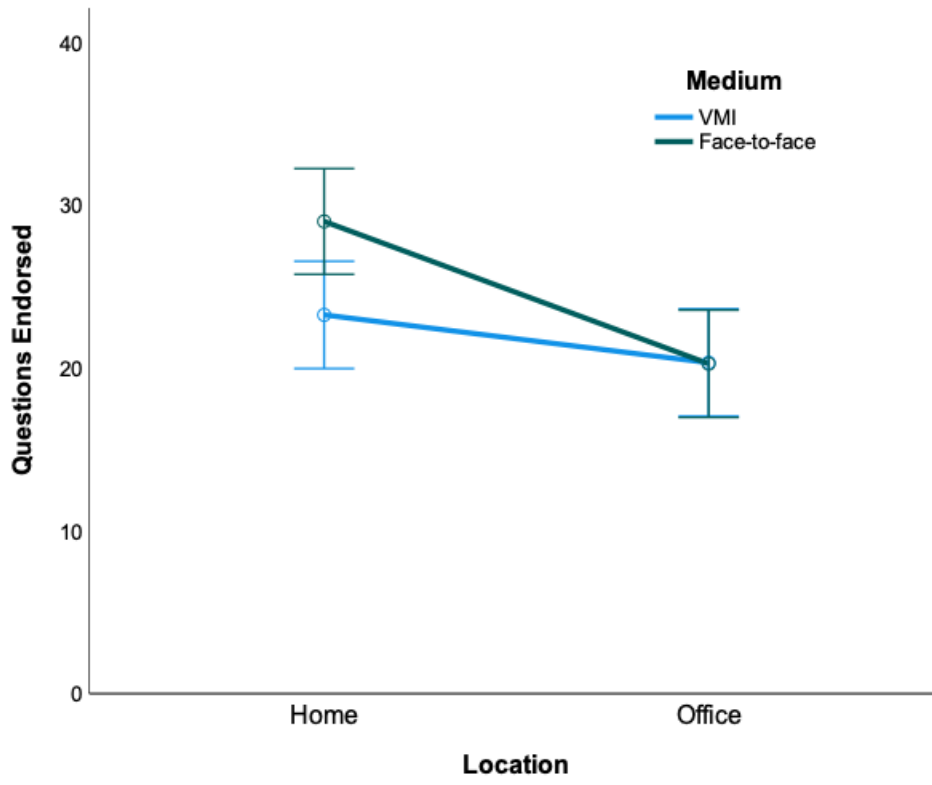
Figure 4.2

Details Disclosed as a Function of Interview Location and Medium
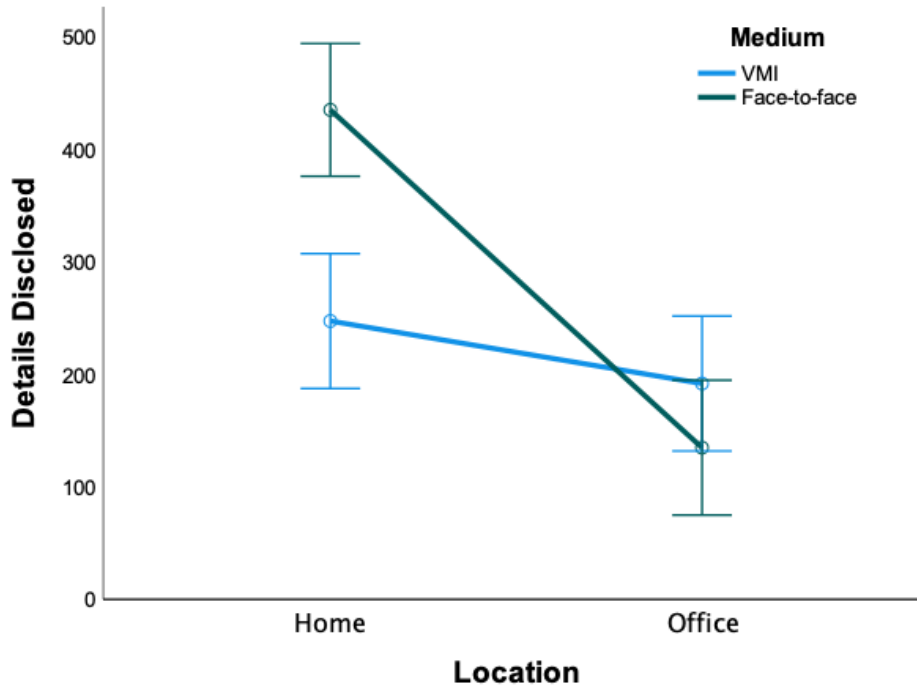
4.3.3   *Place attachment*

Preliminary check. Table 4.2 displays comparisons of place attachment characteristics in the sample, based on interview location. Chi-squared tests of significance revealed that Home-based and Office-based interviewee groups did not differ in terms the proportion of homeowners, X^2 (1, N = 125) = 1.40, p = .238, and did not differ regarding the proportion of those (formerly or currently) affiliated with Lancaster University, X^2 (1, N = 125) = 0.23, p = .633.

Table 4.2

Place Attachment Sample Characteristics of Home-based and Office-based Interviewees

Location	Home (*n* = 63)	Office (*n* = 62)	Total (*n* = 125)
	M (SD)	*M (SD)*	*M (SD)*
Years in Lancaster	14.23 (13.33)	13.09 (13.55)	13.66 (13.40)
Place Attachment	3.43 (0.74)	2.63 (0.77)	3.03 (0.85)
Place Identity	3.65 (0.89)	2.70 (0.90)	3.17 (1.01)
Place Dependence	3.21 (0.68)	2.56 (0.72)	2.89 (0.77)

In line with H3's prediction, Home-based interviewees indicated significantly greater place attachment (M_{diff} = 0.80) compared to Office-based interviewees, $t(123)$ = 5.92, $p < .001$, d = 1.06, 95% CI [0.68, 1.43]. I then used PROCESS v.3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018) to test the potential mediating effects of place attachment on questions endorsed (H4a) and details disclosed (H4b). Standardised indirect effects were computed for each of 10,000 bootstrapped samples, and the 95% CI was computed by determining the indirect effects at the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles. As shown in Figure 4.3, the hypothesized mediator, place attachment, was not significantly related to questions endorsed, p = .392, and therefore, it did not mediate the relationship between location and questions endorsed, ab = 0.08, BCa CI [-0.09, 0.22]. Similarly, as shown in Figure 4.4, place attachment was not significantly related to details disclosed, p = .973, and therefore, it did not mediate the relationship between location and questions endorsed, ab = 0.08, BCa CI [-0.09, 0.22]. Thus, neither H4a nor H4b were supported.

Figure 4.3

Standardised Regression Coefficients for the Relationship Between Interview Location and

Questions Endorsed as Mediated by Place Attachment

$$c' = -.68^{**}$$
$$c \text{ (total)} = -.60^{**}$$

$^{**}p < .001$
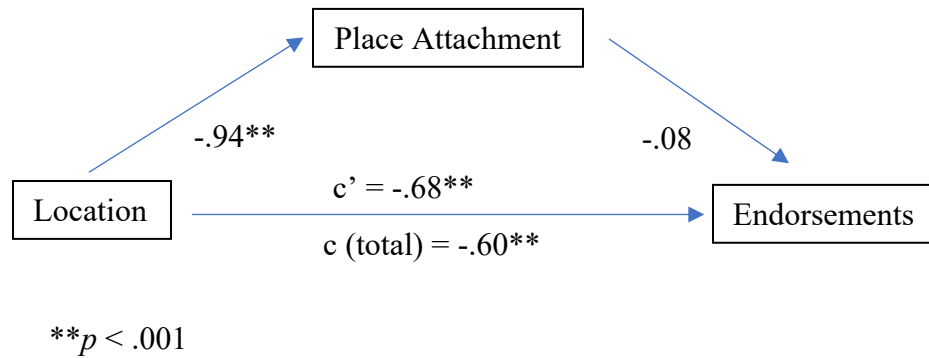
Figure 4.4

Standardised Regression Coefficients for the Relationship Between Interview Location and

Details Disclosed (Square Root Transformed) as Mediated by Place Attachment

$$c' = -.95^{**}$$
$$c \text{ (total)} = -.94^{**}$$
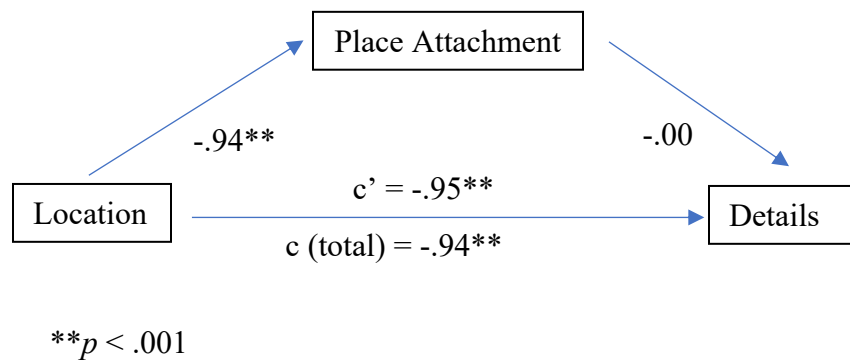
$^{**}p < .001$

4.3.4   Exploratory analyses

Gender. Men endorsed significantly more interview questions ($M = 26.81$, $SD = 9.96$)

compared to women ($M = 21.12$, $SD = 9.19$), $t(123) = -3.25$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.60$, 95% CI [0.23,

0.99]. Men also disclosed significantly more details ($M = 308.66$, $SD = 231.49$) compared to

women ($M = 220.38$, $SD = 174.78$), $t(123) = -2.42$, $p = .017$, $d = 0.44$, 95% CI [0.08, 0.81].

To ensure that Gender did not influence the main self-disclosure findings, Gender was

added as a covariate to the 2x2 ANOVAs carried out for H2a and H2b. The effect of location on

questions endorsed remained significant, $F(1,120) = 14.05$ $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, and the main

effect for interview medium remained non-significant, $F(1,120) = 2.68$, $p = .105$, and the

interaction effect remained non-significant, $F(1,120) = 2.81$, $p = .096$. Similarly, the interaction

effect for details reported remained significant, $F(1,120) = 13.37$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI

[0.03, 0.19], the main effect of location on details disclosed remained significant, $F(1,120) =$

42.43, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$, 90% CI [0.15, 0.36], and the main effect of medium on details

disclosed remained non-significant, $F(1,120) = 3.09$, $p = .081$.

Personality. The TIPI showed the following reliability: extraversion ($\alpha = .75$), openness

to experience ($\alpha = .01$), conscientiousness ($\alpha = .62$), agreeableness ($\alpha = .10$), and emotional

stability ($\alpha = .75$).[27] The main effect of location on questions endorsed remained significant after

adjusting with covariate of conscientiousness, $F(1,120) = 14.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, 90% CI [.03,

.20], emotional stability, $F(1,120) = 10.54$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, 90% CI [.02, .17], and

extraversion, $F(1,120) = 12.23$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, 90% CI [.03, .18]. Similarly, the main effect

of location on details disclosed remained significant after adjusting with covariate of

conscientiousness, $F(1,120) = 41.46$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$, 90% CI [.15, .36], emotional stability,

$F(1,120) = 34.97$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .23$, 90% CI [.12, .32], and extraversion, $F(1,120) = 39.32$, $p <$

.001, $\eta_p^2 = .25$, 90% CI [.14, .35], In addition, the interaction effect observed for details disclosed

remained significant for conscientiousness, $F(1,120) = 12.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI [.03,

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[27] Note: I ensured the scoring mechanism was correct.

.18], emotional stability, $F(1,120) = 13.66$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI [.03, .19], and

extraversion, $F(1,120) = 14.51$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .11$, 90% CI [.04, .20]. I did not include

agreeableness and openness to experience in the exploratory models due to their low Cronbach

alpha.

 Feelings towards the interviewer. Between-subjects one-way ANOVAs were used to

compare groups' feelings toward the interviewer. No group differences were found for liking the

interviewer, $F(3, 121) = 2.49$, $p = .063$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$. A marginally significant effect was found for

trusting the interviewer, $F(3, 121) = 2.84$, $p = .041$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.13], such that FtF

Office interviewees trusted the interviewer significantly less than FtF Home interviewees (M_{diff}

$= .70$, $p = .050$). No other group differences emerged for trust. There were no group differences

for finding the interviewer considerate, $F(3, 121) = 1.72$, $p = .167$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, nor for judgment of

the appropriateness of interview pace, $F(3, 121) = 1.46$, $p = .229$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$.

4.4 Discussion

 Experiment 2 found interview location and medium significantly affected the amount of

self-disclosure made by interviewees. In terms of location, Home-based interviewees endorsed

more questions and disclosed more details compared to their Office-based counterparts. This

finding contrasts Jenner and Myers (2019), however it is partly explained by their recruitment of

specialised populations (i.e., maternal deciders and student veterans), their focus on relevant

special topics, and their difference in measurement of information disclosed. Consistent with the

finding of Mattos and colleagues (2017), medium did not seem to have a significant impact on

self-disclosure for Office-based interviewees, as Office VMI and Office FtF interviewees

endorsed questions and disclosed details at similar rates.

In terms of comparing the effect of interview medium, an interaction effect was observed such that interviewees in the Home condition disclosed more details than those in the Office condition, with this particularly being the case in the face-to-face interview condition compared to the VMI condition. Further, VMI Home self-disclosure was relatively higher in student-based sample (Experiment 1) as opposed to the community-based sample (Experiment 2). This could be related to perceptions of similarity and consequential social attraction. Social attraction reduces feelings of uncertainty, which increases trust (Montoya et al., 2018). Trust is tied to situational interdependence, which is affected by perceptions of power, mutual dependence, future interdependence, information (un)certainty, and social distance (see Damen et al., 2020; Gerpott et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2020). Relative to the community sample, Experiment 1's student sample could have felt stronger feelings of perceived similarity with the interviewer, which may have led to reduced uncertainty regarding study participation, and a stronger perception of future interdependence and social closeness with the interviewer. Additionally, superior detail disclosure in the FtF Home (relative to VMI Home) group in Experiment 2 could be reflective of an increase in actual privacy, as interruptions and external noises occurred much less often in the community sample homes compared to the student sample (Experiment 1).

Similar to Experiment 1's findings, self-reported gender and personality traits as reported by the TIPI did not affect the significance of self-disclosure outcomes. In contrast to Experiment 1's findings, I found that men endorsed more questions and disclosed more details than women. It is possible that the revision of the original STQ – which included the addition and refining of risk-relevant questions, and removal of those that yielded irrelevant responses – led to the reported gender differences in self-disclosure concerning risk-related behaviour, and that these gender differences in self-report are in fact reflective of actual gender differences in behaviour.

Indeed, there is robust evidence that men are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviour, such as substance abuse and financial risks (see Charness & Gneezy, 2012).

With the digital age comes a re-conceptualisation of the home space as one that can be virtual. In line with the idea that self-disclosure is a boundary negotiation, it is likely that the home affords a special intimacy which leads to greater self-disclosure. The findings suggest that self-disclosure resulting from face-to-face interviewing in different locations may be moderated by the interview medium, with face-to-face interviewing resulting in greater reporting of details in personalised locations. Future studies examining the impact of context on self-disclosure should consider exploring mechanisms of trust-building in stranger dyads, attempt to control for the presence of others when interviewing in homes, and take measures of perceived privacy and perceived similarity in stranger dyads.

Finally, Home-based interviewees reported significantly greater place attachment than Office-based interviewees. I did not find evidence of causal links between place attachment and self-disclosure outcomes. That is, relying on the idea that ostracism is an inherent risk in sensitive self-disclosure (Omarzu, 2000), and self-disclosure is a motivated act (Joinson & Paine, 2007), I posited that place attachment would serve self-expression via an "extended self" mechanism. However, this was not supported by the data. Perhaps the notion that the "expanded self" (Aron et al., 1991), which invokes a metaphor of inward inclusion (Connell & Schau, 2013), may serve as a better basis for exploring the phenomenon of how places – and how the home specifically – affect sensitive self-disclosure. According to the Self-Expansion Theory, people are motivated to "self-expand" by increasing material and social resources and perspectives. This is done primarily via building intimacy and personal relationships (Aron et al., 2013). Thus, individuals may behave and (disclose or withhold) based on self-expanding

motivations. Indeed, cue-rich face-to-face environments have implications on power

perspectives, and thus, can serve to amplify or reduce existing perceptions of trustworthiness

(e.g., Damen et al., 2020; Weiss et al., 2020), which may help explain why the starkest

differences were found in outcomes between the face-to-face contexts.

4.4.1   Limitations

This experiment has several limitations. First, I did not enquire whether participants in

the VMI conditions used the split window function to view themselves during the call.

Differences in private self-awareness could have implications for participants' view of the

interviewer (Croes et al., 2016) and potentially positively affected self-disclosure (e.g., Joinson,

2001). Second, I was unaware of whether participants in the VMI conditions were engaged in

other virtual tasks during the interview, and the potential effect that distraction may have had on

self-disclosure outcomes, though it is reasonable to assume that this occurred less frequently in

the Office VMI group as opposed to the Home VMI group. Third, the experiment did not control

for the presence of others in the home condition, nor a measure of the interviewee's perception

of privacy, which may have been useful for helping to explain group differences (Sarikakis &

Winter, 2017; Teutsch et al., 2018). Fourth, many participants in this experiment confessed

issues which would have likely barred them from progressing to the interview stage of vetting if

this information were accurately reported in their security screening form (e.g., arrest records,

colourful substance use history, major bad debts). Future studies should attempt to control for

these issues and focus on populations suited to vetting.

4.4.2   Conclusion

Experiment 2 endeavoured to demonstrate whether and to what extent place (location) and space (location + medium) influenced self-disclosure outcomes. Strong effects were found for interview location, such that Home-based interviewees endorsed significantly more questions and disclosed significantly more details compared to Office-based interviewees. An interaction effect was found for medium*location, such that home-based interviewees disclosed significantly more details than their office-based peers. Taken together, the findings from Experiments 1 and 2 suggest that context manipulation can influence the relative success of a vetting interview, but this is unlikely to be directly related to feelings of place attachment. While place (location) can have a significant impact on individuals' likelihood of endorsing force-choice questions concerning risk, space (location + medium) is important to consider when an interview's focus is to elicit details concerning risk. Findings from Experiments 1 and 2 align with the idea that self-disclosure is boundary negotiation process, and Experiments 3 and 4 explore this process as it relates to interviewer feedback.

Chapter 5   Experiment 3. Examining the Effect of Interviewer Feedback of Personality

Traits and Digital Behaviour on Self-Disclosure

5.1   Introduction

Historically, personality batteries have been used in candidate selection in pre-employment

screenings (e.g., Roberts et al., 2019; Spilberg & Corey, 2017), since they are useful for

identifying potential counterproductive workplace behaviour and workplace deviance (Lee et al.,

2005; Pletzer et al., 2019; Spector, 2011). A meta-analysis on the relationship between

personality and workplace deviance found that the HEXACO personality inventory explains

about 12% more variance in workplace deviance than the Big Five domains (Pletzer et al., 2019).

Recently, however, employers have forgone such batteries and turned to *cybervetting*

(Berkelaar, 2010; Ghoshray, 2013)*,* by obtaining information from informal and non-institutional

online sources (Berkelaar, 2014; Berkelaar & Buzzanell, 2015). One such data source is

smartphone application ("app") usage, which can be used to infer personality and vulnerabilities

(Huseynov, 2020; Lee et al., 2014; Peltonen et al., 2020; Welke et al., 2016). For example,

Huseynov (2020) found that agreeableness is negatively associated with health and lifestyle apps

and internet searching and browser apps, and that emotional stability is negatively associated

with social networking app usage. In an analysis of six months of mobile app usage from 739

smartphone users, Peltonen et al. (2020) found that category-level (e.g., social network, health,

and lifestyle) app usage can predict Big Five personality trait patterns with 86-96% accuracy.

Growing familiarity and knowledge of individuals' access-based consumption has given

rise to the idea that humans are defined by what we access (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Belk,

2014b). Indeed, identity expression is increasingly tied to digital behaviour, as psychographic

'profile' creation has been used in swaying political elections (Brown, 2020). Among the top 60

globally used applications, 99.4% of all users have unique usage patterns based on merely the presence of downloaded apps (Welke et al., 2016), making individuals easily identifiable. Whilst traditional methods of personnel selection confer information construction that is formal and intentional, information construction via cybervetting is informal and emergent (Berkelaar, 2008).

Experiments 1 and 2 found that home-based interviewing tends to result in greater self-disclosure than interviews that occur in less personalised settings. As place attachment is an unlikely explanation for this phenomenon, it is more likely that the propensity to self-disclose is driven by an underlying mechanism concerning the perception of boundary control in the private (i.e., home) versus public (i.e., professional) realm (e.g., Nippert-Eng, 1996). That is, by virtue of allowing an interviewer in one's personal (physical or virtual) "space," it is possible that home-based interviewees may have had feelings of already being 'known' by the interviewer, or a sense that the interviewer is already 'familiar' with them. The perception that the interviewer already knows sensitive information has demonstrated increased disclosure in HUMINT studies (e.g., May & Granhag, 2016a; 2016b; Oleszkiewicz et al., 2014). Information acquired about a candidate is typically viewed as non-private if it is considered both accessible and relevant (Backman & Hedenus, 2019). The following experiment attempts to use acquired information about interviewees as a means to increase their self-disclosure outcomes.

5.1.1   *Feedback in vetting*

As there is a lack of evidence for reliable behavioural cues to deception (see Luke, 2019), mechanical equipment such as the polygraph have been developed in efforts to produce disclosures of self-threatening information. The polygraph is often used in vetting procedures in

the US, even though its use as a screening tool has been widely criticised in scientific

communities (Lilienfeld & Landfield, 2008; National Research Council, 2003). A 'fake

polygraph' (aka the Bogus Pipeline technique) refers to a false non-invasive apparatus used to

encourage truthful responding (Roese & Jamieson, 1993) and has been effectively applied as a

priming procedure (Rasinski et al., 1999) to increase self-report on sensitive topics such as

adolescent smoking, racism, and sexual aggression (Adams et al., 2008; Nier, 2005; Strang &

Peterson, 2020). Studies using bogus pipeline procedures tend to provide feedback

instantaneously (e.g., most apparatuses provide alleged 'biological measures'). Less is known

about the effectiveness of prolonged application of an apparatus and delayed feedback, such as

purported 'psychographic profiling' generated from smartphone activity.

As people tend to readily accept feedback of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992), and

are generally able to distinguish their own results from false reports (Andersen & Nordvik,

2002), I expected that people will also accept feedback concerning a profile generated via their

smartphone behaviour. To my knowledge, no published studies have applied a bogus pipeline

technique in a vetting-like paradigm. I employed a bogus pipeline technique as a means of

generating interviewer 'feedback' in effort to inflate interviewees' perception of the sensitive

information known by the interviewer.

5.1.2   *Illusion of knowing it all*

Borne from studies of the 'Scharff technique,' the *illusion of knowing-it-all* is an

interviewing tactic whereby the interviewer presents information in effort to inflate the

interviewee's perception of what they know (Granhag et al., 2016). Studies on this tactic in

HUMINT interviews suggest that the interviewer's presentation of known information can

encourage information provision (May & Granhag, 2016a; 2016b; Oleszkiewicz et al., 2014; Vrij & Granhag, 2014). This is thought to occur because the interviewee overestimates the amount of information an interviewer knows and in turn, the interviewee feels able to provide information that in reality is not yet known to the interviewer (Granhag et al., 2016). May and Granhag (2016b) compared the effectiveness of applying the illusion of knowing it all in a 'just start' manner (i.e., specific pieces of known information were shared immediately) vs. a 'traditional' manner (i.e., the suggestive statement *"I'm convinced that I already hold most of the important information"* preceded presenting specific pieces of known information). They found that those exposed to the illusion in the just start condition perceived the interviewer to hold significantly more information than participants in the traditional condition. Thus, I approached the illusion of knowing it all using a 'just start' procedure.

5.1.3   *Interviewer feedback: Liking, familiarity, and knowledge*

Interviewer feedback that is validating and confirming toward the discloser's experiences is important for the discloser's liking of the recipient (Reis & Shaver, 1988; Reis et al., 2011), which encourages further self-disclosure. Initial self-disclosure has been shown to increase recipients' familiarity, which further increases liking/self-disclosure (Sprecher et al., 2012). Owing to the intimacy building reciprocal effects of information exchange and liking, I sought to ensure that groups who received interviewer feedback did not disproportionately like the interviewer, as this may have indirectly influenced self-disclosure (e.g., Collins & Miller, 1994). Familiarity has been viewed as a central component of intimacy development in initial interactions (Laurenceau & Kleinman, 2006) and has been shown to decrease socially desirable responding (Kühne, 2018). Drawing on 31 waves of household panel interviewing, Kühne

(2018) found respondents who were more familiar with their interviewers were less likely to choose socially desirable answers. However, less is known about the effects on the discloser's perception of the recipient as familiar *with them*. Reis et al. (2011) conducted two experiments using live interaction paradigms with stranger pairs and found support for the familiarity leads to attraction hypothesis. That is, the more strangers interact, the greater their attraction toward each other, and this relationship was found to be mediated by perceived knowledge (about one another). In other words, greater familiarity leads to greater liking. As the perception of interviewer knowledge serves as the basis for the illusion of knowing it all and said knowledge is typically focused on an event in HUMINT (e.g., May & Granhag, 2016a; May & Granhag 2016b), the illusion of knowing it all denotes knowledge of a *person* in vetting interviews.

5.1.4   *Current study*

Experiment 3 had three primary aims. First, I intended to manufacture an illusion of knowing it all via providing feedback about participants' self-generated information. Second, I sought to determine whether receiving interviewer feedback affected participants' feelings of interviewer familiarity and knowledge. Third, I sought to determine whether the perception of interviewer familiarity and/or knowledge affected self-disclosure outcomes during the interview. To test the idea that an illusion of knowing it all might extend to vetting interviews, I alluded to having created an emergent 'profile' based on smartphone app activity or personality profile reports. In line with the assumption of the privacy control paradox (e.g., Acquisti et al., 2015), Geyer designed a mobile user application ('Inspect') to allow participants in one group "explicit control" (via manual export) of their information (smartphone data). Another group of participants took the HEXACO personality inventory revised (HEXACO-PI-R) without

knowledge of how the assessment would be used later. A third group served as Control, and only

answered the pre-screening questions, without providing further information.

I hypothesized that, compared to a control group, groups receiving interviewer feedback

would endorse more interview questions, disclose more details, and perceive the interviewer as

both more familiar with them and more knowledgeable about them. I further predicted that the

perception of interviewer familiarity and knowledge would positively influence self-disclosure

outcomes during the interview.

5.1.5   *Hypotheses*

H1a. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will endorse significantly more

interview questions than those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H1b. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will disclose significantly more

details than those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H2. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will rate the interviewer as more

familiar than those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H3. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will rate the interviewer as more

knowledgeable than those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H4a. The perception of interviewer familiarity will be positively associated with

interview questions endorsed.

H4b. The perception of interviewer familiarity will be positively associated with details

disclosed.

H5a. The perception of interviewer knowledge will be positively associated with

interview questions endorsed.

H5b. The perception of interviewer knowledge will be positively associated with details

disclosed.

In addition to the hypotheses, I conducted exploratory analyses to determine whether

potential effects of pre-screening endorsements, gender, race, and native language influenced

self-disclosure variables. Finally, because determining response consistency is an important

procedural component in vetting, I examined potential group differences in inconsistent

responding (i.e., endorsements) between the pre-screening and interview.

5.2   Method

5.2.1   *Participants*

Based on May and Granhag's (2016a) study on applying the illusion of knowing it all, a

sample size of 144 participants was estimated based on an *a priori* power estimation and a

conservative interpretation of May and Granhag's medium effect sizes. Power (1 - β) was set at

0.80 and α = 0.05 to detect a small to medium effect ($d = 0.35$). The original mixed design

included a 4th condition: HEXACO + Inspect. This condition was removed due to difficulties

recruiting Android-owning participants and a persistent low study completion rate for this

condition. The required sample size was calculated using *G*power* v3.1.9.3 (Faul et al., 2007).

Prospective participants ($n = 303$) accessed the link to complete the pre-screening survey

and 169 completed it (71 Android users and 98 iOS users). Thirty-one Android participant data

sets were not collected or excluded for the following reasons: seven data sets were excluded due

to the removal of the HEXACO + Inspect experimental group, six participants chose not to

engage with the research, six participants professed issues with app security or readability (e.g.,

owned a rooted device or failed to update their software), three failed to successfully export their

Inspect data, three failed to respond to requests to interview, three were identified as previous

participants, two were unavailable to interview, and one was acquainted with the interviewer.

Following the removal of a condition due to difficulty recruiting participants, all

Android-owning participants were automatically assigned to the Inspect group. From the 98 iOS

users, 48 were randomly allocated to the Control group and 50 were randomly allocated to the

HEXACO group. From the HEXACO group, three participants failed to respond to requests to

interview, three were unavailable, one did not show up, and one was a previous participant. From

the Control group, two participants failed to respond to requests to interview, two were

unavailable, two did not show up, one was acquainted with the interviewer, one was a previous

participant, and one participant's interview did not record due to audio equipment failure. Data

sets were generated for 121 participants, with 39 in the Control group, 42 in the HEXACO

group, and 40 in the Inspect group.

Final sample. Four participants' data sets were excluded from analyses due to extremely

extensive responding during the interview (details disclosed exceeded 1.5xIQR). The final

sample ($N = 117$) had an average age of 21.09 years ($SD = 3.25$), and 72.6% self-identified as

women. Self-reported nationality in the sample represented 25 countries, including the United

Kingdom ($n = 65$; 55.6%), India ($n = 8$; 6.8%), Malaysia ($n = 6$; 5.1%), Indonesia ($n = 4$; 3.4%),

China ($n = 3$; 2.6%), Nigeria ($n = 3$; 2.6%), and Lithuania ($n = 3$; 2.6%). The remainder of the

sample represented mostly nationals of Asian and European countries. The sample largely self-

identified as White (62.4%).[28]

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[28] In accordance with high racial heterogeneity amongst Underrepresented Groups and past research on perceived
similarity and self-disclosure, exploratory analyses compared self-disclosure between Underrepresented Groups and
White People.

5.2.2   Design

Due to the removal of the fourth condition (HEXACO + Inspect), [29] the experiment took

on a between-subjects design, whereby interview disclosure outcomes were compared in relation

to: 1) whether or not interviewees received feedback, and 2) the type of feedback that was

received. Independent variables in this experiment included interviewee group assignment (e.g.,

experimental: HEXACO or Inspect, versus a control group). The experimental groups received

relevant interviewer feedback and the control group did not. Independent samples t-tests were

used to assess group differences for the self-disclosure variables of interest and group differences

in the perception of the interviewer. As in Experiments 1 and 2, participant response sets

generated two main self-disclosure dependent variables of interest: 1) the total number of

question endorsements (0 = not endorsed, 1 = endorsed) for each of the interview questions, and

2) the total cumulative number of details disclosed to the interview questions. Further dependent

measures of interest included two measures of perception of interviewer: interviewer familiarity

and interviewer knowledge. Associations between measures of perception of the interviewer and

self-disclosure measures were investigated. A measure of pre-screening endorsements was taken

to ensure that the experimental and control groups did not differ in their pre-existing propensity

to endorse interview questions. A measure of accuracy of interviewer feedback was taken to

ensure that the two experimental groups did not differ with regards to how they viewed their

respective feedback manipulations.

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[29] The original mixed design endeavoured to compare disclosure outcomes based on the amount of feedback
received (i.e., the additive effects of multiple types of feedback).

5.2.3   Materials and measures

Part I: Pre-screening measures. Research has consistently shown a strong effect for increased reporting of sensitive self-disclosure on self-administered questions as opposed to when those same questions are asked by an interviewer (Gnambs & Kaspar, 2015; Tourangeau & Smith, 1996; Tourangeau & Yan, 2007). Preceding a vetting interview, candidates are often asked to complete an online form answering questions about sensitive topics such as financial history, drug use, and Internet activity (MOD, 2018b). The use of a pre-screening measure has three practical applications for this experiment. First, it ensures experimental groups were unlikely to differ significantly in terms of their propensity to endorse any of the interview questions (i.e., to ensure similar baseline of privately responding to the questions). Second, it enabled a measure of inconsistent responding. Third, it ensured greater effectiveness of the feedback manipulation by promoting parity in terms of disclosure between the control and experimental group. That is, although participants were informed that the interviewer did not have access to their pre-screening responses, both the control group and experimental group had already provided sensitive information to the experimenter. Because failing to respond to the online pre-screening questionnaire is both indicative of avoiding responding truthfully (e.g., Joinson et al., 2008) and not allowed in vetting (e.g., MOD, 2018b), the pre-screening was presented in a forced choice response format.

Sensitive Topics Survey (STS).[30] An online questionnaire included 40 yes-no survey questions as analogue to the open-ended STQ-V2 interview. The total number of endorsements on this measure (*Pre-screening endorsements*) was used as a covariate to control for potential effects of pre-screening responses on the self-disclosure outcome variables (*Interview*

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[30] See Table 5.1.

endorsements and *Details*). The following *KR-20* values were generated for the online pre-

screening survey: Susceptibility to Pressure (*n* = 6; *KR-20* = .43), Affiliations (*n* = 5; *KR-20* =

.38), Avoidance of Online Identifiability (*n* = 4; *KR-20* = .60), Dishonesty (*n* = 8; *KR-20* = .59),

Financial Imprudence (*n* = 6; *KR-20* = .55), Formal Reprimands (*n* = 6; *KR-20* = .20), and

Substance Use (*n* = 5; *KR-20* = .68). The STS demonstrated good overall consistency (*KR20* =

.81).

   HEXACO-Personality Inventory-Revised (HEXACO-PI-R) 60-Item Version. The

HEXACO-PI-R (Ashton & Lee, 2009), a self-report measure produces scores for 24 personality

traits, grouped into six broad personality domains, was used to establish an illusion of knowing it

all for one of the experimental groups (*n* = 41). The measure generated the following reliability

levels: Honesty-Humility, (α = .57); Emotionality (α =.86); Extraversion (α =.77); Agreeableness

(α =.82); Conscientiousness (α =.84); Openness to Experience (α =.65). Because random

responding remains a threat to the validity of social psychological research (Credé, 2010;

Osborne & Blanchard, 2011), a tester question was embedded within the HEXACO (*"Choose

agree"*) in effort to ensure participant engagement. Failure to correctly endorse the correct

response to this question automatically ended the pre-screening and excluded the participant

from the study.

   Inspect. The Android mobile phone application developed by Geyer in 2017 (since

renamed 'Usage Logger'), was designed to attempt to establish an illusion of knowing it all for

one of the experimental groups. Inspect's capabilities were limited to identification and

temporary storage of the following data: names of applications present on the device, and

timestamps indicating when: the phone is turned on; the phone is unlocked; the screen is

accessed; and applications are accessed. Inspect offers limited user-control, allowing the user to

bulk delete and/or export data collected within the app, without enabling the user to modify or

selectively delete data within the app. Inspect stores user data locally for up to 12 days following

installation, followed by an automatic data deletion and uninstall process.

Part II: Interview and post hoc measures.

Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 2 (STQ-V2).[31] This interview questionnaire

included 40 open-ended questions, analogous to the STS pre-screening questions. The following

KR-20 values are based on questions endorsements within the stated categories: Susceptibility to

Pressure (n = 6; *KR-20* = .46), Affiliations (n = 5; *K-R20* = .47), Avoidance of Online

Identifiability (n = 4; *KR-20* = .09), Dishonesty (n = 8; *KR-20* = .47), Financial Imprudence (n =

6; *KR-20* = .55), Formal Reprimands (n = 6 items; *KR-20* = .23), and Substance Use (n = 5

items; .67). Good overall consistency was found for the interview questionnaire (*KR-20* = .80).

Details disclosed were quantified using M-ACID.

Inconsistent responding. A vetting candidate's lack of thoroughness or accuracy can

point to potential problems with their integrity or judgment; inconsistencies in reporting past

misbehaviour can predict future conduct problems. For example, Cuttler and Muchinsky (2006)

found that American police officers who provided inconsistent or discrepant responses to life

history questions were more likely to belong to a group of police officers that had undergone

disciplinary procedures than those who had not provided inconsistent or discrepant responses. To

ensure groups did not differ regarding response consistency, I measured inconsistent (yes-no

mismatch) endorsements when comparing each of the 40 response sets in the STS and STQ-V2.

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[31] See Appendix A.8.

Manipulation check. As a manipulation check, participants were asked: "*Do you think you know the intent of the study?*" If yes was selected, they were asked "*What do you think is the intent of the study?*". None of the participants correctly guessed the purpose of the study.

Accuracy of interviewer feedback. The source's perception of information that the interviewer states as accurate is central to the effectiveness of both the bogus pipeline and the illusion of knowing it all. To ensure the HEXACO and Inspect groups did not differ regarding their perception of the accuracy of their respective feedback, they were asked to respond to the following question with a 10-point Likert rating (10-point Likert; 1 = *not at all accurate*; 10 = *extremely accurate*) *"How accurate is the information that the interviewer shared about you at the beginning of the interview?"*

Interviewer liking, familiarity, and knowledge. To assess potential impact on self-disclosure outcomes, a post-hoc questionnaire was used to assess group differences regarding participants' perception of the interviewer. Each question was assessed using a 7-point Likert rating (1 = *strongly disagree*; 7 = *strongly agree*). First, I ensured the control group and experimental group did not differ in their response to the following statement: *"I liked the interviewer."* Next, to assess whether and to what extent the perception of interviewer familiarity and knowledge impacted self-disclosure outcomes, I used the following four statements, adapted from May and Granhag's (2016a) [32] study on HUMINT sources: 1) *I believe the interviewer was familiar with some aspects of me before the interview,* 2) *I believe the interviewer knew me better than a stranger before the interview.* 3) *I think the interviewer knew more information about me than what she shared with me at the beginning of the interview,* and 4) *I think the interviewer*

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[32] The authors' post-hoc questions only focused on perceived interviewer knowledge. Person-centred as opposed to event-centred inquiry warranted focus on familiarity, and questions were adapted to fit this interview type. Similar rationale is provided for adaptation of other methods (e.g., ACID to M-ACID changes).

had a good idea of how I would answer the interview questions. Items 1 and 2 generated

participant scores for the perception of interviewer familiarity (α = .77) and items 3 and 4

generated participant scores for interviewer knowledge (α = .72).

5.2.4   Procedure

Student participants were recruited via flyer advertisements and SONA at Lancaster

University to participate in a Mock Security Vetting Interview study. Exclusion criteria ensured

that participants were at least 18 years old, were not previously acquainted with the interviewer,

and had not previously participated in a Mock Security Vetting Interview study at Lancaster

University. Further, eligibility criteria asked that all participants were fluent in English, owned

an operating smartphone that was not rooted or jailbroken,[33] and that they would be available for

a face-to-face interview in roughly one week after completing Part 1 of the study.

Participants were emailed an Information Form inviting them to participate in a multi-

part study which involved completing an online survey and a face-to-face interview, and possibly

downloading Inspect to their mobile device. Participants were informed that the study included

questions of a personal nature and were meant to simulate those asked in security vetting

interviews. Participants were provided with examples of the types of questions involved in the

study, including the researcher's limits to confidentiality and examples of disclosures that would

necessitate a confidentiality breach. They were also told about the specific data that Inspect

would collect and they were asked not to participate if they were uncomfortable with any aspect

of the research. Participants were informed that the interviewer would not have access to their

answers to the pre-screening questions.

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[33] Inspect could not ensure user data security on a rooted or jailbroken smartphone.

After providing consent, participants answered demographic questions, including what type of mobile operating device they used (i.e., Android, iOS) and next were presented with the STS. To increase the likelihood of veracity, questions were conceptually grouped into categorical blocks and each block of questions was listed in least-to-most threatening order (see Acquisti et al., 2012) and pre-faced with the following instruction and honesty messaging:

"These questions refer to both your **PAST and PRESENT** circumstances. So, if any question has been true for you at any point, please select 'yes.' If you are unsure about an answer, please think critically and answer in the way which you lean toward."

After completing the STS, Android-owning participants were assigned to download 'Inspect' from the Google Play store. Inspect-downloading participants were contacted by a researcher who would request their data export before attending their interview. Half of iPhone-owning participants were randomly assigned to either complete the personality assessment ('HEXACO') or to do nothing ('Control').[34] After completion the STS, all participants were notified that a researcher would be in contact to schedule an interview. A co-experimenter managed the pre-screening data, which included generating HEXACO scores and processing user-exported data from Inspect. Prior to each interview, the co-experimenter provided the interviewer with a data file that included participant email addresses, their unique identifying number, and experimental group assignment. Within two days of completing the pre-screening, the interviewer contacted the participants via email to schedule their completion of the study.

Participants were interviewed 5-10 days after completing the pre-screening. The five-day minimum period was necessary to generate data that would establish the manipulation (i.e., a 'personality profile') for the Inspect group. Prior to each experimental participant interview, the

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[34] Due to difficulty recruiting Android-owning participants, they were not included in the HEXACO or control groups.

co-experimenter sent the interviewer an updated data file which included the participant's data

(i.e., two highest scoring HEXACO traits or two most frequently accessed mobile applications).

Interviewees met the interviewer at an interview room on campus in the psychology lab. For

experimental groups, I motioned to information on a clipboard I was holding and I reported the

following for each respective experimental group:

a.) HEXACO group: "Thank you for completing the HEXACO. Are you familiar with it?

It is a personality assessment which measures honesty-humility, extraversion,

agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience. I see here that you scored

highest on ____ and ____. If you like, we can discuss your profile in more depth after the

interview?"

b.) Inspect group: "Thank you for downloading Inspect. Did you experience any

problems with it? My colleague creates personality profiles based on the data that we

collected. I see here that you most often access ____ and ___. If you like, we can discuss

your profile more in depth after the interview?"

Interview instructions and questions were listed on the clipboard I was holding. I read the

following instruction and subsequent interview questions to each participant:

"I'm going to ask you a series of open-ended questions, which are similar to those

in security vetting and those you saw during Part I of the experiment. Please feel

free to answer them however you wish. If you don't have information or you feel

like a question does not apply to you, simply let me know by saying 'pass.' Each

question refers to both the past and present. So, if something that was true for you

in the past is no longer true today, you are still encouraged to talk about it. You

are encouraged to provide as much information as possible, however, please do

not provide names or identifiable information about yourself or others. You may

ask clarifying questions. If you are unsure of an answer or wish to skip a question

and return to it later, please let me know and we can return to it later. When

responding, please take your time and give as much detail as you feel

comfortable. Please keep in mind that this interview is confidential, and that

confidentiality will only be breached if you express a risk of harming yourself or

others. Please know that you are free to end participation at any time, for any

reason, without penalty. Do you have any questions before we start? Are you

ready? May I record this? [35]

….

We've reached the end of the interview. Are there any questions that you would

like to return to? Is there anything you would like to change or add to your

responses, or any additional information you would like to provide?"

At the end of the interview, all participants were asked to complete the post hoc

questionnaire on a university provided laptop. Participants were thanked, debriefed, and

paid £7. Additionally, Inspect participants were also offered their full Inspect report as

part of their incentive for participating.

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[35] The STQ-V2 open-ended interview questions were then asked in sequential order as listed in Appendix A.8. The STS closed-ended pre-screening analogue of these questions are listed in Table 5.1.

5.2.5   Transcript coding

Interviews were transcribed verbatim by professional transcription services. Transcripts

from STQ-V2 response sets were blinded by one of my supervisors (KL). I discerned question

endorsements and coded all interviews for details disclosed using M-ACID, as explained in

Experiments 1 and 2. A research assistant blind to the purpose of the experiment coded at least

20% (24) of the blinded interviews. KL ensured that the research assistant received a

counterbalanced distribution of transcripts from each interview group. Interrater agreement was

assessed at four stages: (1) whether or not a question was endorsed (κ = .93); (2) whether or not a

response contained relevant codable details (κ = .92); (3) whether or not the details in the

response (those agreed upon from Stage 2) were relevant to the question asked (κ = .85); and (4)

the specific type of detail (affective, external, internal, contextual) in the relevant responses (κ =

.89). Kappa values suggested excellent interrater agreement. Endorsements for the pre-screening

and interview questions are listed in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1

Number of Participants and Percentage of Sample who Endorsed the STS Pre-screening

Questions and STQ-V2 Interview Questions

(STS) Question	STS Participant Endorsements *n* (%)	STQ-V2 Participant Endorsements *n* (%)
Susceptibility to Pressure		
1. Have your political beliefs been influenced by individuals or groups you have encountered online?	39 (33.3%)	78 (66.7%)
2. Have you ever chatted online or messaged over an app about your involvement in illegal activity?	15 (12.8%)	26 (22.2%)

3. Have you ever concealed important aspects of your identity from people close to you?	38 (32.5%)	60 (51.3%)
4. Have you ever shared or posted materials or opinions online that others might consider racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise intolerant?	12 (10.3%)	13 (11.1%)
5. Have you ever experienced any mental health or psychological issues?	65 (55.6%)	75 (64.1%)
6. Have you ever compromised your values in order to please someone?	64 (54.7%)	73 (62.4%)

Affiliations

7. Do you personally know anyone who has been involved in a gang or organised crime?	12 (10.3%)	16 (13.7%)
8. Do you know anyone who has travelled abroad to support a non-peaceful action, not including military?	1 (0.9%)	2 (1.7%)
9. Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members *regularly* engaged in criminal behaviour?	19 (16.2%)	41 (35.0%)
10. Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members spent time in prison?	9 (7.7%)	23 (19.7%)
11. Do you have any links to individuals or organisations that might be perceived as extremist?	1 (0.9%)	8 (6.8%)

Avoidance of Online Identifiability

12. Have you ever conducted online transactions with digital or virtual currencies, such as Bitcoins?	12 (10.3%)	6 (5.1%)
13. Do you have any fake profiles, aliases, or handles that are associated with your online activity, including for social media and gaming accounts?	51 (43.6%)	53 (45.3%)
14. Have you ever misrepresented personal information about yourself when communicating with an individual or group online?	41 (35.0%)	46 (39.3%)
15. Have you ever used technology which masks your identification online, such as The Onion Router (TOR)?	18 (15.4%)	17 (14.5%)

Dishonesty

16. Have you ever used illegal streaming or downloading services?	86 (73.5%)	95 (81.2%)
17. Have you ever disclosed a secret you promised not to tell?	75 (64.1%)	86 (73.5%)
18. Have you ever skipped out on paying for a service, such as the train, a salon, restaurant, or taxi?	62 (53.0%)	65 (55.6%)
19. Have you ever pirated software?	42 (35.9%)	39 (33.3%)
20. Have you ever shoplifted?	21 (17.9%)	25 (21.4%)
21. Have you ever cheated on academic work, including both exams and plagiarising, from upper school onward?	27 (23.1%)	45 (38.5%)
22. Have you ever stolen from an employer?	9 (7.7%)	21 (17.9%)
23. Have you ever cheated on a partner?	21 (17.9%)	20 (17.1%)
Financial Imprudence		
24. Have you ever gone into overdraft?	52 (44.4%)	53 (45.3%)
25. Have you ever maxed out a credit card?	7 (6.0%)	3 (2.6%)
26. Have you ever purchased a product and then attempted to return or sell it because you could not afford it?	41 (35.0%)	37 (31.6%)
27. Have you ever gambled?	42 (35.9%)	39 (33.3%)
28. Have you ever been unable to pay a bill?	17 (14.5%)	26 (22.2%)
29. Have you ever accumulated excessive (not student) debt?	8 (6.8%)	19 (16.2%)
Formal Reprimands		
30. Have online administrators ever banned your access to a site or deleted your posts or comments?	12 (10.3%)	22 (18.8%)
31. Have you ever received a formal reprimand at school or university for violating the rules, such as detentions, formal hearings, suspensions, or expulsions?	39 (33.3%)	62 (53.0%)
32. Have you ever been reprimanded at work due to violating the rules?	3 (2.6%)	16 (13.7%)
33. Have you ever received any warnings or cautions from law enforcement, excluding minor traffic violations?	9 (7.7%)	12 (10.3%)
34. Have you ever been fired or asked to leave a job?	8 (6.8%)	9 (7.7%)
35. Have you ever been arrested?	1 (0.9%)	3 (2.6%)

Substance Use		
36. Has drinking alcohol ever caused you problems?	38 (32.5%)	69 (59.0%)
37. Have you ever used marijuana?	45 (38.5%)	44 (37.6%)
38. Have you ever used other illicit drugs, such as mushrooms, cocaine, amphetamines, MDMA, PCP, LSD, and opiates?	21 (17.9%)	22 (18.8%)
39. Have you ever habitually used any addictive substance, such as drugs or alcohol?	18 (15.4%)	18 (15.4%)
40. Have you ever operated machinery, such as a bicycle or vehicle, whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	14 (12.0%)	19 (16.2%)

Note. The STQ-V2 endorsements indicate those responses to the open-ended interview analogue. Items 1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 39 are conceptually based on the NSV002 Developed Vetting Questionnaire. Items 2, 3, 4, and 6 are conceptually based on the Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2001). Items 7, 9, and 10 are conceptually based on Gardner et al. (2007) investigation of self-regulation within a deviant peer context. Items 16, 18, 22, 23, and 40 are adapted from Mattos et al.'s (2017) study on self-disclosure of transgressions. Items 17, 21, 27, and 36 are adapted from the Domain Specific Risk Scale (Blais & Weber, 2006). Items 19, 20, and 40 are adapted from Illegal Behavior Checklist (McCoy & Edens, 2006). Items 37 and 38 are adapted from the Deviant Behavior Variety Scale (Sanches et al., 2016). Items 24, 25, 26, 28, and 29 are based on the NSV003 Financial Questionnaire.

5.3   Results

5.3.1   Pre-screening check

Between-subjects ANOVAs were carried out to ensure the three groups did not differ significantly for pre-screening question endorsements, as this may have affected the self-disclosure outcomes from the interview. No group differences were found for pre-screening endorsements, $F(2, 114) = 0.45$, $p = .640$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$, and no group differences were found for inconsistent responding, $F(2, 114) = 2.72$, $p = .070$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to ensure that Inspect and HEXACO groups did not differ significantly in terms of their judgment of the *accuracy of the interviewer's feedback* (as the control group did not receive feedback). No significant group differences emerged, $t(78) = -0.96$, $p = .338$, $d = 0.21$. Next, I conducted a *t*-test to ensure no group

differences existed for *liking the interviewer* between groups who did and did not receive

interviewer feedback, as this may have affected self-disclosure outcomes. No significant group

differences emerged for liking the interviewer, $t(115) = -0.45$, $p = .651$, $d = 0.09$. Liking the

interviewer was positively associated with the perception of familiarity ($r_s(115) = .20$, $p = .028$),

but unrelated to the perception of knowledge ($r_s(115) = .10$, $p = .190$).

5.3.2   Hypothesis tests

Self-disclosure. Table 5.2 displays pre-screening and interview self-disclosure outcomes

for all interview conditions. To determine whether receiving interviewer feedback affected self-

disclosure, Welch's *t*-tests were carried out. Consistent with H1a, participants who received

interviewer feedback endorsed significantly more interview questions ($M_{diff} = 1.92$, $SE = .94$)

than the control group, $t(100.85) = -2.04$, $p = .044$, $d = 0.35$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.74]. Likewise,

consistent with H1b, participants who received interviewer feedback disclosed significantly more

details ($M_{diff} = 81.20$, $SE = 24.62$) than the control group, $t(113.78) = -3.29$, $p = .001$, $d = 0.53$,

95% CI [0.13, 0.92]. Critically, the group receiving personality trait feedback did not differ

significantly from the group receiving digital behaviour feedback in terms of interview questions

endorsed, $t(78) = -0.36$, $p = .724$, $d = 0.08$, nor details disclosed, $t(78) = 0.39$, $p = .698$, $d = 0.09$.

Table 5.2

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-Screening Questions Endorsed, Interview Questions

Endorsed, Inconsistent Responses, and Details Disclosed

Condition	n	Pre-screening Endorsements		Interview Endorsements		Inconsistent Responses		Details Disclosed	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
HEXACO	41	9.63	5.37	12.39	6.71	6.32	2.94	237.27	209.46
Inspect	39	10.03	5.40	12.87	5.32	7.51	3.33	221.85	134.45
Control	37	8.89	5.01	10.70	4.00	8.19	4.45	148.73	90.02
Total	117	9.53	5.25	12.02	5.53	7.31	3.66	204.13	158.23

Perceived interviewer familiarity and knowledge. In support of H2, participants who received interviewer feedback ($M = 4.66$, $SD = 1.44$) perceived the interviewer as significantly more familiar with them compared to the control group ($M = 3.43$, $SD = 1.49$), $t(115) = -4.24$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.84$, 95% CI [0.44, 1.25]. In support of H3, participants who received interviewer feedback ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 1.26$) perceived the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable about them compared to the control group ($M = 3.77$, $SD = 1.46$), $t(115) = -2.75$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.55$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.95]. To ensure that the pre-screening endorsements did not influence the perception of interviewer familiarity or knowledge, I carried out two ANCOVAs, controlling for pre-screening endorsements, using group assignment as the predictor and the perception of familiarity and knowledge as each respective dependent variable. I found that, after controlling for pre-screening question endorsements, participants who received any interviewer feedback still perceived the interviewer as both significantly more familiar with them, $F(1, 114) = 17.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, 90% CI [0.05, 0.23], and significantly more knowledgeable of them $F(1, 114) = 6.84$, $p = .010$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.13], compared to the control group.

Scatterplots evidenced non-monotonic relationships when examining self-disclosure variables as they related to both the perception of interviewer familiarity and knowledge. Because transforming the data failed to produce a monotonic relationship between self-disclosure and post-hoc variables, I used Kendall's tau-b correlation to explore the hypothesized relationships between these variables (H4a-H5b). No meaningful associations were found between the perception of interviewer familiarity and interview questions endorsed, ($\tau_b = .05$, $p = .466$), nor between the perception of interviewer familiarity and details disclosed, ($\tau_b = -.02$, $p = .735$). Thus, both H4a and H4b were not supported. The perception of interviewer knowledge was moderately positively associated with interview question endorsement ($\tau_b = .13$, $p = .048$), thus, support was found for H5a. However, the perception of interviewer knowledge was not associated with details disclosed ($\tau_b = .06$, $p = .351$). Thus, no support was found for H5b. Next, to examine potential influence of the perception of interviewer knowledge on question endorsement, I conducted a mediation analysis using PROCESS v.3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018) (See Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1

Standardised Regression Coefficients for the Relationship Between Receiving Interviewer

Feedback and Interview Questions Endorsed, as Mediated by the Perception of Interviewer

Knowledge
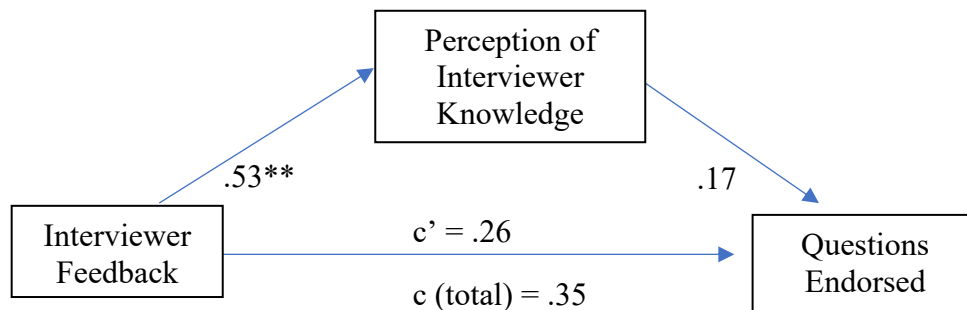
**p < .001

Partially standardised indirect effects were computed and 95% confidence intervals were computed using 10,000 bootstrapped samples, determining the indirect effects at the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles. Standardised effects for paths b and c reported in Figure 5.1 were non-significant (p = 0.081 and 0.081, respectively), however, there was a significant indirect effect of interviewer feedback on interview questions endorsed, through the perception of interviewer knowledge, ab = 0.09, BCa 95% CI [0.001, 0.21]. The indirect pathway through the perception of interviewer knowledge accounted for 25.38% of the relationship between receiving interviewer feedback and endorsing interview questions.

5.3.3   *Exploratory analyses*

STQ-V2 proposed categorical analysis. As in Experiments 1 and 2, I conducted a nonlinear principal component analysis using CATPA to explore object plots and vector models with the proposed categories. Scree plots evidenced an elbow at the second and third component of analysis. Model summaries produced the minimum total effect size for scaling items on at least three dimensions (VAF = 25.48%; α = .93; λ = 10.20), however component loadings again evidenced a unitary model based on qualitatively non-meaningful loadings. Thus, I did not conduct analyses on proposed or re-conceptualised interview topics.

Gender. Men endorsed significantly more interview questions (M_{diff} = 3.12, SE = 1.24) compared to women, $t(46.47)$ = -2.52, p = .015, d = 0.58, 95% CI [0.17, 0.99].[36] Men and women disclosed details at similar rates, $t(115)$ = -1.25, p = .321, d = 0.26, 95% CI [0.15, 0.66]. An ANCOVA was carried out, using gender as a predictor and interview endorsements as an outcome variable, while controlling for covariate pre-screening endorsements. When controlling for pre-screening endorsements, there was no longer an effect of gender on interview question endorsement, $F(1, 114)$ =1.28, p = .261, η_p^2 = .01, R^2 = .42, $R^2_{adjusted}$ = .41.

Native language. Native English speakers endorsed significantly more interview questions (M = 13.01, SD = 5.42) than non-native English speakers (M = 10.42, SD = 5.40), $t(115)$ = 2.52, p = .013, d = 0.48, 95%CI [0.10, 0.86]. Non-significant differences were found for the number of details disclosed by native (M = 220.38, SD = 152.32) and non-native (M = 178.13, SD = 165.66) English speakers, $t(115)$ = 1.41, p = .161, d = 0.27. Two ANCOVAs were carried out, each using native language as a predictor, while controlling for covariate pre-screening endorsements, with interview endorsements and details disclosed each as outcome

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[36] Due to significant homogeneity of variance, equal variances were not assumed.

variables. When controlling for pre-screening endorsements, there was no longer an effect of native language on interview question endorsement, $[F(1, 114) = 1.41, p = .238, \eta_p^2 = .01, R^2 = .42, R^2_{adjusted} = .41]$, and the effect of native language on details disclosed remained non-significant, $[F(1, 114) = .091, p = .764, \eta_p^2 = .00, R^2 = .22, R^2_{adjusted} = .20]$.

Race. White people endorsed significantly more interview questions ($M = 13.51$, $SD = 5.29$) than Underrepresented Groups ($M = 9.55$, $SD = 5.07$), $t(115) = 3.99$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.76$, 95% CI [0.37, 1.15]. White people also disclosed significantly more details ($M = 234.18$, $SD = 160.24$), compared to Underrepresented Groups ($M = 154.27$, $SD = 143.08$), $t(115) = 2.71$, $p = .008$, $d = 0.53$, 95%CI [0.14, 0.90]. Two ANCOVAs were carried out, each using race as a predictor, while controlling for covariate pre-screening endorsements, with interview endorsements and details disclosed each as outcome variables. When controlling for pre-screening endorsements, the effect of race on interview question endorsement remained significant, $[F(1, 114) = 4.64, p = .033, \eta_p^2 = .04, R^2 = .44, R^2_{adjusted} = .43]$. When controlling for pre-screening endorsements, there was no longer an effect of race on details disclosed, $[F(1, 114) = 1.56, p = .214, \eta_p^2 = .01, R^2 = .23, R^2_{adjusted} = .21]$.

5.4   Discussion

In line with H1a and H1b, participants who received interviewer feedback endorsed more interview questions and disclosed more details compared to those participants who did not receive interviewer feedback. In accordance with hypothesized outcomes, participants who received interviewer feedback reported perceiving the interviewer as more familiar with them (H2) and more knowledgeable about them (H3) compared to the control group. Crucially, the

significance of each of these four (H1a-H3) reported group differences was not affected by

participants' pre-screening responses.

In accordance with hypothesized outcomes, experimental group participants rated the

interviewer as both more familiar with them (H2) and more knowledgeable about them (H3) than

the control group. These results suggest that the intended outcome of the experiment's

manipulation was effective. These findings suggest that the presentation of interviewee's self-

generated personality traits or mobile device activity can increase an interviewee's perception

that the interviewer is familiar with them and knowledgeable about them.

The two experimental groups reported a similar level of accuracy concerning the content of

their respective manipulations. Thus, this experiment demonstrated similar efficacy for self-

reported personality traits and emergent profiling via digital behaviour in establishing an illusion

of knowing it all. While liking the interviewer was moderately associated with the perception of

interviewer familiarity, neither liking the interviewer nor the perception of familiarity were

directly linked to self-disclosure outcomes. Importantly, receiving interviewer feedback did not

affect liking the interviewer. This finding suggests that the procedure used in this experiment to

obtain data and present the manipulation is unlikely to pose a significant threat to rapport

building in candidate selection interviews.

I did not find support for an effect of the perception of interviewer familiarity on interview

self-disclosure outcomes. The interviewee's perception that the interviewer was familiar with

them did not influence their endorsement of interview questions (H4a), nor did it influence the

number of details they disclosed during the interview (H4b). These findings suggest that the

mechanism of emergent self-generated information (e.g., self-reported personality traits and

mobile device activity) does not influence familiarity in such a way that encourages self-

disclosure. In line with theory of privacy as a boundary negotiation, the experimenter's

unanticipated use of the interviewee's information may have counteracted potential positive

effects of familiarity on self-disclosure outcomes during the interview (Petronio, 2007).

Partial support was found for the effects of interviewer knowledge on self-disclosure outcomes.

The perception of interviewer knowledge was unrelated to the disclosure of details (H5b)

however, it was positively associated with the number of interview questions endorsed (H5a). An

indirect-only mediation was found, whereby there was a significant effect for receiving

interviewer feedback and the perception of interviewer knowledge ($a*b$) on question

endorsements, but no direct effect of receiving interviewer feedback on question endorsements.

This may be due in part to differential effects of the feedback manipulations or a small sample.

More research is needed to understand the role of interviewer knowledge on question

endorsements. This finding suggests that the experimental manipulations I used to establish an

illusion of knowing it all might be applied to vetting-like interviews to increase information

provision related to endorsement of risk-relevant questions, but perhaps not in terms of the

amount of information (i.e., details disclosed) that they provide in relation to those questions.

Exploratory analyses found that, after controlling for pre-screening endorsements, there

were no demographic differences (i.e., for gender or native language) in interview self-disclosure

outcomes (i.e., questions endorsed and details disclosed), apart from the finding that White

people still endorsed more interview questions compared to Underrepresented Groups. As in

Experiment 1, this finding may be partly explained by exposure to differences in opportunity to

commit transgressions and culturally relevant moral and legal consequentiality (of both

committing them and disclosing about them), and partly explained by out-group stereotype

threat.

5.4.1 Limitations

This experiment has a few critical limitations, mainly related to issues with

generalisability and potential self-selection bias. First, the Inspect application was intended to be

developed to collect user data from both Android and iPhone devices however, iOS development

was later determined to be outside of the scope of this research. Therefore, only Android users

could be recruited for the Inspect condition. This is potentially problematic as Android users tend

to exhibit more risk-awareness when downloading mobile applications (Reinfelder et al., 2014)

as compared to iPhone users. On a related note, problems recruiting Android participants to

complete the experiment led to the removal of the Inspect + HEXACO group, which limited the

analyses to examining the impact of only one type of interviewer feedback (as opposed to the

impact of combining two types of feedback). Nonetheless, two large studies of personality traits

of university-aged mobile device users (Götz et al., 2017) found little personality differences

between Android and iPhone users, notably with respect to variables that might point to insider

threat, such as willingness to take risks. Third, it is difficult to ascertain to what extent that the

experimental groups' perception of interviewer familiarity and interviewer knowledge was

influenced by the interviewer's presentation of the manipulation (i.e., the illusion of knowing it

all) versus the potential confound that experimental groups had provided more information (i.e.,

HEXACO or mobile data) to the other experimenter beforehand. However, because all groups

(including the Control) completed the pre-screening security questions (STS) before the

interview, arguably, all participants provided the most sensitive information to the experimenter

beforehand. Whilst I considered a measure of the interviewee's perception of familiarity and

knowledge in all groups before the manipulation was presented, I decided against this as it may

have introduced demand characteristics and possibly affected self-disclosure outcomes. Past

criticisms of bogus pipeline studies note the confound of basic operational differences in terms of increased experimenter attention on experimental subjects as opposed to controls (e.g., Ostrom, 1973). As participation in the experimental groups necessitated more work compared to the control group, it is possible that the outcomes of greater levels of self-disclosure in the experimental groups could be driven by increased commitment or motivation to complete the study. The privacy control paradox further supports this notion, as individuals who provide more sensitive information seemed willing to provide more information about themselves on identifying forms (Acquisti et al., 2015). Increased self-disclosure in response to a privacy control paradox may have been especially apparent for the Inspect group, as the Inspect group's participation was ongoing (over at least five days) compared to the other two conditions. The difficulty recruiting for the Inspect condition attests to the possibility of self-selection bias. Future studies using this paradigm should consider factors involved in the decision to participate in the study and measure the perception of control individuals feel they have over their information.

5.4.2   Conclusion

Vetting is a lengthy process, which includes pre-interview contact and gathering background information about the interviewee. In analogue to real life vetting, this experiment used emergent information gathering – that is, I collected information and did not explain how it would be later used. This deception was necessary to effectively establish the manipulation (the illusion of knowing it all). The illusion of knowing it all was achieved by using interviewer feedback of a presumed 'personality profile' via self-generated information (i.e., HEXACO scores and Inspect report) elicited via a pre-screening questionnaire and tracing mobile activity.

As this experiment was composed of university students, future studies should consider examining the effectiveness of the Inspect manipulation in other groups (e.g., community samples or those with less digital literacy). For further insight into the mechanism of the illusion of knowing it all, self-disclosure studies using emergent information (e.g., digital traces or unanticipated use of information) should include a measure of trust.

The purpose of this experiment was to demonstrate the usefulness of personalised trait and digital behavioural feedback in interviews which attempt to elicit risk-related self-disclosure. The illusion of knowing it all has traditionally been applied in studies focused on disclosure during HUMINT (e.g., suspect or witness) interviews (e.g., May & Granhag, 2016a; 2016b). This experiment is the first to apply this interviewing tactic to a vetting-like interview. Findings established that the illusion of knowing it all can effectively be applied via the presentation of specific self-generated personality meta-traits or a bogus pipeline mechanism using specific self-generated mobile traces. By adopting the illusion of knowing it all within a vetting-like experimental paradigm, I demonstrated the relationship between the passive collection and "analysation" of personal data, interviewee feelings of being "known", and the resultant self-disclosure of risk-relevant information. This experiment adds to the growing body of literature on dyadic communication, the use of personal data, and information elicitation. Experiment 4 examines the effect of other-generated information in establishing an illusion of knowing it all via the use of referee reports.

Chapter 6   Experiment 4. Referee-Reported Interviewer Feedback of Personality Traits in a Community Sample

6.1   Introduction

When a candidate undergoes vetting, information about the candidate is elicited from both the candidate and other sources. Information reported from one's in-group is typically perceived as reliable (Flanagin, 2017; Shin et al., 2017). Background investigations during the pre-employment vetting process often include the use of referees, many of whom are nominated by the candidate. Candidates are informed that a vetting officer will interview the "most appropriate supervisors and referees [the candidate] nominated on [their] security questionnaire"; however, it is unclear whether the same vetting officer conducts all interviews associated with one candidate (MOD, 2020). Vetting officers contact referees that the candidate has selected to provide information on their behalf. Information that referees provide the vetting officer is typically related to the candidate's character and suitability determination. The UKSV website states that a referee should be "someone who has known [the candidate] well over a significant period of [their] life" (MOD, 2021). In the case that the vetting officer interviews a referee prior to interviewing the candidate, it is realistic to assume that the candidate may form a perception that the interviewer already knows sensitive information about them. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, interviewees' perception that the interviewer has specific personal knowledge (i.e., personality traits or mobile activity) about them can increase interviewee self-disclosure. This effect has also been demonstrated in HUMINT studies for interviewees' perception that the interviewer has (non-personal) sensitive knowledge, such as knowledge concerning a specific investigative matter (e.g., May & Granhag, 2016a; 2016b; Oleszkiewicz et al., 2014).

Experiment 3 found that the interviewer's presentation of interviewee's self-generated personality traits can increase interviewees' perception that the interviewer is familiar with them and knowledgeable about them. Whilst this emergent self-generated information did not influence the perception of interviewer familiarity in such a way that encourages self-disclosure, the perception of interviewer knowledge positively influenced the number of interview questions endorsed. Experiment 3's findings suggest that the presentation of the interviewee's self-generated personality traits can increase an interviewee's perception that the interviewer is familiar with them and knowledgeable about them. During the vetting interview, interviewees must continuously assess their level of comfort and judge whether they are providing enough information to satisfy the vetting officer. Conversely, vetting officers must continuously ascertain the value of information provided in effort to guide probing questions. Walther and Parks (2002) describe warranting value of other-generated information as a derivative of the recipient's perception about the extent to which the content of the information is immune to manipulation by the person to whom it refers. With respect to online impressions, researchers have shown that third party observers tend to give more credence to other-generated statements about a target, as opposed to statements that are self-generated by the target, and this may especially be the case when statements are socially desirable (Walther et al., 2009). Thus, when ascertaining character judgments in interviews, judgments from those close to the interviewee may offer greater actual (and perceived) insight for an information assessor as opposed to the interviewee's account alone, especially when motivation for impression management is high.

6.1.1   Relationship closeness

Relationship closeness is conceptualised as the degree of affective, cognitive, and behavioural interdependence between individuals (Dibble et al., 2012), including the frequency of their impact and strength of their occurrence (Kelley et al., 1983). Close relationships are often characterised by high levels of trust, commitment, and mutual intimate self-disclosure. Mutual self-disclosure consistently ranks as the top indicator of closeness out of 14 indicators of relationship closeness, for both geographically close and long-distance friendships for both men and women (Johnson et al., 2009; Parks & Floyd, 1996). Thus, a high degree of self-disclosure is expected in close relationships.

6.1.2   HEXACO in candidate selection

The HEXACO is becoming an increasingly popular measure used in candidate selection studies (e.g., Pletzer et al., 2020; McAbee et al., 2019). Recent research has given attention to the application of the HEXACO in work settings, including counterproductive work behaviours and organisational citizenship (McAbee et al., 2019), workplace delinquency (de Vries & van Gelder, 2015), and workplace deviance (Oh et al., 2011; Pletzer et al., 2020).

Aggregating personality reports from both self- and observer-reports increases the validity of personality ratings from supervisors (Mount et al., 1994). Meta-analytic results of self- and observer-ratings of personality traits have shown that self-rated Conscientiousness and self-rated Honesty-Humility have the strongest relationship with job performance outcomes (Aamodt, 2004; Barrick & Mount, 1991; Pletzer et al., 2019; Pletzer et al., 2020). Pletzer and colleagues' (2020) meta-analytic review of the HEXACO model found that self-reported Fairness explains workplace deviance with almost as much variance as all six of the HEXACO

domains combined. In a series of studies on high stakes personnel selection, Lee and colleagues

(2008) demonstrated the empirical distinctiveness of Honesty-Humility subscale, including the

subscale's utility in predicting scores on an integrity test and ethical business decision making

tasks. They found that (Honesty-Humility) observer reports from familiar persons generated

similarly strong predictive validity as self-reports on outcomes of those measures (rs = .42-.46, p

< .001).

As Experiment 3 found medium effects for self-generated interviewer feedback (e.g.,

HEXACO self-report) on interviewee self-disclosure, I sought to determine whether interviewer

feedback would similarly influence self-disclosure if the feedback were generated by a person

close to the interviewee. This experiment thus, intended to simulate the use of referees, as might

occur in a vetting scenario. Research has demonstrated that perceived benefits hold a large value

in determining an individuals' likelihood of disclosing personal demographic and consumer

information online (Awad & Krishnan, 2006; Acquisti et al., 2015). Similar to Experiment 3, I

included a pre-screening questionnaire analogous to the open-ended interview questionnaire. A

natural desire to maintain consistency (Gawronski & Strack, 2012) may conflict with the notion

that reports from referees are not necessarily always in line with self-reports and observations

made during vetting interviews (Spilberg & Corey, 2017). Thus, I hypothesized that knowledge

of reports generated from important close others will inflate the interviewee's perception of

interviewer familiarity and knowledge, as this tends to occur when the source of information is

known, but the specific information the interviewer holds is unknown (Oleszkiewicz et al.,

2014). As inflated perception of interviewer knowledge can in turn, increase disclosure of new

information (Granhag et al., 2016), I again hypothesized that the perception of interviewer

familiarity and knowledge would both be positively associated with self-disclosure outcomes. I

further hypothesized that nominator-referee relationship closeness would be positively associated with self-disclosure outcomes.

6.1.3   Current study

The aims Experiment 4 were threefold. First, I endeavoured to establish an illusion of knowing it all (i.e., perceived interviewer familiarity and knowledge) via other-generated information (i.e., observer-reported personality traits). Second, I sought to determine whether an experimental group who received interviewer feedback in the form of referee-generated personality traits would self-disclose more during the interview compared to a control group who did not receive referee reports. Third, I explored whether aspects of the nominator-referee relationship (i.e., closeness and length) were associated with self-disclosure for the nominator interviewees. To this end, I simulated requesting referees to provide personality information about their nominator, as might occur in a vetting scenario.

6.1.4   Hypotheses

H1. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback will endorse more interview questions (H1a) and disclose more details (H1b) during the interview than the control group.

H2. Length of relationship will positively correlate with interview questions endorsed (H2a) and details disclosed (H2b).

H3. Length of relationship will positively correlate with the IOS (H3a) and the URCS (H3b).

H4. Relationship closeness as indicated by the IOS will positively correlate with

interview questions endorsed (H4a) and with details disclosed (H4b).

H5. Relationship closeness as indicated by the URCS will positively correlate with

interview questions endorsed (H5a) and with details disclosed (H5b).

H6. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback will perceive the interviewer as

more familiar with them (H6a) and knowledgeable of them (H6b) than the control group.

H7. Perceived interviewer familiarity will correlate positively with interview questions

endorsed (H7a) and with details disclosed (H7b).

H8. Perceived interviewer knowledge will correlate positively with interview questions

endorsed (H8a) and with details disclosed (H8b).

6.2   Method

6.2.1   Participants

An *a priori* power calculation using *G*power,* v3.1.9.3 (Faul et al., 2007) with power (1 -

β) set at 0.80 and α = 0.05, determined that 74 participants were needed to reflect a medium-to-

large effect size based on findings from previous experiments in this thesis (*d* = 0.60). I

overrecruited participants by 2.7% (*n* = 2), based on post-interview exclusion rates (2.4-3.2%) in

previous experiments in this thesis.

Interviewee participants were recruited via a community online participant pool (used in

Experiment 2), snowball sampling, and flyer advertisements. Participants were required to have

not previously participated in the interviewer's research studies, not personally know the

interviewer, have lived in the UK for at least five years, speak English fluently, and have home

access to Skype on a computer or tablet. Furthermore, participants were required to agree that

they would only participate in the study in one capacity: as an interviewee or a referee. In

exchange for participation, interviewee participants were offered a £10 Amazon voucher and referee participants were offered a £3 Amazon voucher.

Interviewee participants were first asked to complete Part 1 (pre-screening survey) of the study. Of the eligible participants ($n = 109$) who completed Part 1, 17 did not respond to the experimenter's requests to complete the study, eight withdrew from the study with no explanation, two were excluded for nominating each other to serve as referee, two withdrew due to technical issues, one was excluded for leaving the UK, and one withdrew due to language difficulty. One participant's data was not processed due to the interviewer presenting an incorrect referee report. One participant's data was not processed due to their distress.[37] Of the 76 interviews completed, one nominator interviewee's data set was excluded for extremely (> 1.5 IQR) inconsistent responding, evidencing that they did not take the experiment seriously.[38] No other extreme outliers were found for other self-disclosure measures.

The final interviewee sample included 75 interviewee participants with a mean age of 25.53 years ($SD = 9.89$). The sample largely self-identified as women (73.3%) and White (85.3%), and was comprised of British (86.7%), dual national (British-other; 9.3%), and non-British (4.0%) interviewees. Educational attainment across the sample varied, with 2.7% reporting highest completion as O-level, 66.7% reported having completed A-levels, 13.3% had an undergraduate degree, 13.3% had a postgraduate degree, and 4.0% of the sample reported having completed other education.

Half of the interviewee sample were randomly allocated to the experimental group ("Nominator interviewees") and asked to nominate a Referee (a close, trusted person) to submit a

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[37] See Chapter 2.
[38] The participant endorsed one pre-screening question and 33 interview questions.

personality evaluation on their behalf. Referees ($n = 37$) reported a mean age of 30.22 years (SD

$= 11.88$) and mostly (59.5%) self-identified as women.

6.2.2   Design

This experiment used a between-subjects design to compare outcomes in two different

interviewee groups. Independent samples t-tests were used to assess group differences for the

self-disclosure variables of interest and group differences in the perception of the interviewer.

The independent variable was interviewee group assignment (i.e., Nominator interviewee vs.

Control interviewee). Nominator interviewees received referee-reported feedback from the

interviewer and Control interviewees did not. As in Experiments 1-3, participant response sets

generated two main self-disclosure dependent variables of interest: 1) the total number of

question endorsements (0 = not endorsed, 1 = endorsed) for each of the interview questions, and

2) the total cumulative number of details disclosed to the interview questions. As in Experiment

3, dependent measures also included two measures of perception of interviewer: interviewer

familiarity and interviewer knowledge. Again, a measure of pre-screening endorsements was

taken to ensure that groups did not differ in their propensity to endorse questions prior to the

experimental feedback manipulation. Closeness measures were provided to the Nominator

interviewees and Referees to assess how relationship closeness may have affected self-disclosure

in the Nominator group.

6.2.3   Materials and measures

Sensitive Topics Survey-Version 2 (STS-V2). All interviewees (control and

experimental) responded to the revised version of the STS, which included 45 forced-choice yes-

no questions and used same instructions as the STS. The online measure yielded the associated

KR-20 values (*n* = 76): Susceptibility to Pressure (*n* = 8; *KR-20* = .59), Affiliations (*n* = 5; *KR-20* = .46), Avoidance of Online Identifiability (*n* = 4; *KR-20* = .46), Dishonesty (*n* = 8; *KR-20* = .49), Financial Imprudence (*n* = 6; *KR-20* = .61), Formal Reprimands (*n* = 7; *KR-20* = .58), and

Substance Use (*n* = 7; *KR-20* = .80). The summed scale produced an endorsement rating for the

pre-screening endorsements. Excellent internal reliability was found (*KR-20* = .86).

  Accuracy of interviewer feedback. In order to effectively establish the illusion of

knowing it all, the interviewee must perceive the information that the interviewer provides as

accurate. To ensure that the HEXACO-O demonstrated its intended purpose, I asked the

Nominator group to respond to the 10-point Likert rating (10-point Likert; 1 = *not at all*

accurate; 10 = *extremely accurate*) *"How accurate is the information that your referee provided*

the interviewer?" Nominator (HEXACO-O; *n* = 37) accuracy ratings for other-generated

personality feedback (*M* = 7.92; *SD* = 1.46) was nearly identical to Experiment 3's (HEXACO; *n*

= 41) accuracy ratings for self-generated personality feedback (*M* = 7.92; *SD* = 1.70).

  Nominator/Referee relationship. Nominators and referees were asked *"How long have*

you known your [nominator/referee]? Please specify years and months." and *"Please describe*

your relationship to your [nominator/referee]. I am my [nominator's/referee's] _____"

(friend, partner, parent, etc.). The average amount of time nominators and referees reported

knowing one another was 12.08 years (*SD* = 9.48). Nominator-referee relationships were always

reported with mutual accuracy (e.g., mother-daughter, friend-friend, partner-partner, etc.):

42.10% (*n* = 16) described their relationship as friends, 26.30% (*n* = 10) were partners, and

31.60% (n = 12) were family members. Siblings composed 18.40% (*n* = 7) of the referee sample

and 13.20% (*n* = 5) were caregivers to their Nominator, which of whom included four parents

and one aunt.

   Inclusion of Other in the Self scale (IOS). is a pictorial measure (Aron et al., 1992), and

it is a strong and reliable tool for measuring subjective relationship closeness (Gächter et al.,

2015). Nominators and referees were asked to choose one of the images below in response to the

question, "*Which picture best describes your relationship with your referee/nominator?"* Likert-

type scores (1 = *no overlap*; 7 = *highly close*) were generated. Paired samples t-tests

demonstrated virtually no difference between Referees' (*M* = 4.97, *SD* = 1.66) and Nominators'

(*M* = 4.95, *SD* = 1.58) feelings of closeness, *t*(36) = 0.08, *p* = .936. A composite average of the

Nominator and Referee IOS ratings (*M* = 4.96, *SD* = 1.03) was used for closeness analyses.

Figure 6.1

Inclusion of Other in Self Scale
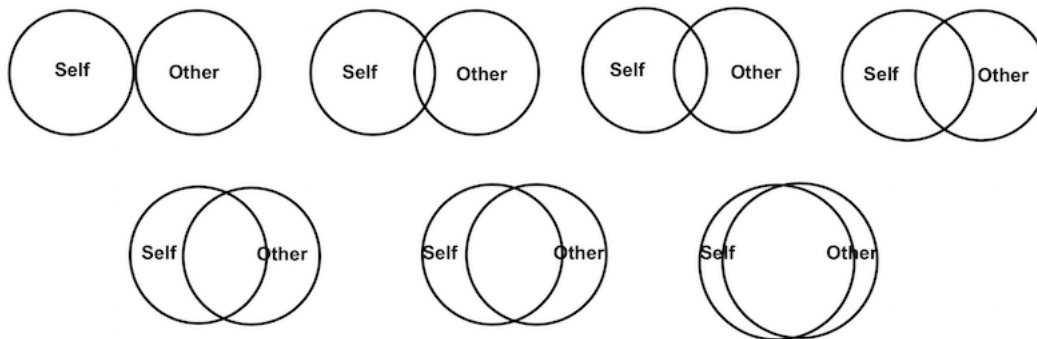
   Unidimensional Relationship Closeness Scale (URCS). The URCS is a 12-item measure

used to assess the closeness of personal relationships and is associated with relationship

satisfaction (Dibble et al., 2012). Nominators and Referees answered items about their

relationship such as "_____ is a priority in my life." The scale used a 7-point Likert rating

(*Strongly disagree* to *Strongly agree*) for each response. The scale demonstrated excellent

overall reliability ($\alpha = .90$), and high inter-item reliability for both referee ratings ($\alpha = .90$) and

nominator ratings ($\alpha = .87$). Again, paired samples t-tests showed similar closeness levels were

reported $t(36) = 0.79$, $p = .436$, among Referees ($M = 5.68$, $SD = 0.89$), and Nominators ($M =$

5.57, $SD = 0.85$). A composite average of the Nominator and Referee URCS ratings ($M = 5.63$,

$SD = 0.77$) was used for the closeness analyses.

   HEXACO-Observer report, HEXACO-O. Referees ($n = 37$) were asked to complete the

observer version of the 60-item HEXACO-PI-R assessment on behalf of their nominator. Meta-

analyses have demonstrated fairly high reliabilities for self-other HEXACO agreement

(Moshagen et al., 2019), especially when respondents are well acquainted (Ashton & Lee, 2010).

The following reliability levels were generated for the six meta-trait domains: Honesty-Humility,

($\alpha = .80$); Emotionality ($\alpha = .81$); Extraversion ($\alpha = .77$); Agreeableness ($\alpha = .73$);

Conscientiousness ($\alpha = .84$); Openness to Experience ($\alpha = .77$).

   Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 3-Revised (STQ-V3-R). All interviewees

responded to the revised version of the STQ-V3[39] and included 45 open-ended prompts,

analogous to the STS-V2. The following *KR-20* values were based on my coding of question

endorsements ($n = 45$): Susceptibility to Pressure ($n = 8$; *KR-20* $= .55$), Affiliations ($n = 5$; *KR-20* $= .43$), Avoidance of Online Identifiability ($n = 4$; *KR-20* $= .33$), Dishonesty ($n = 8$; *KR-20* $=$

.58), Financial Imprudence ($n = 6$; *KR-20* $= .63$), Formal Reprimands ($n = 7$; *KR-20* $= .55$), and

Substance Use ($n = 7$; *KR-20* $= .82$). The STQ-V3-R demonstrated excellent internal reliability

(*KR-20* $= .86$).

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[39] STQ-V3-R revisions only include minor grammatical edits for more inclusive language.

Inconsistent responding. As in Experiment 3, a measure of response consistency was based on the total number of inconsistent endorsements (yes-no ratings) when comparing each of the 45 response sets in the STS-V2 and STQ-V3-R ($M = 8.59$; $SD = 4.67$).

Manipulation check. As a manipulation check, participants were asked: "*Do you think you know the intent of the study?*" If yes was selected, they were asked "*What do you think is the intent of the study?*". None of the participants correctly guessed the purpose of the study.

Feelings towards the interviewer. As in Experiment 2, I assessed participants' feelings concerning the following four statements on a 7-point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly disagree*; *7 = Strongly agree*): *1) I liked the interviewer; 2) I trusted the interviewer; 3) The interviewer was considerate; 4) The interviewer conducted the interview at an appropriate pace.*[40]

Perception of the interviewer. As in Experiment 3, participants were asked to rate their perception of interviewer with four questions using a 7-point Likert scale (*1 = Strongly disagree*; *7 = Strongly agree*). Interviewer familiarity ($\alpha = .74$) was generated from the average rating of the following two statements: 1) *I believe the interviewer was familiar with some aspects of me before the interview,* and 2) *I believe the interviewer knew me better than a stranger before the interview.* Interviewer knowledge ($\alpha = .62$) was generated from the average rating of the following two statements: 3) *I think the interviewer knew more information about me than what she shared with me at the beginning of the interview,* and 4) *I think the interviewer had a good idea of how I would answer the interview questions.*

HEXACO-PI-R, 60-item version (Ashton & Lee, 2009) was used as a post hoc exploratory measure, to test potential correlates of self-disclosure within the interviewee sample ($n = 75$). The following reliability levels were produced for the six meta-trait domains: Honesty-

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[40] Outcomes of pre-screening check reported in section 6.3.1.

Humility, (α = .79); Emotionality (α = .85); Extraversion (α = .79); Agreeableness (α = .78);

Conscientiousness (α = .78); Openness to Experience (α = .75).

6.2.4   Procedure

Upon expressing interest in participating via email, interviewee participants were emailed a

Qualtrics link to the Participant Information Form and Consent Form. Participants were informed

that the study included questions of a personal nature and they were meant to simulate questions

asked in security vetting interviews. Further, participants were informed that they might be asked

to nominate a Referee to complete a personality questionnaire on their behalf, and that they

should refrain from participating if they were uncomfortable with this possibility. The researcher

provided the interviewees assurance that if selected to nominate a Referee, Referees would not

be provided information about of any their pre-screening responses, including responses to

questions about their relationship, nor responses to their pre-screening security questions (STS-

V2). Further, interviewees were assured that Referees would not be asked to answer any of the

security questions on their behalf. Interviewees were then asked to complete the pre-screening,

which included demographic questions and the STS-V2.

Following completion of the pre-screening, a randomiser assigned interviewee participants

to a Control group or Nominator group. The researcher emailed Control group interviewees and

invited them to participate in the interview (STQ-V3-R). Nominator interviewees were emailed

with a unique participation code and instructions on how to nominate a trusted Referee to

complete a personality evaluation on their behalf. Reminders were emailed to Nominator

interviewees who did not provide a referee within five days. Nominator interviewees were given

unlimited opportunities to provide a Referee.

Referees contacted the researcher via email with the unique code provided to their

Nominator. The researcher replied to the Referee with information about the study, indicating

that they would be asked questions about their relationship with their Nominator, and questions

about their Nominator's personality (HEXACO-O). The researcher assured referees that their

Nominator would not be provided with their responses to specific questions. Referees were sent

a Qualtrics link to a Participant Information Sheet, which described the sensitive nature of the

study, an explanation of their rights to withdraw, and an electronic Consent Form. Referees

provided their demographic information, answered questions about their relationship with their

Nominator, and then completed the IOS, URCS, and HEXACO-O. In line with vetting practices,

Referees were asked to not provide their Nominator with information concerning the questions

that they were asked. Reminders were emailed to Referees who did not complete the HEXACO-

O within three days. If the Referee did not complete the form or respond to the researcher within

one week, I emailed the Nominator and requested that they nominate a new Referee.

Upon meeting with the interviewer on Skype, Nominators were sent a Qualtrics link to complete

a brief questionnaire about their relationship with their Referee (e.g., length, type), including

URCS questions and the IOS. Immediately preceding the interview, I then provided the

following referee-reported feedback for the Nominator interviewees.

> "I see your (<u>relation of referee</u>) completed the HEXACO-observer report on your
>
> behalf. Thank you for that. Are you familiar with it? It's a personality assessment
>
> which measures honesty-humility, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness
>
> and openness to experience. The results from your (<u>relation of referee</u>)'s
>
> assessment show you ranking highest on ____ and ____. If you like, we can
>
> discuss your profile in more depth after the interview?"

Interview instruction and the interview questions were then read from the interviewer's computer

screen. All interviewee participants (both Nominators and Controls) were provided with

following interview instruction:

> "These questions refer to both your past and your present. Please take your time
>
> and answer the questions as honestly as you can, however you wish. If you need
>
> some time to think about how you want to answer a question, please ask me if we
>
> can skip it and return to it later. If you don't feel comfortable or don't want to
>
> answer a given question, simply say 'pass' and we will move on. Please do not
>
> provide names of those known personally to you. You may say 'my mum, my
>
> friend, my boss, etc.' and names of places and publicly known figures are fine,
>
> but please do not include any personally identifying information such as names or
>
> online handles in your responses. If you say anything that I feel indicates you are
>
> at risk of harming yourself or others, I will have to breach confidentiality,
>
> however, anything else you say is confidential, including anything related to petty
>
> criminal history. For your privacy, this interview will be audio recorded and later
>
> transcribed for analysis. Feel free to ask any questions throughout, and please
>
> remember that you're free to end participation at any time, for any reason, without
>
> question or penalty. Do you have any questions before we start? Are you ready?
>
> May I record this?
>
> ….
>
> We've reached the end of the interview. Are there any questions that you would
>
> like to return to? Is there anything you would like to change or add to your
>
> responses, or any additional information you would like to provide?"

All participants completed a post hoc questionnaire via a Qualtrics link, which included the same questions in Experiment 2 and 3. As in Experiment 3, I ensured that receiving interviewer feedback did not affect liking the interviewer. Furthermore, as Experiment 2 found an effect for trust, I ensured that the two groups did not differ in terms of trusting the interviewer. Again, to ensure interviewer consistency across conditions, I took a measure of interviewer consideration and appropriateness of pace. Groups were also asked to report their level of perceived interviewer familiarity and knowledge.

Finally, all interviewees completed the HEXACO in order to explore the extent to which HEXACO traits were correlated of self-disclosure variables. Upon completing the post-hoc questionnaire, the interviewees were thanked, debrief, and given the opportunity to ask questions. They were emailed a debrief form and sent a monetary voucher. Referees were emailed a thank you note, a debrief form, and a monetary voucher.

6.2.5   Transcript coding

A research assistant blind to the purpose of the experiment transcribed about 35 of the interviews and I transcribed what remained. I discerned question endorsements and coded all interviews for details using M-ACID. Transcripts were blinded by my thesis supervisor (KL) and distributed in a counterbalanced fashion to the research assistant, who discerned question endorsements and coded details of 16 (21.3%) of the blinded interviews. Interrater agreement was assessed at four stages: (1) whether or not a question was endorsed ($\kappa = .90$); (2) whether or not a response contained relevant codable details ($\kappa = .80$); (3) whether or not the details in the response (those agreed upon from Stage 2) were relevant to the question asked ($\kappa = .85$); and (4)

the specific type of detail (affective, external, internal, contextual) in the relevant responses ($\kappa =$

.85). Kappa values suggested good interrater agreement.

6.3   Results

Table 6.1

Number of Participants and Percentage of Sample who Endorsed the STS-V2 Pre-screening

Questions and STQ-V3-R Interview Questions

Question	STS-V2 Participant Endorsements	STQ-V3-R Participant Endorsements
	$n = 75$ (%)	$n = 75$ (%)
Susceptibility to Pressure		
1. Have your political beliefs been influenced by individuals or groups you have encountered online?	32 (42.7%)	39 (52.0%)
2. Have you ever chatted online or messaged over an app about your involvement in illegal activity?	19 (25.3%)	28 (37.3%)
3. Have you ever felt the need to conceal important aspects of your identity from people close to you?	31 (41.3%)	50 (66.7%)
4. Have you ever said, shared, or posted opinions online that others might consider racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise intolerant?	22 (29.3%)	23 (30.7%)
5. Have you ever been dissatisfied with your body?	72 (96.0%)	72 (96.0%)
6. Have you ever destroyed a meaningful or expensive item out of anger?	23 (30.7%)	27 (36.0%)
7. Have you ever experienced any mental health or psychological issues?	58 (77.3%)	60 (80.0%)
8. Have you ever compromised your values in order to please someone, other than in a professional capacity, such as school or work?	41 (54.7%)	55 (73.3%)
Affiliations		
9. Do you personally know anyone who has been involved in a gang or organised crime?	19 (25.3%)	25 (33.3%)

10. Do you know anyone who has travelled abroad to support a non-peaceful action, not including military?	7 (9.3%)	8 (10.7%)
11. Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members *regularly* engaged in criminal behaviour?	23 (30.7%)	41 (54.7%)
12. Have any of your romantic partners, friends, or family members spent time in prison?	14 (18.7%)	19 (25.3%)
13. Do you know anyone who has links to individuals or organisations that might be perceived as extremist?	5 (6.7%)	12 (16.0%)

Avoidance of Online Identifiability

14. Have you ever conducted online transactions with digital or virtual currencies, such as Bitcoins?	4 (5.3%)	4 (5.3%)
15. Do you have any fake profiles, aliases, or handles that are associated with your online activity, including for social media and gaming accounts (including not using your real name when registering for accounts)?	26 (34.7%)	42 (56.0%)
16. Have you ever misrepresented personal information about yourself when communicating with an individual or group online?	23 (30.7%)	27 (36.0%)
17. Have you ever used technology which masks your identification online, such as The Onion Router (TOR) or Virtual Private Networks (VPN)?	13 (17.3%)	25 (33.3%)

Dishonesty

18. Have you ever used illegal streaming or downloading services?	55 (73.3%)	59 (78.7%)
19. Have you ever disclosed a secret you promised not to tell?	57 (76.0%)	58 (77.3%)
20. Have you ever skipped out on paying for a service, such as the train, a salon, restaurant, or taxi?	40 (53.3%)	51 (68.0%)
21. Have you ever pirated software?	22 (29.3%)	26 (34.7%)
22. Have you ever shoplifted?	26 (34.7%)	31 (41.3%)
23. Have you ever cheated on academic work, including both exams and plagiarising, from upper school onward?	12 (16.0%)	30 (40.0%)
24. Have you ever stolen from an employer?	11 (14.7%)	27 (36.0%)
25. Have you ever cheated on a partner?	17 (22.7%)	17 (22.7%)

Financial Imprudence

26. Have you ever gone into overdraft?	43 (57.3%)	48 (64.0%)
27. Have you ever maxed out a credit card?	12 (16.0%)	14 (18.7%)

28. Have you ever purchased a product and then attempted to return or sell it because you could not afford it?	24 (32.0%)	17 (22.7%)
29. Have you ever gambled?	36 (48.0%)	46 (61.3%)
30. Have you ever been unable to pay a bill?	16 (21.3%)	31 (41.3%)
31. Have you ever accumulated excessive debt?	10 (13.3%)	32 (42.7%)

Formal Reprimands

32. Have online administrators ever banned your access to a site or deleted your posts or comments?	11 (14.7%)	23 (30.7%)
33. Have you ever received a formal reprimand for violating rules at school or university, such as detentions, formal hearings, suspensions, or expulsions?	23 (30.7%)	45 (60.0%)
34. Have you ever been reprimanded at work due to violating the rules?	3 (4.0%)	22 (29.3%)
35. Have you ever left a job without giving a proper two-week notice?	14 (18.7%)	20 (26.7%)
36. Have you ever received any warnings or cautions from law enforcement, excluding minor traffic violations?	5 (6.7%)	7 (9.3%)
37. Have you ever been fired or asked to leave a job?	13 (17.3%)	13 (17.3%)
38. Have you ever been arrested?	4 (5.3%)	5 (6.7%)

Substance Use

39. Has drinking alcohol ever caused you problems?	22 (29.3%)	48 (64.0%)
40. Have you ever used marijuana?	45 (60.0%)	45 (60.0%)
41. Have you ever used other illicit drugs, such as poppers, ketamine, mushrooms, cocaine, amphetamines, MDMA, PCP, LSD, or opiates?	29 (38.7%)	32 (42.7%)
42. Have you ever missed school, work, or family obligations due to using alcohol or drugs?	21 (28.0%)	29 (38.7%)
43. Have you ever attended school or work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	26 (34.7%)	37 (49.3%)
44. Have you ever *habitually* used any addictive substances, such as drugs or alcohol?	17 (22.7%)	32 (42.7%)
45. Have you ever operated machinery, such as a bicycle or vehicle, whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs?	14 (18.7%)	24 (32.0%)

Note. The STQ-V3-R endorsements indicate those responses to the open-ended interview analogue. Items 1, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 32, 34, 36, 37, 38, and 42 are conceptually based on the NSV002 Developed Vetting Questionnaire. Items 2, 3, 4, 6, and 35 are conceptually based on the Antisocial Process Screening Device (Frick & Hare, 2001). Items 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12 are conceptually based on Gardner et al. (2007) investigation of self-regulation within a deviant peer context. Items 18, 20, 24, 25, 33, and 45 are adapted from Mattos et al. (2017)'s study on self-

disclosure of transgressions. Items 19, 23, 29, and 39 are adapted from the Domain Specific Risk Scale (Blais & Weber, 2006). Items 21 and 22 are adapted from Illegal Behavior Checklist (McCoy & Edens, 2006). Items 40, 41, 43, and 44 are adapted from the Deviant Behavior Variety Scale (Sanches et al., 2016). Items 26, 27, 28, 30, and 31 are based on the NSV003 Financial Questionnaire.

6.3.1   Pre-screening check

First, I carried out independent samples t-tests to check whether the Control and Nominator groups differed with regard to pre-screening questions endorsed, the consistency of their responses, and their feelings toward the interviewer, as these outcomes may have affected the self-disclosure variables of interest. Table 6.2 reports the relevant means and standard deviations for the four questions relating to feelings toward the interviewer. Independent samples t-tests determined that the Nominator group endorsed significantly more pre-screening questions than the Control group $t(73) = -2.33$, $p = .022$, $d = 0.53$, 95% CI [0.08, 1.00]. Further, the Nominator group endorsed questions with significantly greater inconsistency compared to the Control group, $t(73) = -2.86$, $p = .006$, $d = 0.66$, 95% CI [0.19, 1.12]. No group differences were found for liking the interviewer, $t(73) = 0.06$, $p = .953$, $d = 0.02$, trusting the interviewer, $t(73) = -1.02$, $p = .310$, $d = 0.23$, finding the interviewer considerate, $t(73) = 0.38$, $p = .707$, $d = 0.08$, nor for feeling that the interview was conducted at an appropriate pace, $t(73) = -1.44$, $p = .155$, $d = 0.33$.

Table 6.2

Means and Standard Deviations of Feelings toward the Interviewer

		Liking		Trust		Consideration		Pace	
Condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Control	38	5.45	1.06	5.34	1.15	5.84	1.00	6.18	0.83
Nominator	37	5.43	1.14	5.59	0.99	5.76	0.96	6.43	0.65
Total	75	5.44	1.09	5.47	1.07	5.80	0.97	6.31	0.75

6.3.2 Hypothesis tests

Self-disclosure (H1). Table 6.3 displays the group means for each of the self-disclosure measures. I ran two independent samples *t*-tests to test whether Nominator interviewees endorsed more questions (H1a) and disclosed more details (H1b) than Control group interviewees. The Nominator group endorsed more questions during the interview than the Control group, $t(73) = -2.68$, $p = .009$, $d = 0.61$, 95%CI [0.15, 1.08], however, they did not disclose more details than the Control group, $t(73) = -1.74$, $p = .085$, $d = 0.40$, 95%CI [0.06, 0.86].

I next conducted a one-way ANCOVA on each of the hypothesized outcome measures using pre-screening endorsements as a covariate. After adjusting for the pre-screening endorsements, there were no longer group differences for interview questions endorsed, $F(1,72) = 1.72$, $p = .193$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, and the effect of group assignment on details disclosed during the interview remained non-significant, $F(1,72) = 0.08$, $p = .780$, $\eta_p^2 = .001$. Thus, I did not find support for H1a nor H1b.

Table 6.3

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-Screening Questions Endorsed, Interview Questions

Endorsed, Inconsistent Responses, and Details Disclosed

Condition	n	Pre-screening Endorsements		Interview Endorsements		Inconsistent Responses		Details Disclosed	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Nominator	37	15.95	6.75	21.27	7.14	10.08	4.80	372.51	244.97
Control	38	12.37	6.52	16.82	7.26	7.13	4.11	282.03	202.92
Total	75	14.13	6.83	19.01	7.50	8.59	4.67	326.67	227.72

Relationship Length and Closeness (H2-H5). In contrast to H2a's expectation, length of relationship was not associated with the number of interview questions endorsed $r(35) = .15$, $p = .376$. In support of H2b, length of relationship was positively associated with the number of details disclosed, $r(35) = .40$, $p = .014$. The IOS and URCS measures were strongly positively associated, $r_s(35) = .61$, $p < .001$. Against expectations for both H3a and H3b, relationship length was significantly negatively associated with both the IOS, ($r_s(35) = -.45$, $p = .006$), and the URCS ($r_s(35) = -.47$, $p = .003$). It was thus perhaps unsurprising to find the IOS was unrelated to both interview questions endorsed (H4a; $r_s(35) = .03$, $p = .881$) and unrelated to details disclosed (H4b; $r_s(35) = -.31$, $p = .063$), and the URCS was unrelated to both interview questions endorsed (H5a; $r_s(35) = -.09$, $p = .583$) and details disclosed (H5b; $r_s(35) = -.15$, $p = .376$).

Perceived Interviewer Familiarity and Knowledge (H6-H8b). Consistent with the hypotheses, interviewees who received feedback perceived the interviewer as significantly more familiar with them, $t(73) = -2.30$, $p = .024$, $d = 0.53$, 95% CI [0.06, 0.99], and knowledgeable about them, $t(73) = -3.07$, $p = .003$, $d = 0.70$, 95% CI [0.24, 1.17], than those who did not. The

effect remained significant after controlling for pre-screening endorsements for both perceived familiarity, $F(1, 72) = 8.37$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, 90% CI = [0.02, 0.22], $R^2 = .13$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .11$, and perceived knowledge, $F(1, 72) = 12.23$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$, $R^2 = .16$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .13$. Thus, H6a and H6b were supported.

To examine hypothesis H7a-H8b, I ran a series of Pearson product-moment correlations. Perceived interviewer familiarity was unrelated to interview questions endorsed, (H7a; $r(73) = .45$, $p = -.088$), and unrelated to details disclosed (H7b; $r(73) = .36$, $p = -.108$). Perceived interviewer knowledge was unrelated to interview questions endorsed (H8a; $r(73) = .53$, $p = .073$) and unrelated to details disclosed (H8b; $r(73) = .03$, $p = .808$). Because the Nominator group responded with greater inconsistency compared to the Control group, I examined whether the perception of interviewer familiarity and knowledge were correlated with inconsistent responding. Inconsistent responding was unrelated to perceived familiarity, ($r(73) = .41$, $p = .097$), however, it was significantly positively related to the perception of interviewer knowledge ($r(73) = .26$, $p = .024$).

6.3.3   Exploratory Analyses

Relationship types. Nominators who chose caregivers ($Mdn = 21$), siblings ($Mdn = 21$), and friends ($Mdn = 21$) to serve as their Referee tended to be younger than those who chose partners ($Mdn = 31$). Table 6.4 gives the means and standard deviations of self-disclosure outcomes for the different nominator-referee relationships. To determine whether the nominator-referee relationship type had an impact on self-disclosure outcomes, I carried out a series of one-way between-subjects ANOVAs for the Nominator interviewees, using Referee type as the predictor variable and self-disclosure type as the respective outcome variables. No significant

group differences were found. The means and standard deviations of self-disclosure outcomes

for the different nominator-referee relationships are reported in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4

Means and Standard Deviations of Self-Disclosure Variables for Nominator Interviewees, as

Determined by their Relationship to their Referee

Referee	n	Pre-screening endorsements		Interview endorsements		Inconsistent responding		Details disclosed	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Friend	16	15.63	3.95	20.88	6.23	10.88	4.94	315.31	205.02
Partner	9	13.22	7.89	18.89	7.79	8.33	3.91	303.67	149.32
Sibling	7	21.14	9.16	24.57	7.28	8.57	2.30	502.29	333.48
Caregiver	5	14.60	5.94	22.20	8.93	12.80	7.40	497.80	313.44
Total	37	15.95	6.75	21.27	7.14	10.08	4.80	372.51	244.97

Personality traits and self-Disclosure associations. Spearman rho correlations were

carried out to examine the relationship between self-reported (HEXACO) personality traits and

self-disclosure outcomes during the interview.[41] Openness to Experience was significantly

positively associated with endorsing interview questions ($r_s(73) = .35, p = .002$) and disclosing

details ($r_s(73) = .33, p = .004$). No other associations were found between self-reported

HEXACO meta-traits and self-disclosure.

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[41] Bonferroni-adjusted $p \leq .004$.

Because Honesty-Humility, and specifically its subscale, Fairness, is strongly associated with workplace deviance (Pletzer et al., 2019; 2020), I examined the relationship between self-reported Honesty-Humility subscales and self-disclosure measures during the interview.[42] Self-reported Fairness was significantly negatively related to interview questions endorsed (r_s(73) = -.38, p = .001), but not details disclosed (r_s(73) = -.13, p = .254). Sincerity, Greed, and Modesty were not associated with the self-disclosure measures.

To examine the relationship between referee-reported meta-traits and Honesty-Humility subscales, I conducted the same analyses above using the HEXACO-O reports (n = 37) and found no associations with referee-reported personality traits and nominator self-disclosure.

6.4   Discussion

Experiment 4 sought to examine the effect of knowledge of referee feedback on interviewees' willingness to disclose. As predicted, participants aware that the interviewer would have referee feedback endorsed more interview questions and disclose more details than the control group. However, after controlling for pre-screening endorsements, the two groups did not significantly differ with regard to the interview questions they endorsed nor the number of details they disclosed. This suggests the effect of referee reporting rests in the 'anticipation' of the knowledge the report provides rather than the presentation of other-generated interviewer feedback within the interview. The distinction between anticipation and presentation is interesting and not something considered in prior investigative interviewing (i.e., Scharff technique) work that underpinned the hypotheses of this Experiment. It is more consistent with the notion of a bogus pipeline in the sense that participants are anticipating the referee will

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[42] Bonferroni-adjusted $p \leq .006$.

disclose information about them. Indeed, the length of nominator-referee relationship was positively associated with details disclosed (H2) and perceived interviewer knowledge was positively associated with inconsistent responding, suggesting that referees' knowledge had some influence on interviewees' responses.

Contrary to expectations, relationship length was negatively associated with both measures of relationship closeness. This is inconsistent with past research, which has indicated that closeness measures are positively associated with relationship length (e.g., Gächter et al., 2015). One explanation for this unexpected finding may be attributable to sampling error resulting from a disproportionately high number of younger participants. Indeed, Gächter et al. (2015) noted that IOS ratings are variable with the type of relationship, and that older individuals tend to more often choose a romantic partner as their "close person" whereas younger folks tend to choose friends with whom they have weaker bonds and shorter relationship lengths. Whilst I aimed to recruit a community-based sample (and, as in Experiment 2, I did not exclude students), many participants were students and student-aged (Mdn_{age} = 21 years).[43] Given that both the IOS and URCS measures were negatively associated with relationship length, it is unsurprising that the URCS and IOS were unrelated to interview questions endorsed (H4a and H5a) and unrelated to details disclosed (H4b and H5b).

The illusion of knowing it all affected how interviewees perceived the interviewer. Consistent with the hypotheses, those in the nominator group perceived the interviewed as more familiar (H6a) with them and more knowledgeable (H6b) about them compared to control interviewees. However, the manipulation was not effective because the perception of interviewer familiarity and knowledge were not associated with self-disclosure measures (H7a-H8b). It is

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[43] Experiment 2's community sample had a median age of 32 years.

possible that although the illusion of knowing it all did not produce the intended effect (i.e., it did not result in increased self-disclosure in nominator interviewees compared to the control), it may have produced an unintended effect via the introduction of demand characteristics or social desirability for specific nominators on the basis of their choice of referee. Again, I expect the nominator-referee relationship type and possibly the relationship length to partially account for this finding. Future studies should compare the effects of interviewer feedback generated from different sources (e.g., parent, colleague, friend, partner) on self-disclosure outcomes and response consistency.

Similar to Experiment 3's findings, there were no reported differences in feelings toward the interviewer between conditions. Thus, the interviewee's liking and trust for the interviewer was likely unaffected by the presentation of the referee account. Finally, self-reported Openness to Experience was positively associated with both the endorsement of interview questions and details disclosed. Further, self-reported (but not referee-reported) Fairness was negatively associated with question endorsements, which echoes findings of recent research concerning the relationship between this trait and workplace risk (Pletzer et al., 2019; 2020), and demonstrates the utility of the HEXACO in candidate selection research.

6.4.1 *Limitations*

This experiment had several limitations, namely, with regard to sampling. The community sample was younger than expected, which likely influenced nominators' choice of referee to include parents, and friends and partners who are not as well known to them (compared to older participants, who might more often choose a longstanding friend or partner). Second, the illusion of knowing it all was mentioned verbally via VMI in this experiment,

whereas in Experiment 3, the alleged "profile" was both mentioned verbally and visible to the interviewee (face-to-face) as a piece of paper on a clipboard. This difference in medium and salience of the manipulation could have had implications on the plausibility of the illusion, its relevance to participation, or both.

Third, I cannot exclude the possibility that findings for group differences in questions endorsed and details disclosed may have been affected by attrition bias, as group differences in pre-screening endorsements may have disproportionately impacted group differences in self-disclosure measures during the interview. The experimental group's higher yield of pre-screening endorsements may have resulted from disproportionate attrition, as 69.70% of the 33 participants who failed to complete the experiment were assigned to be nominators. Amongst the various reasons for not completing the experiment, those assigned to the nominator group more often failed to reply to requests to complete the experiment ($n = 12$; control: $n = 5$) and more often did not cooperate with instructions ($n = 4$; control: $n = 0$) relative to controls. Because ethical concerns necessitated data destruction for those who did not complete the experiment, I was unable to include the 33 incomplete data sets in the analysis when comparing pre-screening endorsements between controls and nominators. I suspect that low motivation to engage with the experiment perhaps resulted in an overrepresentation of participants who were committed and engaged in the nominator group (i.e., participants likely to endorse the pre-screening questions and/or interview questions) relative to the control group. Disproportionately higher attrition in the nominator group could be due to the perception of increased time requirement, more work without greater reward, discomfort with aspects related to involving a referee in their participation, or a combination of these reasons. Suspected attrition bias poses a threat to internal

validity and should be counteracted in future studies by offering compensation proportionate to perceived effort and emotional labour.

6.4.2   Conclusion

The purpose of this experiment was to examine the usefulness of personalised referee-generated personality feedback in interviews which attempt to elicit risk-related self-disclosure. Nominators reported the interviewer as more familiar with them and more knowledgeable about them compared to the control group, however, these perceptions were not associated with increases in self-disclosure during the interview. Thus, the illusion of knowing it all in the form of interviewer feedback of referee-reported personality traits was unsuccessful at generating an increase in self-disclosure. Whilst relationship closeness was not associated with self-disclosure measures, the findings suggest that length of candidate-referee relationships may positively be associated with details disclosed during a vetting interview. This experiment is the first to apply the illusion of knowing it all as it relates to other-generated personality feedback. By adopting the illusion in a vetting-like paradigm, this experiment offers further insight to the use and presentation of the referee report in the vetting interview.

Chapter 7   General Discussion

Vetting interviews remain a key component of good candidate selection for security-sensitive employment. However, institutional demands mean that vetting organisations would benefit from screening methods that expedite the vetting process without compromising the quality of information secured (NAO, 2018). The aim of this thesis was to explore the effect of context (i.e., location and medium; Chapters 3 and 4), and sources of interviewer feedback (i.e., self- and other-generated; Chapters 5 and 6, respectively) on self-disclosure of risk-relevant information. It created and employed novel interviewing paradigms akin to a vetting interview process and adapted an existing coding scheme to identify the disclosure of unique details (Chapter 2). Implications of this research for security organisations and recommendations for future research are discussed in this chapter.

7.1   Summary of Findings from the Context Experiments

Similar to Jenner and Myers' (2019) findings on student veterans and maternal deciders, Experiment 1 found that interviewing in public yielded limited self-disclosure of sensitive topics as compared to more private spaces and also that superior self-disclosure occurred in home-based conditions (i.e., virtual and face-to-face). Experiment 2's findings suggest that self-disclosure resulting from face-to-face interviewing in different locations may be moderated by the interview medium, with face-to-face interviewing resulting in greater reporting of details in the interviewee's home. I proposed that these findings are due in part to an increased perception of privacy afforded by home-based interviewing. Whilst Experiment 2 found that home-based interviewees reported higher levels of place attachment, place attachment did not mediate the relationship between interview location and self-disclosure outcomes. As concluded by Scannell and Gifford (2017b) control is likely an antecedent to place attachment rather than a need it

satisfies. In other words, the feelings of control associated with place attachment likely also underpin the mechanism associated with increased self-disclosure in the home. Indeed, increased control can facilitate opportunities for self-expansion and can lead to measures to ensure greater privacy. The interaction effect suggests that face-to-face interviewing is heavily impacted by interview location. Whilst Experiment 1 found no differences in self-disclosure between (virtual and face-to-face) groups who interviewed at home, Experiment 2 found that face-to-face home interviews yielded superior question endorsements and details disclosed compared to virtual interviews. It is possible that the notion of future interdependence may have paradoxically adversely affected levels of trust (Gerpott et al., 2018) in student interviewees, such that home-based face-to-face self-disclosure was suppressed in Experiment 1.

Both Experiments 1 and 2 showed evidence for greater endorsement of interview questions in face-to-face home interviews as compared to face-to-face office interviews. Both Experiments 1 and 2 provide weak evidence for superior detail disclosure in home-based virtual interviews as compared to face-to-face office interviews. Further research is needed to understand this effect and whether it may be related to interview content or other factors such as trust and perceived privacy. Whilst boundary control is heavily affected within a given location, situational factors related to disclosing details may also be differentially affected *by* certain locations, such that virtual interviewing may influence the amount of disclosure for certain types of content when used in specific locations.

The home is likely to offer unique psychological benefits specific to vetting interviewees beyond the supportive aspects related to perception of privacy (e.g., boundary control) and place attachment (e.g., security and comfort). For example, Hoogesteyn et al. (2020) found that eyewitness interviewees who interviewed face-to-face at home reported greater feelings of

control and comfort compared to those who interviewed face-to-face at an office, yet there was

no evidence that home interviewing increased quantity or quality of information disclosed.

Similarly, Experiment 2 found that face-to-face office interviewees trusted the interviewer

significantly less than face-to-face home interviewees, yet there was no evidence for a direct

relationship between trust and self-disclosure outcomes. Taken together, the contextual

manipulation experiments (Experiments 1 and 2) suggest that interviewees' decisions to self-

disclose sensitive information are likely influenced by a combination of situationally generated

factors such as boundary control, perceived privacy, trust, and self-expansion motives (Damen et

al., 2020; Kashdan et al., 2011; Teutsch et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2020). Further, as vetting-like

interviews require divulging sensitive information concerning lifestyle and behavioural self-

narrative, it is likely that self-expansion motives are more readily affected by the personalisation

of interview space in vetting-like interviews, as opposed to other types of interviews (e.g., Bang

et al., 2019; Hoogesteyn et al., 2020). In other words, I propose that, in addition to the effects of

interview context and situational factors on willingness to self-disclose, the purpose of the

interview and specific topic(s) discussed are central to influencing a person's boundary

negotiation process, and thus, self-disclosure. Future research should work to uncover situational

drivers of perceived privacy and trust (e.g., Damen et al., 2020; Gerpott et al., 2018; Teutsch et

al., 2018), and how these aspects affect – and are affected by – increasingly blurred boundaries

between the home and virtual worlds (Zhao, 2020).

7.2   Summary of Findings from Interviewer Feedback Experiments

The interviewer feedback experiments examined the usefulness of personalised trait and

mobile activity feedback in interviews which attempt to elicit risk-related self-disclosure.

Although the illusion of knowing it all has already been applied in studies which examined

disclosures in suspect and witness interviews (May & Granhag, 2016a; Oleszkiewicz et al.,

2014), this tactic has not yet been applied in research which examines disclosures relevant for

security vetting interviews. In Experiment 3, the perception of interviewer knowledge was only

moderately associated with the endorsement of interview questions, such that receiving

interviewer feedback was weakly indirectly related to the endorsement of interview questions,

through the perception of interviewer knowledge. Experiment 4 did not demonstrate a causal

relationship between the perception of interviewer knowledge and self-disclosure measures. Both

Experiment 3 and 4 suggest that an expectation related to the use of interviewee information may

have increased self-disclosure in experimental groups relative to the control group. This finding

could suggest that knowledge the interviewer holds about the interviewee is related to self-

disclosure outcomes, but perhaps because of the interviewee's 'expectation' rather than the

presentation or delivery of information known by the interviewer. As identified in Chapter 6, this

distinction has not been considered in prior work because advanced warning of the knowledge

would not work within the investigative interviewing context. However, it is a plausible tactic

within vetting in the same way as it is used in other investigative environments. For example,

advertised the existence of police patrols having the same effect as the patrols themselves

(Sherman & Weisburd, 1995). To explore this opportunity further, future studies could examine

different ways to establish a perception of interviewer knowledge, such as shared social

networks, shared geographical origin, perceived privacy, or trust. Finally, differences in

outcomes resulting from the illusion of knowing it all manipulations in Experiment 3 (face-to-

face) and 4 (virtual) suggest that interview medium, plausibility, and significance of the

manipulation are important aspects to consider when applying this tactic. The interviewer

feedback experiments demonstrated the relationship between suggested emergent profiling,

interviewee feelings of being "known," and interviewee disclosures of self-threatening

information.

7.3 **Limitations**

7.3.1 *Methodological limitations*

    Researcher bias. As I conducted this research, acting in the capacity of both interviewer

and researcher, there is a possibility of implicit researcher bias, particularly because I was not

blind to the experimental conditions. In addition, as I created the interview schedule and coded

the interviews, Stage 2 of coding for details (determining relevance of information) was an

inherently subjective task. Indeed, although the interview transcripts were blinded, salient

information in the transcripts sometimes served as a reminder to the participant and condition.

To be clear, I did mitigate the possibility of researcher bias by repeating the extensive ACID

training before coding for each experiment, engaging in discussions with supervisors about

uncertainty regarding relevance, coding blinded interview transcripts, conducting interrater

reliability analyses, and including a post-hoc questionnaire which asked participants to evaluate

the consistency of my behaviour (e.g., interviewer pace and consideration). Whilst these steps

minimised the impact of bias in the experimental process, it did not eliminate it.

    Self-selection bias. Due to the sensitive nature of these experiments, they suffer a degree

of self-selection bias, especially the multi-part Experiments (2, 3, and 4). The interviewer

feedback experiments may have been especially prone to self-selection bias, as experimental

group assignments clearly necessitated more effort compared to the control groups. Additionally,

due to the sensitive nature of the research and need for maintaining trusting community relations,

data were destroyed for participants who completed pre-screenings but did not complete

participation, which limited analyses. Further, the motivational state of participants may have

played a role in self-selection bias. As noted earlier, monetary incentive was expected to be a

large motivation for participating. Absent the real-world motivation to participate in vetting

interviews (i.e., to procure employment), the generalizability of findings is limited.

   Lack of accuracy of self-disclosure. The experiments were designed in a manner which

does not establish a ground truth for participant responses (i.e., the veracity of participant

responses is unknown). The experiments were intentionally designed in this manner for a few

reasons: 1) to increase ecological validity, 2) to simplify instruction of participant responses, 3)

to examine the effect of context on overall endorsement of items and disclosure of any relevant

details for given questions or topics, and 4) it is ethically dubious and impossible to establish

ground truth. Nonetheless, a lack of ground truth is analogous to a real-life vetting scenario in

that interviewers cannot verify nor disconfirm all information disclosed. As question

endorsements represent a clear indicator of willingness to disclose and because more detailed

responses are 1) more likely to be truthful (Colwell et al., 2007), and 2) provide greater

opportunity to elicit cues to deceit if they exist (Leal et al., 2013), group differences in

forthcomingness represents a robust proxy for disclosure accuracy.

   Interview schedules. Questions asked during the interviews were unverifiable in terms of

whether they are used in UK vetting interviews. Crucially, the interview questions were

structured and did not reflect the adaptability that a vetting officer may show in their questioning.

Indeed, because candidates' life histories are unique, it is reasonable to assume that vetting

interviews are semi-structured and tailored to the interviewee to an extent. Thus, even if I had

access to specific questions that are used in UKSV interviews, it would be implausible to

conduct a meaningful experiment which included follow-up questions and sub-questions, considering both time restrictions and ethical concerns.

Linguistic. There may have been unintended cultural and linguistic misunderstandings of interview questions and interpretation of responses, especially in the multicultural student samples (Experiments 1 and 3). As proficiency in English was necessary for meaningful engagement in the study and "proficiency" is subjective, the experiments required participants to be fluent in spoken English. However, I did not challenge participants who demonstrably did not meet this requirement during the experiments. Nonetheless, the number of misinterpreted questions cannot be ascertained from these experiments, nor is it known how many questions were falsely denied (and thus, failed to yield details) based on cultural or linguistic misunderstandings. In addition, there is reason to believe that cultural differences in the way language is processed and interpreted is rooted in neural foundations, and virtual communication may exasperate these differences due to a poverty of contextual cues.

Sampling characteristics. Participants in these studies may not have similar characteristics to people who undergo pre-employment security vetting as some verifiable disclosures (e.g., arrest record) which would have required disclosure on the UKSV's screening form (NSV002) may have disqualified some of them from further vetting (MOD, 2018b). Throughout each experiment, several participants admitted behaviour which would have not only led to the denial of a security clearance (e.g., histories of arrests and job terminations, recent addictions, persistent financial difficulties, severe mental health issues), but would have also likely barred them from interview invitation or dissuaded them from undergoing vetting in the first place. This issue was more pronounced in Experiments 2 and 4, as the community-based samples reported more colourful histories. Further, Experiment 2's sample may not accurately

represent those who undergo vetting, as the combined participant age groups of 18-20 and 55+ comprised 33.6% of the total sample. On a related note, balancing ethical concerns by informing participants of the nature of the experiments may have produced demand characteristics. For example, after participating, one participant mentioned they had seen the study's flyer (which included the example interview question: *"Have you ever shoplifted before?"*) and said, *"I saw that, and I knew I could help you with your research because I shoplift a lot and I've been caught before."*

7.4   Practical Implications

7.4.1   *The space of the vetting interview*

Due to the persisting global coronavirus pandemic, there is an increasing interest in videoconferencing for sensitive data collection and policymaking (Gibert & Angerri, 2021) and as a means of employee recruitment and engagement (Kerawala et al., 2020; Riva et al., 2020), as it has largely eclipsed face-to-face interaction across hundreds of professions. With the increased use of videoconferencing comes a re-negotiation of traditional privacy boundaries and thus, self-disclosure across organisations. Further, the pandemic has led to a relaxation of digital boundaries. Operating on the premise that "space" serves as "place," Experiment 1 included Skype as an interviewing condition, without participant assignment to location. Experiment 1 demonstrated that when individuals are given the option to interview virtually, they choose to do so from their homes, which likely results from needs for convenience and the perception of privacy. While Experiment 1 demonstrated no difference in the effects of face-to-face versus virtual interviews, Experiment 2 demonstrated that this effect was not limited to the Home; office-based virtual interviews yielded similar levels of self-disclosure as face-to-face Office

interviews. Virtual officed-based interviews are thus, a useful alternative to face-to-face, as both contexts result in similar levels of self-disclosure. Experiment 2's findings suggest that when interviewing at Home, face-to-face interviewing is preferred. Further, as main effects were found for interview location, this finding suggests that substituting the interview medium (i.e., face-to-face v. virtual) is likely to result in smaller differences in self-disclosure outcomes as opposed to substituting a categorically different type of location (e.g., Home, Office, Public). When the goal of the interview is to increase sensitive information provision, and the desirable interview context (location + medium) is not possible, interviewers should always attempt to maintain similar or greater level of privacy perception (i.e., as to not adversely affect trust) to the originally planned interview.

Despite the lower yield of information compared to home-based interviewing, office-based virtual interviews may be preferred when there is concern over hiring bias/procedural fairness, candidate confidentiality and privacy (from both home co-dwellers and technical interference), and identity verification (e.g., collection of biometric data). Virtual interviews may not only provide a cost- and time-saving alternative for vetting agencies, but it could also pose as a social justice equaliser by reducing social context cues which drive interviewer bias and can affect interviewee self-disclosure via perceived status distance (Phillips et al., 2009). Further, virtual interviews are part of the increasing evolution of human-computer technological interface, which will undoubtedly include artificial intelligence feedback in the years to come.

7.4.2   *Interpersonal dynamics*

Use of interviewee information. As suggested previously, emergent information gathering tactics such as cybervetting are becoming commonplace in recruiting and hiring

(Gruzd & Jacobson, 2020). The coronavirus pandemic has led context-aware mobile application

users to relax their privacy preferences (Alawadhi & Hussain, 2021). Emergent information

gathering tactics such as cybervetting are often not disclosed by the hiring party, which can lead

to compromised trust between the candidate and employer (Stoughton et al., 2015), as people

have context-specific expectations of privacy (e.g., Teutsch et al., 2018; Jacobson & Gruzd,

2020). Nonetheless, the interviewee is typically aware of the types of questions to expect based

on information they have already shared, and they can plan and prepare their responses based on

these expectations.

Findings from Experiment 3 suggests that the illusion of knowing it all can effectively be

applied in a manner that may increase self-disclosure during the vetting interview. The findings

suggest that the knowledge the interviewer holds about the interviewee is related to self-

disclosure outcomes, but perhaps because of the interviewee's 'expectation' about its use rather

than the presentation or delivery of information known by the interviewer. As identified in

Chapter 6, this distinction has not been considered in prior work because advanced warning of

the knowledge would not work within the investigative interviewing context. However, the effect

of anticipated use of self-generated information on self-disclosure can be seen in other contexts

related to security sensitive employment and are sometimes detrimental to information

elicitation. For example, perceptions about the fear of being outed to superiors led to work-

blogging cessation among several UK police officers (Pedersen et al., 2014).

Despite current legal limits for information gathering, it is not a far-away notion that

psychographic profiling may (or already has) become commonplace (Bakir, 2020; Gruzd et al.,

2020), especially in high security agencies. Findings from Experiments 3 and 4 suggest that

interviewees are receptive to emergent production of analytical personality 'profiling' – both

self-generated and manufactured via a bogus pipeline mechanism. To explore the potential of examining this in a vetting context, future studies could examine different ways to establish a perception of interviewer knowledge, such as shared social networks, shared geographical origin, perceived privacy, or trust.

The interviewer feedback experiments demonstrated that whilst liking the interviewer was positively associated with the perception of interviewer familiarity, neither liking nor perceived familiarity were associated with self-disclosure outcomes. Crucially, experimental and control groups did not differ from one another in terms of liking the interviewer, suggesting that – despite an unanticipated use of information – the manner in which data were obtained and later presented in these experiments is unlikely to threaten rapport building in candidate selection interviews.

Perceived similarity and power maintenance. The UKSV (2021) website mentions that interviewees may request "someone of your own sex, age profile, or ethnic group." The experiments did not use a measure of perceived similarity, which may have helped explain racial differences in self-disclosure outcomes, given that perception of similarity is particularly high in race concordant Black dyads (Nazione et al., 2019) and perceived ethnic similarity bolsters trust (Street et al., 2008). There was a strong effect of race on self-disclosure outcomes in the multicultural student samples (Experiments 1 and 3), such that White interviewees disclosed significantly more (to the interviewer, who is White) than interviewees of Underrepresented Groups. The false consensus effect – or the tendency to appraise values, opinions and behaviours as normal, as explained by the similarity contingency model would help explain why perceived similarity may account for differential levels of interviewee disclosure. Similar to Thomson et al.'s (2018) meta-analytic findings that relational mobility drives self-disclosure decisions, my

findings suggest disclosure decisions in racially discordant pairs may result from a variety of

factors pointing to power maintenance and protection against stereotypes (e.g., Consedine et al.,

2007), which are perhaps regulated by the interview space and the expectation of knowledge.

The findings of this thesis confirm the utility of the UKSV's offer to assign an interviewer with

similar ethnic group. Future research should work to identify vetting topics and question types

prone to in-group and out-group stereotype threat among racially discordant and similar pairs.

7.5   Future research considerations

7.5.1   *Researcher reflexivity, empathy, and rapport*

Reflecting on my dual role of researcher and interviewer, I found that maintaining

consistency (i.e., neutral facial expression and no verbal feedback) in my responses to

disclosures was both unnatural and somewhat uncomfortable. There were moments that I wished

to provide empathic responses, especially to disclosures that I considered traumatic.

Additionally, there were moments that I had to consciously stop myself from mimicking the

interviewee, especially when they were smiling or frowning, and this was more difficult when

interviewing FtF. As previously implied, a lack of confirming feedback (e.g., neutral responses,

deflection, as opposed to reciprocation or validation) – especially toward disclosures considered

highly sensitive – is likely to have affected subsequent self-disclosure, and this is especially true

in virtual interviewing conditions, owing to the paucity of cues (Dai et al., 2016). Home-based

interviewing and providing personalised feedback can be viewed as methods of personalising the

interview. Personalising the interview implies relationship building and has been recently

identified as a key method under which rapport building behaviours are mapped (see Gabbert et

al., 2021). Future vetting interview studies may benefit from identifying effective rapport

building strategies, and addressing the role of interviewer empathy, especially as it relates to

question order.

7.5.2   Sampling and measurement methods

Population. Most crucially, future studies should consider using samples that accurately

reflect those who wish to undergo real life vetting, perhaps by recruiting participants who are

interested in sensitive employment, or those who hold security sensitive or public trust

professions (e.g., police officers, doctors). As consequentiality of disclosures posed another

major limitation, recruiting participants who are already hold sensitive employment would

increase the ecological validity of findings.

Social congruence. Although anecdotal, I recognised the dialect and shared a regional

accent with one participant who turned out to be a high self-discloser. Additionally, I anecdotally

suspect positive effects of acculturation on self-disclosure measures. As alluded to previously,

perceived effects of race on self-disclosure outcomes may have been better accounted for by

participants' individual feelings of perceived similarity and relational mobility (e.g., San Martin

et al., 2019; Yuki & Schug, 2020) which are more related to acculturation and conformity, as

opposed to demographic characteristics. That is, a reliable predictor of sensitive question

endorsement is the perceived social permissiveness of endorsing the question (e.g., Acquisti et

al., 2012; Näher & Krumpal, 2012), which may have suppressed responding in participants of

various cultural backgrounds. Future studies on risk-related sensitive self-disclosure should

examine effects of acculturation and unique social similarities (e.g., same first name, same field

of study, same accent) in vetting interviews. Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate

whether a desire for psychosocial congruence in the speaking partner – that is, the projective

identification of (real or imagined) similarity in social experiences, which are psychologically

meaningful for the interviewee (e.g., nostalgia for a specific place or time, stigmatised traits,

immigration, trauma, mental health issues) may affect a sense of perceived interviewer

familiarity and knowledge, and also a willingness to self-disclose.

VMI. With regard to potential cultural, linguistic, and neurological differences in

response styles, VMI studies could attempt to account for measures of interviewee attention and

stress, such as using eye-tracking or pulse wave (Giannakakis et al., 2017; Iuchi et al., 2020), as

these could help offer cues to the reliability of responses (Pavlov & Zlokazov, 2018). Future

studies should attempt to examine the role of private self-awareness or self-monitoring in VMI-

based vetting interviews, as these aspects are related to sensitive self-disclosure (e.g., Joinson,

2001; 2008; Croes et al., 2016; 2019).

M-ACID and consequential narrative. As the aim of the experiments were to provide

insight to how context and interviewer feedback affect self-disclosure, the truthfulness of

responses was less consequential. In other words, although participants did not have a strong

incentive to be forthcoming, they also did not have a strong incentive to fabricate detailed

information. Therefore, the vast majority of lies in these experiments were assumed to be false

denials and lies of omission – or failure to disclose relevant information. M-ACID demonstrated

strong internal consistency across experiments and its application was suited to account for

relative concealment (omission of coding irrelevant details) and equivocation (avoiding direct

responses). As these types of responses are antithetical to the desired forthcoming and detail-rich

responses of interest to vetting interviewers, the M-ACID coding system shows promise for

research application in other studies focused on consequential self-disclosure narratives, such as

clinical interviews, expert witness assessments, and medical or legal financial claims. More

research is needed to validate M-ACID for use in other interviewing research, perhaps in studies designed to include a standardised ground truth or verifiable information.

7.5.3   High disclosers

Candidates being vetted are unlikely to form deep lasting relationships with the individual carrying out the interview, as strained resources means that vetting services are often conducted by compartmentalised departments within an organisation or external contractors. Anecdotally, I noticed that individuals with concealable stigmatised traits (e.g., transgender, non-heterosexual, mental illness, legal issues) tended to be amongst the highest disclosers and composed the entirety of the few cases that were excluded from analysis due to extensive over-reporting. The motivation for those with concealable stigmatised traits to disclose at very high rates was unknown, but it is likely to be considered a cause (e.g., catharsis due to prolonged concealment) and/or consequence (e.g., comfort due to previous disclosure) of their concealable traits (e.g., one interviewee said, *"I never really get to talk to anyone about this stuff"*, and another said, *"I've talked about this to my therapist"*). In line with recent research on sensitive self-disclosure across different interview modes (e.g., Pickard et al., 2018), the findings in these experiments suggest that feelings related to vulnerability – that is, the perception of the level of control a person has over their environment or personal information – may be a crucial antecedent to willingness to self-disclose. Future research should examine specific aspects associated with very high disclosers and identify effective (vetting officer-interviewee) pairing strategies to help enable security organisations to meet their clearance processing targets.

7.6   Bridging the Gap between Intelligence and Research

One of the most difficult aspects in designing these experiments concerned the lack of available, up-to-date information concerning base rates of behaviours, and the determination and adaptation of specific questions in the STQ and its subsequent revisions. Owing to the restricted semi-structured nature of the interview schedules used in these experiments (and in real life vetting practices), the findings compliment recommendations set forth in Spilberg and Corey's (2017) psychological screening manual for California Peace Officers. They suggested that errors in judgment for candidate suitability result – at least in part – from psychologists (who serve as both interviewer/assessor and candidate suitability determinant in California) not receiving feedback from the hiring agency concerning their suitability determinations. Spilberg and Corey recommended that information assessors receive longitudinal follow-up on actual vetted security personnel "in order to assist in identifying indicators that may otherwise go undetected," (2017, p. 153), as they can interpersonally adapt their information-finding strategies accordingly. As vetting officers do not make suitability determinations (UKSV, 2021), they still serve as interviewer and thus, they are considered information assessors; adapting question content and style moment-to-moment, based on both interviewee response and knowledge of a base rate behaviours. Thus, although vetting officers are encouraged to remain as unbiased as possible, these experiments emphasise the importance of interviewer as an information assessor who must continually determine whether and when is appropriate to probe for further information (e.g., if question endorsement or elaboration is unclear), how and when to respond to disclosures (e.g., if failure to do so is expected to damage rapport), and how to respond to unexpected clarifying questions posed by the interviewee. Thus, it seems prudent that vetting officers receive feedback concerning the subsequent identification insiders, and specifically of those who commit low base

rate offences (e.g., sexual misconduct, stalking), as this feedback can assist in moment-to-moment crafting of appropriate follow up questions and protect against confirmatory bias.

Concerning the decision to use one interview medium over another, interviewers trained in narrative methods aimed at improving relationship quality will be more sensitive in everyday communication, and when given the opportunity, tend to prefer mediums that fit the social situation (Meissner, 2005). The UKSV's website mentions that interviews take place within reasonable travel to an interviewee's location, which could be a local hub, and in "exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to have [an] interview at [the interviewee's] home address" (2021). With the evolving global COVID-19 crisis, it is possible that VMI (e.g., within an office, at a local hub) may become standard for interviewees who travel to local hubs to interview. Whilst home-based VMIs have been shown to elicit a high degree of sensitive self-disclosure and could be touted as a time and money-saving solution, cybersecurity concerns may make this option less desirable. Nonetheless, in line with the findings of recent research (e.g., Jenner & Myers, 2019, Teutsch et al., 2018; Weiss et al., 2020), the adequate perception of privacy and a high degree of established trust between parties suggests little if any information loss for VMIs. Therefore, home-based VMI may be a desirable option for individuals who have established relationships with the interviewer if the situation does not pose undue risk to UKSV (e.g., low level security clearance, or topic(s) discussed are low risk). Further, as meeting a client in-person prior to beginning virtually-based treatment is considered ideal for both assessing risks and treatment needs (Kotsopoulou et al., 2015), it may also be preferred for aftercare procedures.

As retaining employee trust is a major issue pertinent to sustaining organisational security and mitigating insider threat, longitudinal studies on aftercare procedures within low stakes organisations might be a helpful means of establishing best practices for assigning information

gatherers. As a sense of familiarity is correlated with self-disclosure and Social Penetration Theory points to the importance of relationship building, it would be interesting to determine the value of continuing to use the same vetting officer in follow up interviews. Similarly, it would be interesting to explore whether specific life events warranting a 'change of circumstances' necessary for review (e.g., divorce, lawsuit defamation) might result in greater information in using a specialist trained (e.g., counsellor) in gathering information on the issue at hand.

7.7   Final Thoughts

Psychological research in vetting interviews can help increase information provision and ultimately assist with organisational decision-making and risk deterrence. Standardising pre-employment vetting procedures introduces unique challenges for intelligence and security agencies. Whilst the advent of new technologies may increase the reliability of source reporting and thus, improve the overall verifiability of information, the evolution of technological, legal, and societal norms nonetheless complicate efforts to effectively measure and operationalise constellations of risk factors. Thus, the vetting interview remains an invaluable insight into the individual, which perhaps holds the greatest subjective weight in determining the outcome of the vetting process. Increased researcher engagement in vetting practices can lead to a more nuanced approach and greater insight into what works. Increasing knowledge of vetting organisations' needs as they relate to emerging areas of insider threat, changing cultural norms, and evolving standards of data protection may assist in the design and implementation of additional approaches to studying this topic. This thesis adds to the growing body of knowledge on information elicitation and promotes a novel approach for quantifying sensitive self-disclosure.

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Appendix A: Materials

A.1 Record of Risk Assessment

Task:
Guidance: Conducting home interviews with (non-student) members of the Lancaster community. For additional information, please reference Lancaster University's Lone Working Guidance and the Lancashire Care NUS Foundation Trust Safety Checking of Lone Workers Standard Operating Procedures.

Department	Psychology	Assessment ID	
Assessor	Christina Winters	Date of assessment	
Authorised by	Kirk Luther	Review date	

Step 1 List significant hazards	Step 2 Who might be harmed?	Step 3 Determine appropriate controls	Step 4 Make it happen
Kidnapping	Interviewer/ researcher	-send updated encrypted excel schedule of names/addresses of participants -have reciprocal contact with supervisors on the day of interviews and immediately preceding the interviews (via email, text message, and calling) -ask the interviewee to not lock the front door (or any door) on your arrival -if a person insists on locking doors, tell them it is safety protocol that they remain unlocked -use toilet before entering property	-follow the safety protocols for the nominated safety person and researcher (attached below) -if someone disagrees with leaving doors unlocked, ask to leave -if someone tries to prevent your exit, call 999 -maintain in close contact with supervisors, contacting them before and after interviews, as procedure (below) -avoid using the bathroom, or any room which does not have multiple exits -stay seated closest to the door, with nothing physically impeding your exit

| Assault | Interviewer/ researcher | *-before arriving, ask (email) how many adults are expected to be in the home at the time of the interview*
-avoid wearing scarfs, necklaces, lanyards, or anything around the neck
-avoid wearing a skirt, or any bottom which might be easily removed
-avoid wearing anything that can be grabbed, such as loose jewellery, or wearing hair in a ponytail
-note the presence of weapons or sharps, heavy blunt objects, especially anything which seems out of place (e.g., a kitchen knife in a living room)
-avoid plastic bags, blankets, or non-porous wraps near the head
-take note of what dwellers are holding and where they are standing at all times
-remain standing until others are sat down
-do not allow anyone to take your coat, items, etc. to another room. Keep all of your items within your sight
-maintain awareness of emotional reactions, internal stimuli, sexual arousal, or non-reactivity/catatonic behaviour in individuals
-note abuse of persons or animals
-maintain appropriate distance from others (3 feet) at all times | *-be aware of items which might facilitate strangulation*
-wear trousers as opposed to dresses or skirts
-insist on interviewing on the ground floor of the home, in a communal area, which has more than one safe exit. If this is not possible, then leave.
-ensure the presence of something in between you and the interviewee (e.g., table)
-sit across from the interviewee rather than next to them
-ensure the interviewee is sitting out of reach of heavy blunt or sharp objects
- if individuals become emotionally reactive for any reason (angry/aroused), ask if they are OK, and if they would like you to leave. Leave if you are uncomfortable
-if anyone becomes combative or aroused, leave and call supervisor
-if anyone touches you in a way that makes you uncomfortable, leave and call supervisor
-if anyone attempts to assault you, leave and call 999 and supervisor
-in an emergency, reference any conflict management or self-defence training as appropriate
-leave and call supervisor and authorities if suspected abuse of animals or persons |

Poison/ drugging	Interviewer/ researcher	-kindly refuse offers of food or beverages -note odd smells (e.g., unusual sweet, cleaner/vinegar, ammonia, battery acid, marijuana) -do not share your water bottle -note the presence of drugs in the home	-leave if you see drugs or suspect the presence, manufacturing, use, or distribution of drugs or poison; call supervisor, and possibly 999
Illness	Interviewer/ researcher	-note the presence of damp or poor hygiene in the home -do not touch anything	-use hand sanitizer -avoid using bathroom -leave if you smell mould
Injury	Interviewer/ researcher	-bring a First Aid kit, as provided by the department	-bring a take note of surroundings -move cautiously -attend to self and leave if you get hurt
Theft	Interviewer/ researcher	-ensure that errands are done before or after interviews -travel light -do not allow anyone to take your coat, items, etc. Keep all of your items within your sight	-do not bring large amounts of cash, or expensive, unnecessary equipment -insist your items remain with you at all times -if you notice something missing, politely ask if anyone has seen the item(s), and then leave
Stalking	Interviewer/ researcher	-do not provide your personal contact information (address, phone number, social media, etc.) -pre-plan route of exit/way home	-decline requests to meet again -if you are asked for personal information, politely say that you are not supposed to provide this information for your safety. If someone persists, leave and call supervisor

A.2 Home Interview Protocol Checklist

For the interviewer/researcher/person collecting data: (leave the premises if you cannot circle the underlined answer or if you feel uncomfortable at any time, for any reason)

1. Is the home within proximity of other homes? (i.e., on a bus route, in case emergency assistance is needed)? <u>YES</u> / NO

2. Is your phone charged >50%? <u>YES</u>/NO

3. Do you have a phone signal? <u>YES</u>/NO

4. Does the neighbourhood appear safe and well-lit? <u>YES</u> / NO

5. Upon entering, ask the interviewee:

a. You will be interviewed about sensitive topics. For comfort and safety, this interview should be conducted alone. Are there any other adults in the home right now, and will any arrive in the next hour?

b. In what room will we be interviewing? (To ensure your safety, this must be on the ground floor with at least two ways to exit).

c. What is the most reasonable way to exit in case of a fire?

6. Does the interviewee appear intoxicated or as if they have a compromised ability to provide consent or act in a safe manner? YES/<u>NO</u>

7. Are there physical hazards (weapons, drugs, damp, unsafe flooring, etc.) in the home? YES / <u>NO</u>

8. Is there reasonable suspicion of abuse or neglect of persons or animals? YES / <u>NO</u>

9. Does the home appear suitable to the needs of people (including vulnerable) who live there? <u>YES</u> / NO

10. Is there more than one way to safely exit the interview room and home? <u>YES</u> / NO

11. Is there sufficient space between you and the interviewee in the interview room? <u>YES</u>/NO

12. Do you feel unsafe (ongoing)? <u>YES</u> / NO

Notes. (make note of emergency exits, number of individuals, etc.)

_____

_____

Task Checklist (for the relevant increased controls):

1. Google location to ensure within proximity of other homes or businesses. Re-assign participant to another condition if they live in a remote area.

2. Send interview schedule with addresses to supervisor(s) and/or nominated safety person. Text nominated safety person on arrival to pre-scheduled address.

3. Ensure phone battery is charged >50%. Ensure phone signal strength at location and inside residence.

4. Make note of emergency exits.

5. Text nominated safety person when risk assessment (RA) has been completed for the relevant address. Begin interview when you receive a text message from nominated safety person, acknowledging receipt of your RA.

6. Call nominated safety person with code word when the interview is over.

A.3 Nominated Safety Person Protocol

After receiving a text from the researcher that the risk assessment has been completed, set an alarm for one hour. If, after one hour, you do not receive a call from the researcher with the code word ("coconut"), please follow the steps below:

A.4 Participant Distress Protocol

Distress
- A participant indicates they are experiencing a high level of stress or emotional distress OR
- exhibit behaviours suggestive that the discussion/interview is too stressful such as uncontrolled crying, shaking etc

Stage 1 Response
- Stop the discussion/interview.
- One of the researchers (who is a health professional) will offer immediate support
- Assess mental status:
  - Tell me what thoughts you are having?
  - Tell me what you are feeling right now?
  - Do you feel you are able to go on about your day?
  - Do you feel safe?

Review
- If participant feels able to carry on;
  - resume interview/discussion
- If participant is unable to carry on
  - Go to stage 2

Stage 2 Response
- Remove participant from discussion and accompany to quiet area or discontinue interview
- Encourage the participant to contact their GP or mental health provider OR
- Offer, with participant consent, for a member of the research team to do so OR
- With participant consent contact a member of the health care team treating them at for further advice/support

Follow up
- Follow participant up with courtesy call (if participant consents) OR
- Encourage the participant to call either if he/she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following the focus group

A.5 Interviewer Distress Protocol

Pre-data collection

- The researcher should consider the potential physical and psychological impact on the researcher of the participants description of life experiences
- The researcher should consider how many interviews could be undertaken in a week
- The researcher should be aware of the potential for emotional exhaustion

Data collection stage

- If the topic is potentially sensitive/distressing data collection to be undertaken by two members of the research team
- regular scheduled debriefing sessions with a named member of the research team
- may be encouraged to journal their thoughts and feelings which may then become part of fieldwork notes in some research approaches

Analysis

- is alerted prior to transcription review of potentially "challenging" or "difficult" interviews
- has regular scheduled debriefing sessions with a named member of the research team

Follow up

- Encourage the researcher to access a research mentor if he/she experiences increased distress in the hours/days following transcription

A.6 Sensitive Topics Questionnaire (STQ)[44] Interview Protocol
(Experiment 1; Chapter 3)

(For Home interviewees): Hi, I'm _____, and I'm here for your interview today. Thank you (for letting me in). (Allow the interviewee to guide you to the interview space and follow safety check protocol). Are you comfortable that we will not be interrupted here?
(For Skype interviewees): Hi, thanks for being here with me today. I'm _____. I want to assure you that I am alone. Are you alone and do you feel you have adequate privacy for the interview? Do you mind me asking where (in what room) you are interviewing? Can you hear me just fine?
(For Office interviewees): Hi, I'm _____. Please come in. Thanks for taking time to come here today. Please have a seat (motion to seat). Do you need anything before we start?
(For Public interviewees): Hi, I'm _____. Please have a seat (motion to seat). Do you need anything before we start? Are you comfortable sitting here? Do you see anyone you know?

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[44] See Table 3.1 for questions and endorsement rates.

A.7 Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-V3 (STQ-V3)[45] Interview Protocol
(Experiment 2; Chapter 4)

(FtF Home interviewees): Hi, I'm here for your interview today. Thank you (for letting me in). Allow the interviewee to guide you to the interview space and follow safety check protocol. Are you comfortable that we will not be interrupted here?

(VMI Home interviewees): Hi, thanks for taking the time to be here with me today. Can you hear me alright? I want to assure you that I'm alone. Are you alone, and do you feel you have adequate privacy for the interview and that we won't be interrupted? Do you mind me asking where (in what room) you are interviewing?

(FtF Office interviewees): Hi, thanks for taking the time to be here today. Before we start, do you need a parking pass? Please have a seat (motion to seat). Would you like anything before we start?

(VMI Office interviewees): Hi, thanks for taking the time to be here today. I want to assure you that I'm alone. Did (the research assistant) set you up alright? Can you hear me just fine? If you have any technical problems during the interview, please feel free to ask (research assistant) for help.

A.8 Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 2 (STQ-V2) Interview
(Part II, Experiment 3; Chapter 5)

(Susceptibility to Pressure)

1. Please tell me about how your political beliefs may have been influenced by individuals or groups you have encountered online.
2. Please tell me about chatting online or messaging over an app about any involvement in illegal activity.
3. Please tell me about important aspects of your identity that you have concealed from people close to you.
4. Please tell me about any material or opinions that you have posted or shared online that others might consider racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise intolerant.
5. Please tell me about any mental health or psychological issues you have experienced, including any evaluations or treatment you have received.
6. Please tell me about how you may have compromised your values in order to please someone.

(Affiliations)

7. Please describe your relationship with anyone you personally know who has been involved in a gang or organised crime.
8. Please describe your relationship with anyone you know who has travelled abroad to support a non-peaceful action, not including military.
9. Please tell me about any romantic partners, friends, or family members who have regularly engaged in criminal behaviour.
10. Please tell me about any romantic partners, friends, or family members who have spent time in prison.
11. Please describe any links you have to individuals or organisations that might be perceived as extremist.

(Avoidance of Online Identifiability)

12. Please tell me about any online transactions you have made with digital or virtual currencies, such as Bitcoins.
13. Please tell me about any fake profiles, aliases, or handles you have that are associated with your online activity, including for social media and gaming accounts.
14. Please tell me about any personal details you may have misrepresented about yourself when communicating with an individual or group online.
15. Please tell me about using technology which masks your identification online, such The Onion Router (TOR)?

(Dishonesty)

16. Please tell me about times you have used illegal streaming services.

17. Please tell me about times you have disclosed a secret you promised not to tell.
18. Please tell me about times you have skipped out on paying for a service, such as the train, a salon, restaurant, or taxi.
19. Please tell me about times you have pirated software.
20. Please tell me about times you have shoplifted.
21. Please tell me about any academic work you have cheated on from upper school onward, including both exams and plagiarizing.
22. Please tell me about times you have stolen from an employer.
23. Please tell me about times you have cheated on a partner.

(Financial Imprudence)

24. Please tell me about times you have gone into overdraft.
25. Please tell me about times you have maxed out a credit card.
26. Please tell me about any purchases you have made that resulted in your attempt to return or sell the product because you could not afford it.
27. Please tell me about your experience gambling.
28. Please tell me about any time you have been unable to pay a bill.
29. Please tell me about any excessive personal debt you have accumulated.

(Formal Reprimands)

30. Please tell me about times online administrators have banned your access to a site or deleted your posts or comments.
31. Please tell me about any detentions, formal hearings, suspensions, or expulsions you faced due to violating a rule at school or university.
32. Please tell me about times you have been reprimanded at work due to violating the rules.
33. Please tell me about any warnings or cautions you have received from law enforcement, excluding minor traffic violations.
34. Please tell me about times you have been fired or asked to leave a job.
35. Please tell me about any arrest history.

(Substance Use)

36. Please tell me about times drinking alcohol has caused you problems.
37. Please tell me about your experience using marijuana.
38. Please tell me about your experience using other illicit drugs, such as mushrooms, cocaine, amphetamines, MDMA, PCP, LSD, and opiates.
39. Please tell me about any habitual use of addictive substances.
40. Please tell me about your experiences operating machinery, such as a bicycle or vehicle, whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A.9 Sensitive Topics Questionnaire-Version 3-Revised (STQ-V3R) Interview[46]
(Part II, Experiment 4; Chapter 6)

(Susceptibility to Pressure)

1. Please tell me about how your political beliefs may have been influenced by individuals or groups you have encountered online.
2. Please tell me about times you have chatted online or messaged over an app about your involvement in illegal activity.
3. Please tell me about important aspects of your identity that you may have felt the need to conceal from people close to you.
4. Please tell me about material or opinions that you have said, shared, or posted online that others might consider racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, or otherwise intolerant.
5. Please tell me about times you have felt dissatisfied with your body.
6. Please tell me about times you have destroyed a meaningful or expensive item out of anger.
7. Please tell me about any mental health or psychological issues you have experienced.
8. Please tell me about how you might have compromised your values in order to please someone, other than in a professional capacity, such as school or an employer.

(Affiliations)

9. Please describe your relationship with anyone you personally know who has been involved in a gang or organised crime.
10. Please describe your relationship with anyone you know who has travelled to support a non-peaceful action, not including military.
11. Please describe your relationship with romantic partners, friends, or family members who have *regularly* engaged in criminal behaviour.
12. Please describe your relationship with romantic partners, friends, or family members who have spent time in prison.
13. Please describe your relationship with anyone who has links to individuals or organisations that might be perceived as extremist.

(Financial Imprudence)

14. Please tell me about any online transactions you have made with digital or virtual currencies, such as Bitcoins.
15. Please tell me about any fake profiles, aliases, or handles you have that are associated with your online activity, including for social media and gaming accounts or profiles in which you did not use your real name. Please do not state the names of your handles.
16. Please tell me about any personal details you may have misrepresented about yourself when communicating with an individual or group online.

---

[46] These are the same questions as the STS-V2, rephrased in open-ended format. See Table 6.1 for endorsement rates.

17. Please tell me about any experience you have using The Onion Router (TOR) or Virtual Private Networks (VPNs).

(Dishonesty)

18. Please tell me about times you have used illegal streaming services.
19. Please tell me about times you have told a secret you promised not to tell.
20. Please tell me about times you have skipped out on paying for a service, such as the train, a salon, restaurant, or taxi.
21. Please tell me about times you have pirated software.
22. Please tell me about times you have shoplifted.
23. Please tell me about any academic work you have cheated on, including both exams and plagiarising, from upper school onward.
24. Please tell me about times you have stolen from an employer.
25. Please tell me about times you have cheated on a partner.

(Financial Imprudence)

26. Please tell me about times you have gone into overdraft.
27. Please tell me about times you have maxed out a credit card.
28. Please tell me about any purchases you have made that resulted in your attempt to return or sell the product because you could not afford it.
29. Please tell me about your experience gambling.
30. Please tell me about times you have been unable to pay a bill.
31. Please tell me about any excessive debt you have accumulated.

(Formal Reprimands)

32. Please tell me about times online administrators have banned your access to a site or deleted your posts or comments.
33. Please tell me about any detentions, formal hearings, suspensions, or expulsions you faced due to violating rules at school or university.
34. Please tell me about times you have been reprimanded at work due to violating the rules.
35. Please tell me about times you have left a job without giving a proper two-week notice.
36. Please tell me about any warnings or cautions you have received from law enforcement, excluding minor traffic violations.
37. Please tell me about times you have been fired or asked to leave a job.
38. Please tell me about times you have been arrested.

(Substance Use)

39. Please tell me about how using alcohol has caused you problems.
40. Please tell me about times you have used marijuana.
41. Please tell me about times you have used other illicit drugs, such as poppers, ketamine, mushrooms, cocaine, amphetamines, MDMA, PCP, LSD, or opiates.

42. Please tell me about times you have missed school, work, or family obligations due to using alcohol or drugs.
43. Please tell me about times you have attended school or work whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
44. Please tell me about any *habitual* use of addictive substances, such as drugs or alcohol.
45. Please tell me about times you have operated machinery, such as a bicycle or vehicle, whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

A.10   Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception (ACID) Detail Tally Score Rules

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I = Internal or Idiosyncratic:

1. Metacognitive Processes (e.g., I don't remember, I think so)
a. These refer specifically to a cognitive operation, not a general state of mind. In other words, these describe those aspects of the respondent's internal environment that are **NOT RELATED TO MOOD.**

2. Idiosyncratic or self-referential information (e.g., That happened to me once, I used to do that).

A = Affective:

1. Any detail that relates to the subjective mood of the respondent. For example (I am depressed, anxious, angry, etc.).

E = External (Perceived): Answer the who, how, and what questions and describe intra-relationships.

1. Information derived from the senses (anything seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelled.)
2. Adjectives—including amounts, numbers, heights, weights, colours, textures etc. (even if inferred)
3. Number and gender of people, animals, objects and any article or pronoun that gives additional information on the number or gender.
4. Actions and interactions

C = Contextual: includes spatial relationships/context, timing, location, Answer the when and where questions and describe inter-relationships.

1. Information that frames the physical scene (time, place)—chronology (e.g., In a few minutes, a little while later), sequence (e.g., Then, while, next, before, after), and location (e.g., Behind the desk, on the door, around the corner, by the chair, in the hall, in the room).

Note. prepositional phrases are often a clue as they describe spatial relationships between objects and people (under the table, through the door, in the door).

A.11 Modified-Assessment Criteria Indicative of Deception (M-ACID) Coding Guidance[47]

A. Coding (e): all verbs, nouns, pronouns

Coding estimations of amounts: For (e)/amounts: code each guess for number of people, illegal acts, or clearly verifiable information

Counting
Once (e) = One time, two times (e) (=twice), many times (e), multiple times (e) (no spatial/contextual info)
one of my (e) friends (e) = my (e) friend (e)

Sometimes, we code **verbs + prepositions** as **(e),** which indicates **meaning**
last year (c) when I was a first (c) year student (e) at uni (c) I **put on** (e) a little bit of weight (e)
 "put on" = gained
I **went into overdraft (e)** = I overdrew (tells us WHAT, not where or when).
came/go/went (e); go (e) to... (c)
came back = returned (e)

Only code "have/I've/got" if it indicates *possession* or if *"have"* can be switched with another verb. Ex: "I have (e) my (e) own home (e)." (Have = own). = I own (e) my (e) home (e).

Adverbs (e.g., really, very)
Do not code when referring to a subjective, vague appraisal of quality or amount:
was really rude (e)
was quite beautiful (e)
was very helpful (e)
was a little helpful (e)
was a bit scary (e)

Only code the first instance of details
CODE: a lot (e) much (e) many (e) several (e) a little (e) a few (e) a couple (e)
DO NOT CODE: Vague amounts: "some", "somewhat", "quite" and "a bit"

B. Coding (c): contextual information, place, space, time, prepositions

Prepositional phrases:
Vague references to time or place = single (c)
(c) is ONLY coded as a *string of a phrase* if it provides a vague appraisal of time or place, otherwise it is coded within the context of other details [usually (e)].

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[47] This coding guidance is supplementary to the guidance listed in A.10 (ACID) and includes (M-ACID) guidance not already explained in Chapter 2. These materials are used as part of M-ACID training.

A long time ago (c)
In the past (c)
At some point (c)
When I used to (c)
when (c) I came (e) to the UK (c)
In school (c)
In high (c) school (c)
When I was young (c)
When I was a child (c)
In the UK (c)
Back home (c)
When (c) I was in high school (c)
When (c) I was 14 (c)
Two (c) years (c) ago (c) → specific units
I went (e) to (c) a psychologist (e) WHO
I went (e) to university (c) → WHERE (place)
we (e) went to (c) a lecture (e) → WHAT (context/directional)
we (e) went shopping (e) → WHAT (activity)
we (e) went (e) to (c) my (e) first (c) hen do (e) → (context + descriptors)
Online platforms can be used interchangeably as (e) what or (c) where

For units of time: code as a unit if it is not clearly verifiable/consequential: When (c) I was 17
or 18 (c), I broke (e) my (e) mum's (e) vase (e).
Code as distinct units if verifiable: I got convicted (e) when (c) I was 19 (c) or 20 (c).

Coding **plural information**
Recently (c) I had a fight (e) with (c) a friend (e) so I may have talked (e) about (c) her (e) to (c)
other people (e). "other people" "another person" "other friends" coded as 1 (e)

Frequency can be (c) or (e):
(e): Multiple occasions (e) Many times (e) One time (e)
(c): Usually (c) Often (c) Recently (c) Sometimes (c)
Never (c) Always (c) Anymore (c) Whenever (c) Ago (c) Until (c)

Describing relationships
With (c) Together (c) From (c) Where (c) Next (c) After (c) Then (c)
in / to / into / of = use discretion. These are usually coded as part of a string, but not always.

For (c): for (c) a few months (c) / for (c) her (e)

About (c) (code when used as a preposition / do not code when describing an estimation)
talk (e) about (c) / about 20 (e)

Coding **of** (c)
Piece of paper (e) = paper
Bottle (e) of (c) alcohol (e) = bottle containing alcohol

Vase (e) of my (e) mum (e) = my mum's vase

When the words preceding or following a preposition describe a WHAT, WHO or HOW, it is E.
I was with (c) friends (e)………………..WHO were you with?
Shoplifting (e) at Boots (c). ……………. WHERE did you shoplift?
spoke (e) to (c) a counsellor (e) ………. WHO did you speak to?
at (c) my (e) first (c) party (e) ……………… at WHAT event? (+ WHEN?)
on (c) an iPad (e) ………………… on WHAT device?
on (c) his (e) phone (e)…………………. on WHOSE (+WHAT) device?
I go (e) to the gym (c)………………. WHERE do you go?
in (c) the car (e)…………………….. in WHAT vehicle?
travelled (e) by (c) train (e)…………. HOW did you travel?
at university (c) I studied (e) law (e)…….. WHERE did you study?

Only code "to" when it is directional or indicates relationship ("*toward/with*" not "*in order to*").
I talked (e) to (c) her (e).
vs.
She (e) went (e) to get (e) bananas (e). (to get = 'to buy') to buy is not directional.

Ending with (c):
Coding oftentimes ends with a (c) because the subject [(e)] is often already referenced earlier in the response.
Ex: "I think, probably, at home (c), breaking (e) plates (e), cups (e), and not telling (e) anyone (e) **about (c) it,** but that's it." (it = breaking plates, cups)

Combinations of (c)/(e)
(e/c) Tend to be coded tightly together early in a response, and then more sporadically ascribed to chunks later to re-referenced info. Note how repeated info is not later coded individually again.
Ex: "*We (e)* **got in (c) the car (e)** to go (e) to (c) *the shop (e)* and parked (e) in the garage (c). *The shop* was closed (e). So, *we* walked (e) back **to the car (c)** and left (e) the garage.
got in (c) the car (e) = IN WHAT?
to the car (c) = WHERE/CONTEXT?

C. Coding (a): feelings, transient mental states, mood related referring to the speaker
Any detail that relates to the subjective mood of the respondent. For example (I am depressed, anxious, angry, etc.).

Usually only used after "I feel" statements, but also anything that describes the speaker's own feelings.
If I feel/felt/feeling is followed by a string of words, use judgment.
I feel (a) that no one listens (a). (unheard) **Feeling,** but without the affective word
I felt (i) it wasn't a big deal (i). **Thought.**
I felt sad (a) (if an affective word is present, then only use (a) after the affective word) → same meaning as "I was sad (a)"
It made (e) me sad (a)

Double code (a) when the feeling is **intensified** (really/very/intensely/super)
I felt <u>really (a)</u> devastated (a)
I was <u>very (a) upset (a)</u>
That <u>hurt (a)</u> my (e) feelings <u>a lot (a)</u>

Adverbs
Really/very = code <u>doubly only when attached to a feeling</u>.
Yes, I threw (e) my (e) phone (e) on the ground (c) when (c) I was real (a) angry (a).

D. **Coding (i): metacognitive processes, assumptions about others' mental processes, internal thoughts, speech, idiosyncratic information, self-referencing not related to event in question**

Metacognitive processes:
Specific cognitive operations, not a general state of mind. Describes those aspects of the respondent's internal environment that are **not related to mood.**

When coding a metacognitive process:
Use discretion. <u>Do NOT code current metacognitive processes</u>. Code definitive statements or past mental processes. Ignore "hedges" or time-fillers. "um.. I think…"

I knew (i) it was wrong (i). (referencing past thought)
vs.
I guess… I think… I was 22 (c) at the time (c). (current thought)

Code (i) as past participle, present participle, present perfect, or hypothetical future tense
In reference to complete (past or future) thoughts, inner dialogue, or speech, code (i) in clauses (e.g., "I thought, (i) 'she must have seen me (i)'.").

Past participle:
I actually **reflected (i)** on that yesterday (c).
Present participle:
Politics (e) is something I often (c) **think (i)** about (c).
Present perfect (something that occurred in the past at an unspecified time):
I've **known (i)** him to be violent (e).
Hypothetical future:
I **would (i)** if I **could get away with it (i)**.

Use discretion when coding *"I remember"* → "I remember" is usually viewed as a current metacognitive process, however, in some contexts "I remember" indicates a former remembering. Pay attention to whether it is used as a hedge/language peculiarity (in which case, ignore it).

Alcohol (e), yes, I went (e) to (c) a lecture (e) and I think I was still (c) a bit drunk (e) but not drugs (e).

I think so, when (c) I was 16 (c)…**yeah, I remembered (i)** I was lonely (a) then**.**

Words that should raise attention for (i): **considered, imagine, dreamt, sure, remember, think, certain, realise, wonder**

If it references a **difficulty level**, code (i).
Have you ever cheated on an exam?
It was tough (i) and I asked (e) my (e) friend (e) the answer (e) to (c) a question (e)

Quoting oneself (thought or speech) is coded as (i) per complete thought/quote.
I identified (e) someone (e) based on (c) their skin (e) colour (e), like saying, 'The black guy' (i)
 Note: Sometimes, the transcriber will not include quotations around speech or internal thoughts. Add quotations here if you can.

Idiosyncratic or Self-referent information: Use discretion. As this system is for use with autobiographical interviews, do not code "I" in speaker's reference to oneself.

Counterintuitive: When coding self-referential information:
If it is DIRECTLY related to the question, DO NOT code (i) here.
Ex: Have you ever shoplifted?
In the past (c), but I'm scared (a) of getting caught (e) these days (c).

Self-referent:
possessive self-referent: my (e), mine (e)
vs.
indirect self-referent: me (i), myself (i)

Idiosyncratic statements in the passive voice:
The speaker is the narrator to their own story. Idiosyncratic/self-referential statements in the passive voice indicate distancing, and the manner in which individuals distance themselves by using a passive voice leads to a loss of information, which is accounted for by coding (i) in instances where a passive self-referent statement is used.

For example:
I: Have you ever cheated on a partner?
R: I cheated (e) on (c) my (e) ex-husband (e).
vs.
R: Yeah, that happened to me (i) once (e).

Hypotheticals:
For past hypotheticals (appraisals of former situations "would've/should've/could've), code with (i)'s in clauses: I shouldn't have gone there (i).

Inferences/assumptions made about what others are thinking:
My (e) dad (e) must have been so mad (i) vs. he (e) looked (e) angry (e).

E. EXCLUSIONS TO CODING:

Hedging: filler words/phrases, verbal hedging, vague amounts, or variations of: precisely, maybe, specifically, exactly, probably, maybe, it was probably because, might, things like that, and stuff, and everything, and all that, and that sort of thing, these things, it might happen, if that counts, no I don't think so...

Ignore hedging statements before, in between, or after answers that don't provide information. This can be statements related to the own approval/disapproval of one's behaviour, opinions, appraisal of the question or their own answer.
Ex: Have you ever lied to gain attention?
Yeah, I would say so. **When I was younger (c), it could happen, like, a lie (e) to make some people believe things. So, sometimes (c) probably to impress (e), sometimes to make (e) them feel (e) – I don't know – maybe more (e) pleasant (e) with (c) me (e),** <u>I think – but not that much. I am not really into this kind of thing.</u>

Neutralisations, including:
>   Responses/parts which make a **globalised reference, e.g., "everyone does it"**
>   Ex: Have you ever been dissatisfied with your body?
>   **Yes, I think all teenage girls go through** a stage of like insecurity (a) and
>   wanting (i) to lose (e) weight (e) and things and it got really (a) bad (a) at one
>   point (c), like rather unhealthy (e) but again (c) I got it all under control (i) quite
>   quickly (e). ("insecurity" implies the respondent is referencing herself)
>   **Neutralisations**, such as **justifications**, **denial of injury**, **virtue signalling,** etc.
>   **"I wasn't hurting anyone," "I felt taking it was fair because he always..."**

Exceptions to this rule included allowing coding for rationalisations that point to risk in another life area (e.g., *"I stole because I needed to support my addiction"*), and rationalisations that point to psychological vulnerabilities such as justification by comparison (e.g., *"if I wasn't doing this, I would be doing something worse"*) and postponement (e.g., *"I just avoided thinking about it"*).

Self-commentary and virtue signalling
Do not code virtue signalling or self-appraisals of their own responses such as "I'm happy with my answers," "I don't believe so," "I think they are good," "I just want to say I'm a good person." Code appraisals from others if verifiable (e.g., "my old boss said I was top performer," "my tax advisor would say that").

Questions from the respondent,
>   Ex: "Bitcoins? Is that like Paypal?"
>   **Unless** the question involves answering the interviewer's question:
>   Ex: "You mean like seeing a **therapist (e)**? Yes, I have **seen (e)** one…"

Responses/parts which **do not answer** the question or **do not provide information** with reference to the question asked.
>   Ex: Have you ever pretended to be another person online such as by using a
>   fake name or photograph to identify yourself?

My (e) friend (e) she (e) liked (e) this boy (e) but she was scared (e) to add him (e) on (c) Facebook (e) and so we (e) created (e) like a fake (e) profile (e) to try (e) and (e) talk to him (e) <u>and then she'd like introduce herself through that but I don't think there's anything more about that.</u>

Responses which **misinterpret** or **misunderstood the question**
Ex: Have you ever lied to gain attention?
"Yes, sometimes, we say, like, tomorrow let's go shopping or something, whatever. But, on that day I'm so tired, or I'm so busy" Irrelevant. (this is a false promise, not a lie to gain attention)

"They" as an entity
Ignore vague references to "they" as an entity, or "their". It does not tell us who, gender, or how many <u>…they</u> make (e) free (e) downloads (e) available (e)

Meaningless statements that trail off.
Well, there are two (e) circumstances (e), or something like that. **One is for my…** I worked (e) for (c), like, a school (e)

Ignore "I" at the beginning of sentences, but code only the first instance of "me" and "myself" as (i) when appropriate and when it makes sense for meaning.

Identifying with the interviewer
When they say "you" and they mean "I"
Treat "you" as indicating "I" when used in a self-referent manner (it always is).
…like when (c) you want (i) to lose (e) weight (e)…

Read between the lines. Code for *meaning.*
Not a particular fan (e) of my (e) face (e). ["I don't like (e) my (e) face (e)."]

Beware of metaphors. Code for *meaning.*
I felt down in the dumps (a). ["I was sad (a)"]

Be mindful of language. Code for *meaning.*
If the respondent is not fluent in English, work through the mistakes, and find the meaning.
Ex: but I not attended (e) to classes (e) --> assuming means: I did not attend (e) classes (e)

Ignore negations
not/don't/haven't, etc. "not" together with the coded material
He (e) didn't have (e) apples (e).
We (e) weren't going (e) to the store (c).

Stating the obvious in a different way
Do not code the "new information" just because the words are different.
Only (e) the German (e) exam (e), <u>because it's **not an open (e) book (e)** exam. Obviously,
it's **closed** and it's like, I mean</u>, the teacher knows (i) we're going to cheat (i) and she (e) just let
us (e) do it, so that's all.

Self-corrective statements
If someone **directly corrects** themselves, only code the correction
A couple of years ago, not a couple, **it was a year and a half (c) ago (c)….**

Consequences
Some responses include the consequences of someone's behaviour. Only code consequences if
verifiable, or statements indicate that it affected their subsequent behaviour, opinions, etc.
Ex1: Only one time (e) last year (c) a friend (e) is a very big (e) user (e) and we (e) were around
at his (e) house (c) just drinking (e), socialising (e), a lot (e) of people (e) there (c) and I stayed
(e) and he offered (e) me (i) some (e) and we smoked (e) a lot (e) that night (c) and I didn't really
enjoy (a) it, I passed out (e) and that was it, and <u>I didn't want (i) to try (i) it again (i). And it was
very safe (e)</u> but it's just not my thing so just one time.
Ex2: When (c) I was 12 (c), I stole (e) Barbie (e) clothes (e), <u>but my dad found them and
returned them (not consequential).</u>

F. QUESTION RELEVANCE

**When applying M-ACID to specific interview questions, tailor the relevance of coding to
question *intent*:**
Ex.: Have you ever been stopped by the police for something other than a minor traffic
violation?
CODE IF: they are with others who have been stopped for illegal activity
DO NOT CODE IF: they have not been individually and specifically stopped (e.g., they are
stopped at a traffic checkpoint)
Code regardless of purported legality of the activity or reason they believed they were stopped.

Question-specific relevance
**If a person does not endorse ("yes") the question, there still may be relevant details worth
coding!** For personnel screening interviews, ask:
1. Is it relevant to security vetting? AND/OR **2. Is it verifiable?** (documented practices, online
behaviour, financial past or present, employment or employability, networks...)
Common example:
I: Have you ever maxed out a credit card?
R: I've never (c) had (e) a credit card (e). Endorse? No. Code? Yes.

Appendix B: Supplemental Analyses

The following section contains the main analyses for Experiments 1-4 and includes the data

sets of extreme outliers on self-disclosure variables of interest. Findings that differ in terms of

significance from those reported in Chapters 3-6 are reported with an asterisk. Whilst several

strategies were undertaken to improve data normality and improve statistical power, it was

determined that the removal of extreme outliers (1.5 > IQR for details disclosed) would best

represent the data.

B.1: Experiment 1

B.1.a Hypotheses

H1. VMI interviewees will endorse most questions, followed by Home interviewees, then Office

interviewees, and Public interviewees.

H2. VMI interviewees will disclose the most details, followed by Home interviewees, then

Office interviewees, and Public interviewees.

B.1.b Results

Questions endorsed. Table B.1 reports the means and standard deviations of questions

endorsed and details disclosed per interview context. The number of endorsements were

examined as a function of interview context to test the prediction that question endorsement

would decrease from VMI, Home, Office, and Public (H1). No main effect was found for

interview context on question endorsement, $F(3, 122) = 2.51$, $p = .062$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, 90% CI [0.00,

0.12].* A linear contrast partially supported H1's prediction of decreasing question

endorsements across VMI, Home, Office, and Public interview contexts, $F(1, 122) = 6.04$, $p =$ .015, $\eta^2 = .058$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.14]. As reported before, Home interviewees endorsed more questions than VMI interviewees, however, there was not a significant difference ($M_{\text{diff}} = -0.41$, $p = .98$).

Table B.1

Means and Standard Deviations of Questions Endorsed and Details Disclosed as a Function of Interview Context, Including Extreme Outliers

		Question Endorsement		Details Disclosed	
Condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Home	32	11.31	4.98	134.72	90.17
VMI	31	10.90	5.08	132.94	98.57
Office	32	9.25	5.55	123.47	135.39
Public	31	8.42	3.38	84.77	44.85
Total	126	9.98	4.91	119.13	98.91

Details disclosed. The number of details were examined as a function of interview context to test the prediction that details disclosed would decrease from VMI, Home, Office, and Public (H2). No main effect was found for interview context on details disclosed, $F(3, 122) =$ 1.77, $p = .157$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.09]. A linear contrast did not support H2's prediction of decreasing details disclosed across VMI, Home, Office, and Public interview contexts, $F(1, 122) = 3.93$, $p = .050$, $\eta^2 = .04$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.11].*

B.2: Experiment 2

B.2.a Hypotheses

H1a. Home-based interviewees will endorse significantly more questions than Office-based

interviewees.

H1b. Home-based interviewees will disclose significantly more details than Office-based

interviewees.

H2a. Home interviewees will endorse significantly more questions than Office interviewees

when interviewed Face-to-Face, but not when interviewed via VMI.

H2b. Home interviewees will disclose significantly more details than Office interviewees

when interviewed Face-to-Face, but not when interviewed via VMI.

H3. Home-based interviewees will indicate significantly greater place attachment as

compared to Office-based interviewees.

H4a. Place attachment will positively influence the relationship between location and

questions endorsed.

H4b. Place attachment will positively influence the relationship between location and details

disclosed.

B.2.b Results

Questions endorsed. A 2 (Location) x 2 (Medium) ANOVA revealed a significant main

effect of interview location on questions endorsed, $F(1, 124) = 12.69$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, 90% CI

[0.03, 0.18]. In support of H1a, Home-based interviewees endorsed significantly more interview

questions than Office-based interviewees, ($M_{diff} = 6.09$, $SE = 1.72$), $t(116.84) = 3.54$, $p = .001$, d

$= 0.63$, 95% CI [0.27, 0.98]. By contrast, there was no significant effect of interview medium on

questions endorsement, $F(1, 124) = 2.08$, $p = .152$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, nor a significant interaction

between location and medium, $F(1, 124) = 1.73$, $p = .191$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Thus, I did not find support for H2a.

Details disclosed. Consistent with H2b, a 2 (Location) x 2 (Medium) ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of interview location, $F(1, 124) = 24.90$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, 90% CI [0.08, 0.26], with Home-based interviewees disclosing significantly more details than Office-based interviewees, ($M_{diff} = 171.73$, $SE = 35.91$), $t(111.28) = 4.78$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.85$, 95% CI [0.48, 1.21]. No significant main effect of interview medium was found for details disclosed, $F(1, 124) = 1.97$, $p = .163$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, 90% CI [0.00, 0.07]. Consistent with H2b, a significant interaction effect for location and medium was found, $F(1, 124) = 11.26$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, 90% CI [0.02, 0.17], such that VMI Home interviewees disclosed significantly more details than FtF Office interviewees, $d = 0.82$, 95% CI [0.31, 1.33].

Preliminary check. Chi square tests of significance ensured that the proportion of Home-based and Office-based interviewees did not differ in terms the proportion of homeowners, $X^2 (1, N = 128) = 1.22$, $p = .269$, and did not differ regarding the proportion of those (formerly or currently) affiliated with Lancaster University, $X^2 (1, N = 128) = 0.30$, $p = .585$.

Place attachment. In line with H3's prediction, Home-based interviewees indicated significantly greater place attachment ($M_{diff} = .79$) compared to Office-based interviewees, $t(126) = 5.96$, $p < .001$, $d = 1.05$, 95% CI [0.68, 1.42].

I then used PROCESS v.3.5.3 (Hayes, 2018) to test the potential mediating effects of place attachment on location interviewed for questions endorsed (H4a) and details disclosed (H4b).[48] Partially standardised indirect effects were computed, and 95% CIs were computed using 10,000 bootstrapped samples, determining the indirect effects at the 2.5th and 97.5th

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[48] Details were positively skewed. Coefficients were similar in square root transformed data.

percentiles. As shown in Figure 4.3, place attachment did not mediate the relationship between location and questions endorsed, *ab* = 0.10, BCa CI [-0.06, 0.24]. Similarly, as shown in Figure 4.4, place attachment did not mediate the relationship between location and details disclosed, *ab* = -0.03, BCa CI [-0.20, 0.12]. Thus, neither H4a nor H4b were supported.

Figure B.1

Standardised Regression Coefficients for the Relationship Between Interview Location and Questions Endorsed as Mediated by Place Attachment, Including Extreme Outliers
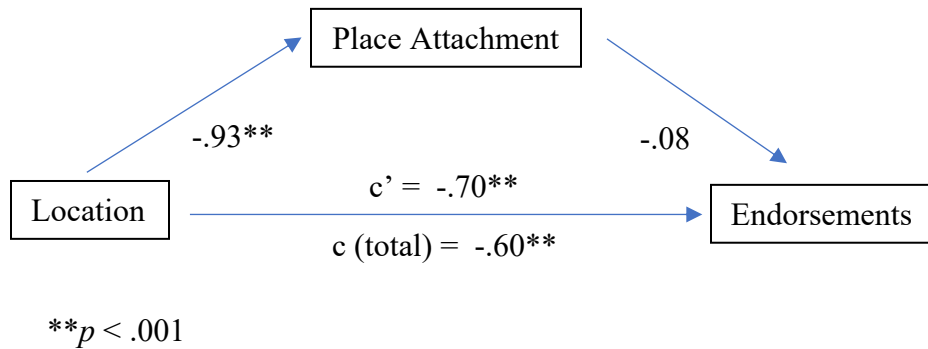

-.93**   -.08

c' = -.70**

c (total) = -.60**

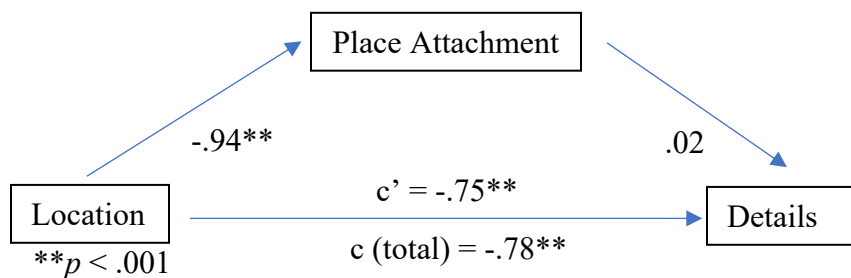Place Attachment

Location

Endorsements

**p* < .001

Figure B.2

Standardised Regression Coefficients for the Relationship Between Interview Location and Details Disclosed as Mediated by Place Attachment, Including Extreme Outliers

-.94**   .02

c' = -.75**

c (total) = -.78**

Place Attachment

Location

Details

**p* < .001

B.3: Experiment 3

B.3 Hypotheses

H1a. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will endorse significantly more interview

questions than those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H1b. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will disclose significantly more details than

those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H2. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will rate the interviewer as more familiar than

those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H3. Participants who receive interviewer feedback will rate the interviewer as more

knowledgeable than those who do not receive interviewer feedback.

H4a. The perception of interviewer familiarity will be positively associated with interview

questions endorsed.

H4b. The perception of interviewer familiarity will be positively associated with details

disclosed.

H5a. The perception of interviewer knowledge will be positively associated with interview

questions endorsed.

H5b. The perception of interviewer knowledge will be positively associated with details

disclosed.

B.3 Results

B.3.a Pre-screening check

Between-subjects ANOVAs were carried out to ensure the three groups did not differ

significantly for pre-screening question endorsements, as this may have affected the self-

disclosure outcomes from the interview. No group differences were found for pre-screening endorsements, $F(2, 118) = 0.23$, $p = .795$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$, and no group differences were found for inconsistent responding, $F(2, 118) = 2.80$, $p = .065$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to ensure that Inspect and HEXACO groups did not differ significantly in terms of their judgment of the *accuracy of the interviewer's feedback* (as the control group did not receive feedback). No significant group differences emerged, $t(79) = -0.96$, $p = .343$, $d = 0.21$. Next, I conducted a t-test to ensure no group differences existed for *liking the interviewer* between groups who did and did not receive interviewer feedback, as this may have affected self-disclosure outcomes. No significant group differences emerged for liking the interviewer, $t(119) = -0.65$, $p = .520$, $d = 0.13$. Liking the interviewer was positively associated with the perception of familiarity ($r_s = .23$, $p = .011$), but unrelated to the perception of knowledge ($r_s = .15$, $p = .097$).

B.3.b Hypothesis tests

Self-disclosure. Table B.2 displays pre-screening and interview self-disclosure outcomes for all interview conditions. To determine whether receiving interviewer feedback affected self-disclosure, independent samples t-tests were carried out. No significant differences in endorsements were found between participants who received interviewer feedback ($M_{diff} = -1.39$, $SE = 1.13$) versus the control group, $t(119) = -1.23$, $p = .223$, $d = 0.24$, 95% CI [0.14, 0.62]. Thus, no support was found for H1a.* Likewise, no significant differences were found for details disclosed between participants who received interviewer feedback ($M_{diff} = 58.83$, $SE = 33.77$) and the control group, $t(119) = -1.74$, $p = .084$, $d = 0.34$, 95% CI [0.05, 0.72]. Thus, no support was found for H1b.* Critically, the group receiving personality trait feedback did not differ

significantly from the group receiving digital behaviour feedback in terms of interview questions endorsed, $t(79) = -.65$, $p = .519$, $d = 0.14$, nor details disclosed, $t(79) = -.03$, $p = .978$, $d = 0.01$.

Table B.2

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-Screening Questions Endorsed, Interview Questions Endorsed, Inconsistent Responses, and Details Disclosed, Including Extreme Outliers

Condition	n	Pre-screening Endorsements		Interview Endorsements		Inconsistent Responses		Details Disclosed	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Control	40	9.65	5.65	11.45	4.85	8.15	4.34	179.03	139.70
HEXACO	41	9.63	5.37	12.39	6.71	6.32	2.94	237.27	209.46
Inspect	40	10.38	5.77	13.30	5.91	7.58	3.31	238.45	169.23
Overall	121	9.88	5.56	12.38	5.88	7.34	3.63	218.40	176.20

Perceived interviewer familiarity and knowledge. In support of H2, participants who received interviewer feedback ($M = 4.67$, $SD = 1.43$) perceived the interviewer as significantly more familiar with them compared to the control group ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.52$), $t(119) = -4.57$, $p < .001$, $d = 0.88$, 95% CI [0.45, 1.28]. In support of H3, participants who received interviewer feedback ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 1.25$) perceived the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable about them compared to the control group ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.43$), $t(119) = -2.77$, $p = .007$, $d = 0.54$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.92]. To ensure that the pre-screening endorsements did not influence the perception of interviewer familiarity or knowledge, I carried out two ANCOVAs, controlling for pre-screening endorsements, using group assignment as the predictor and the perception of familiarity and knowledge as each respective dependent variable. I found that, after controlling for pre-screening question endorsements, participants who received any interviewer feedback

still perceived the interviewer as both significantly more familiar with them, $F(1, 118) = 20.61$, p

$< .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$, 90% CI [0.06, 0.25], and significantly more knowledgeable of them $F(1, 118) =$

7.49, $p = .007$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.14], compared to the control group.

Scatterplots evidenced non-monotonic relationships when examining self-disclosure

variables as they related to both the perception of interviewer familiarity and knowledge.

Because transforming the data failed to produce a monotonic relationship between self-

disclosure and post-hoc variables, I used a Kendall's tau-b correlation to explore the

hypothesized relationships between these variables (H4a-H5b). No meaningful associations were

found between the perception of interviewer familiarity and interview questions endorsed, ($\tau_b =$

$.04$, $p = .575$), nor between the perception of interviewer familiarity and details disclosed, ($\tau_b = -$

$.04$, $p = .562$). Thus, both H4a and H4b were not supported.

The perception of interviewer knowledge was not associated with question endorsement

($\tau_b = .12$, $p = .077$), thus, no support was found for H5a.* The perception of interviewer

knowledge was not associated with details disclosed ($\tau_b = .05$, $p = .479$), thus, no support was

found for H5b. Next, to examine potential influence of the perception of interviewer knowledge

on question endorsement, I conducted a mediation analyses using PROCESS v.3.5.3 (Hayes,

2018) (See Figure B.3).

Figure B.3

Standardised Regression Coefficients for the Relationship Between Receiving Interviewer Feedback and Interview Questions Endorsed, as Mediated by the Perception of Interviewer Knowledge, Including Extreme Outliers
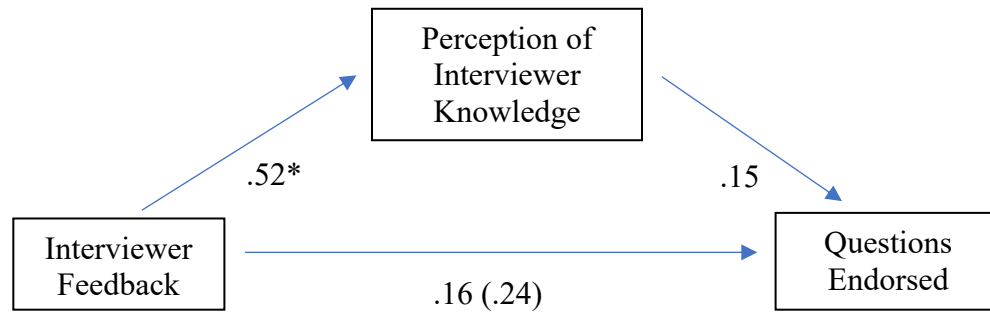
*p < .01

Partially standardised indirect effects were computed for each of 10,000 bootstrapped samples, and the 95% CI was computed by determining the indirect effects at the 2.5th and 97.5th percentiles. The indirect effect found for interviewer feedback on questions endorsed was non-significant, *ab* = 0.08, BCa 95% CI [-0.00, 0.19]. The standardized regression coefficient between group assignment and interview questions endorsed, when controlling for the perception of interviewer, knowledge is in parentheses.

B.4: Experiment 4

B.4 Hypotheses

H1a. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback will endorse more interview questions than the control group.

H1b. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback will disclose more details during the

interview than the control group.

H2a. Length of relationship will positively correlate with interview questions endorsed.

H2b. Length of relationship will positively correlate with details disclosed.

H3a. Length of relationship will positively correlate with the IOS.

H3b. Length of relationship will positively correlate with the URCS.

H4a. Relationship closeness as indicated by the IOS will positively correlate with interview

questions endorsed.

H4b. Relationship closeness as indicated by the IOS will positively correlate with details

disclosed.

H5a. Relationship closeness as indicated by the URCS will positively correlate with interview

questions endorsed.

H5b. Relationship closeness as indicated by the URCS will positively correlate with details

disclosed.

H6a. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback will perceive the interviewer as more

familiar with them than the control group.

H6b. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback will perceive the interviewer as more

knowledgeable of them than the control group.

H7a. Perceived interviewer familiarity will correlate positively with interview questions

endorsed.

H7b. Perceived interviewer familiarity will correlate positively with details disclosed.

H8a. Perceived interviewer knowledge will correlate positively with interview questions

endorsed.

H8b. Perceived interviewer knowledge will correlate positively with details disclosed.

B.4.a Pre-screening check

Independent samples t-tests determined that the Nominator group endorsed significantly more pre-screening questions than the Control group $t(74) = -2.04$, $p = .045$, $d = 0.47$, 95% CI [0.01, 0.92]. Further, the Nominator group responded to the pre-screening with significantly more inconsistency compared to the Control group, $t(74) = -3.02$, $p = .003$, $d = 0.69$, 95% CI [0.23, 1.15]. No group differences were found for liking the interviewer, $t(74) = 0.21$, $p = .836$, $d = 0.05$, trusting the interviewer, $t(74) = -0.97$, $p = .335$, $d = 0.22$, finding the interviewer considerate, $t(74) = 0.35$, $p = .724$, $d = 0.08$, nor for feeling that the interview was conducted at an appropriate pace, $t(74) = -1.39$, $p = .169$, $d = 0.32$. Means and standard deviations of feelings toward the interviewer are reported in Table B.3.

Table B.3

Means and Standard Deviations of Feelings toward the Interviewer, Including Extreme Outliers

		Liking		Trust		Consideration		Pace	
Condition	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Control	38	5.45	1.06	5.34	1.15	5.84	1.00	6.18	0.83
Nominator	38	5.39	1.15	5.58	0.98	5.76	0.94	6.42	0.64
Total	76	5.42	1.10	5.46	1.06	5.80	0.97	6.30	0.75

B.4.b Hypothesis testing

Self-disclosure. Table B.4 displays the group means for each of the self-disclosure measures. I ran two independent samples *t*-tests to test whether Nominator interviewees endorsed more questions (H1a) and disclosed more details (H1b) than Control group interviewees. The Nominator group endorsed more questions during the interview than the Control group, $t(74) = -2.85$, $p = .006$, $d = 0.66$, [0.19, 1.11]. The experimental groups did not differ with regard to the number of details they disclosed, $t(74) = -1.83$, $p = .071$, $d = 0.42$, [0.04, 0.87].

I next conducted a one-way ANCOVA on each of the hypothesized outcome measures using pre-screening endorsements as a covariate. After adjusting for the pre-screening endorsements, there were no longer group differences for interview questions endorsed, $F(1,73) = 3.73$, $p = .057$, $\eta_p^2 = .05$, and the effect of group assignment on details disclosed during the interview remained non-significant, $F(1,73) = 0.51$, $p = .478$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Thus, I did not find support for H1a nor H1b.

Table B.4

Means and Standard Deviations of Pre-Screening Questions Endorsed, Interview Questions Endorsed, Inconsistent Responses, and Details Disclosed, Including Extreme Outliers

Condition	n	Pre-screening Endorsements		Interview Endorsements		Inconsistent Responses		Details Disclosed	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Control	38	12.37	6.52	16.82	7.26	7.13	4.11	282.03	202.92
Nominator	38	15.55	7.09	21.58	7.30	10.66	5.92	376.03	242.61
Total	76	13.96	6.95	19.20	7.62	8.89	5.36	329.03	227.13

Relationship length and closeness. In contrast to H2a's expectation, length of relationship was not associated with the number of interview questions endorsed $r(36) = -.11$, $p = .495$. In support of H2b, length of relationship was positively associated with the number of details disclosed, $r(36) = .39$, $p = .017$. The IOS and URCS measures were strongly positively associated, $r_s(36) = .63$, $p < .001$. Against expectations for both H3a and H3b, relationship length was significantly negatively associated with both the IOS, ($r_2(36) = -.43$, $p = .007$), and the URCS ($r_2(36) = -.44$, $p = .006$). The IOS was unrelated to both interview questions endorsed (H4a; $r_2(36) = -.01$, $p = .949$) and negatively related to details disclosed (H4b; $r_2(36) = -.32$, $p = .048$), and the URCS was unrelated to both interview questions endorsed (H5a; $r_2(36) = -.14$, $p = .409$) and details disclosed (H5b; $r_2(36) = -.18$, $p = .275$).

Perceived interviewer familiarity and knowledge. An independent samples t-test found that interviewees who received interviewer feedback perceived the interviewer as significantly more familiar with them than did the control group, $t(74) = -2.15$, $p = .035$, $d = 0.49$, 95% CI [0.04, 0.95], thus, I found support for H6a. The effect remained significant after controlling for pre-screening endorsements, $F(1, 73) = 6.54$, $p = .013$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$, 90% CI [0.01, 0.19], $R^2 = .10$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .08$. Interviewees who received interviewer feedback also perceived the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable about them than did the control group, $t(74) = -3.02$, $p = .003$, $d = 0.69$, 95% CI [0.23, 1.16], thus I found evidence for H6b. The effect remained significant after controlling for pre-screening endorsements, $F(1, 73) = 11.23$, $p = .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$, 90% CI = [0.03, 0.25], $R^2 = .14$, $R^2_{adjusted} = .12$. To examine hypothesis H7a-H8b, I ran a series of Pearson product-moment correlations. Perceived interviewer familiarity was not associated with interview questions endorsed, (H7a; $r(74) = -.11$, $p = .342$), and not associated with details

disclosed (H7b; $r(74) = -.12, p = .312$). Perceived interviewer knowledge was not associated

with interview questions endorsed (H8a; $r(74) = .07, p = .577$) and not associated with details

disclosed (H8b; $r(74) = .03, p = .827$). Because the Nominator group responded with greater

inconsistency compared to the Control group, I examined whether the perception of interviewer

familiarity and knowledge were correlated with inconsistent responding. Inconsistent responding

was not associated with perceived familiarity, ($r(74) = .02, p = .835$), and also unrelated to the

perception of interviewer knowledge ($r(74) = .21, p = .071$).*