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Recruiter perceptions of interview faking in selection processes

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# **Recruiter perceptions of interview faking in selection processes**

*A qualitative study of four main patterns of interview faking detected by recruiters and how recruiters strategically manage (or mismanage) to cope with these patterns*

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Aysen Boyar  
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## ABSTRACT

Existing literature determines that faking occurs within employment interviews but has not yet focused on patterns among faking behaviors. Furthermore, extant research has stated that recruiters, in general, are poor at detecting faking without emphasizing how they try to cope with it. Hence, we were triggered to explore both gaps. Through semi-structured interviews, we have managed to explore real-life cases, and identified four main patterns of interview faking detected by recruiters: (1) Education Boosting, (2) Work Experience Boosting, (3) Other-Intentional Motivation, and (4) Personality Adjustment. Within each of the four patterns, we found some degree of coping strategies conducted by the recruiters. However, we observed that companies generally have few strategies to cope with interview faking. For instance, our findings show that strategies to cope with three out of four faking patterns were poorly used as most cases were detected by coincidence.

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## PART I: INTRODUCTION

### ***1.1 Introduction***

An interview is one of the most frequently used tools for assessing applicants (Roulin & Powell, 2018). It helps the organization assess applicants' job-related qualifications (Roulin & Powell, 2018) and predict future job performance (McDaniel et al., 1994). To use interviews as a successful selection tool, it is necessary to obtain accurate information from applicants. However, being honest may not be in the applicants' best interest if they believe it would hinder their chances of securing the job (Roulin & Powell, 2018). Hence, faking in interviews can pose a threat to the hiring process.

### ***1.2 What is interview faking?***

Levashina and Campion (2007) have defined interview faking as “conscious distortions of answers to the interview questions in order to obtain a better score on the interview and/or create favorable perceptions”. Interview faking is mainly focused on applicants faking “good” rather than faking “bad” (Melchers et al., 2020). Faking “bad” is an unusual phenomenon in interviews where applicants present themselves as worse than they actually are, decreasing their chances of securing the job. Faking can consist of a wide range of behaviors, from severe behavior such as lying to mild behavior such as pretense, exaggeration, and concealment (Levashina & Campion, 2007).

### ***1.3 Do applicants engage in interview faking?***

Faking in employment interviews is a quite common activity (Melchers et al., 2020). Earlier studies by Levashina and Campion (2007) found that over 90% of undergraduate job applicants fake during employment interviews, whereas 28% to 75% engaged in faking that was semantically closer to lying. In comparison, recent studies have reported that applicants engage more in mild faking behaviors when they have a higher level of experience, while less experienced applicants engage in more severe faking behaviors to compensate for lack of qualifications (Bourdage et al., 2018). This is in line with applicants believing that not faking may be

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insufficient to secure the job if they want to impress the interviewer (Ho et al., 2019).

### ***1.4 Detecting faking in interviews***

Finding ways to reduce and detect faking in the interview is a crucial issue for organizations (Roulin & Powell, 2018). However, research has shown that it is problematic for interviewers to accurately detect interview faking even if they have a high level of interviewing experience (Roulin, et al., 2015; Roulin, et al., 2014). Experienced interviewers may have overconfidence that they have intuitive skills or expertise to judge an applicant's likelihood to success (Highhouse, 2008), which prevents them from questioning their actual detection skills (Robie et al., 2006). Even though interviewers with more experience may have developed strategies to detect interview faking (Roulin et al., 2015), these strategies have yet to be validated and implemented to improve faking detection (Melchers et al., 2020). Lastly, some researchers argue that the accuracy of deception detection may depend more on the person who fakes rather than the detector (Bond & DePaulo, 2008).

Considering the focus of our study, we have not yet found extant research that targets what type of behaviors applicants fake in a real-life setting and whether there is a pattern among faking behaviors. This notion is supported by Melchers and colleagues (2020), who draw attention to the lack of research on differentiating specific faking behaviors. Lastly, research has found that interviewers are not good at detecting faking in particular. Hence, we will investigate what interviewers perceive as successful coping strategies for interview faking. Hopefully, our study will contribute to filling these knowledge gaps.

### ***1.5 Research question***

The main purpose of this study is to investigate what the companies are doing to prevent interview faking from happening and detect it when occurring. In order to do so, one must first examine what the companies have experienced of interview faking. Hence, our research question is divided into two parts:

- 
1. *What kind of interview faking behavior have companies experienced?*
  2. *What kind of strategies are the companies practicing to cope with interview faking?*

Finding out what kind of interview faking the companies have experienced has been crucial in assessing our second question concerning companies' coping measures. We considered it necessary to examine their experiences, not only to confirm whether our participants experience faking (something that is necessary for our research), but also to observe what kind of faking behavior they experience. This allows us to link the companies' coping methods directly to the various “faking categories.”

### ***1.6 Outline of thesis***

Firstly, we will examine the theoretical background of interview faking. This makes it easier to understand what we already know about the phenomenon and the origin of our study. Secondly, our research method will be described. Thirdly, findings will be presented and discussed. Limitations and further studies will also be accounted for.

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## **PART II: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

As faking in employment interviews is a quite common activity (Melchers et al., 2020), we find it necessary to review and present what existing literature already knows about the phenomenon. A number of relevant studies are relevant to include to gain a broader perspective on our research. This section will start with reviewing the literature on impression management, followed by interview faking behavior. Furthermore, a faking behavior model developed by Levashina and Campion (2006) will be introduced. Finally, we will examine what is stated in connection to coping with interview faking.

### ***2.2 Impression management in interviews***

Applicants want to make a positive impression on the interviewer to increase their chance of getting the job, and impression management (IM) are the behaviors applicants use to do so (Bourdage et al., 2018). Literature on employment interviews has defined IM as a conscious or unconscious goal directed behavior (Levashina & Peck, 2017) to create good impressions through interaction (Bolino et al., 2016). Applicants can engage in honest IM (Bolino et al., 2016) or deceptive IM (Levashina & Campion, 2007). According to Levashina and Campion (2007) faking in employment interviews is considered as conscious and deceptive IM that are used by applicants to portray themselves as a better applicant and create a favorable perception to the interviewer. In addition, applicants may also use reactive “defensive” IM by for example justifying a poor grade on their diploma or try to justify such grades by making excuses as it is not their fault because of a very strict professor (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984). Whereas honest IM can provide interviewers to make more informed decisions by providing accurate job-related information, deceptive IM may result in inaccurate decisions by interviews based on misinformation (Bourdage et al., 2018). Moreover, faking in interviews can be divided into two general categories, severe or mild (Levashina & Campion 2007). It can further be divided into four specific categories of behavior: (1) Slight Image creation, (2) Ingratiation, (3) Extensive Image Creation, and (4) Image Protection.

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While slight image creation and integration are mild forms of faking, extensive image creation and image protection are forms of severe faking (Hogue et al., 2013).

Job applicants use slight image creation when they want to create an image of a good applicant by mildly embellishing or enhancing their image (Levashina & Campion, 2007). If the applicant tries to flatter the interviewer to improve the appearance of a good applicant, they are using ingratiation. Extensive image creation involves inventing an image of a good applicant. Applicants who exclude important information intentionally or hide their true personality use image protection. Image protection is defensive tactics, whereas slight image creation and extensive image creation are self-focused tactics. Lastly, deceptive ingratiation is other-focused tactics (Roulin et al., 2015). It is also necessary to point out that the literature on employment interviews distinguishes faking and lying. Lying would occur if an applicant claimed that they have a bachelor's degree when they only took some classes and never graduated (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Thus, as already mentioned, applicants in interviews can fake in many different ways and degrees, including lying. Accordingly, this thesis will adopt the broad view of faking defined by Levashina and Campion (2007), referring to deceptive and intentional IM.

Interviews present unique situations for applicants to engage in IM, where one reason might be due to the short length of the interview that makes it easier for the applicant to keep up impressions (Levashina & Peck, 2017). Even though IM in interviews is common and critical to understand the behavior of applicants during interviews (Bourdage et al., 2018), detecting IM tactics is a problematic task for interviewers (Roulin et al., 2015). For instance, interviewers attempting to detect IM may fail because of their lack of ability to identify when applicants actually use IM tactics successfully. Although some interviewers have years of experience, research has shown that they still fail to outperform those without experience in detecting faking. A study conducted by Bourdage and colleagues (2018) found that deceptive IM was unrelated rather than negatively related to interview ratings, which is consistent with research that shows that interviewers on their own are not likely to detect deceptive IM during interviews (Roulin et al., 2015).

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### ***2.3 Faking behavior among applicants***

In 2008, Mazar, Amir, and Ariely presented their research on “the dishonesty of honest people” with the basis of the theory of self-concept maintenance. This theory states that “people typically engage in dishonest behaviors and achieve external benefits from dishonesty, but only to the extent that their dishonest acts allow them to maintain a positive view of themselves in terms of being honest.”

Levashina and Campion (2007) have identified 125 types of faking behaviors that job applicants use to create an image of a good applicant, protect an image of a good applicant, and gain a favorable interviewer’s perception. The authors developed a taxonomy of faking behaviors which was used as the basis to develop the Interview Faking Behavior (IFB) scale (Levashina & Campion, 2007). The faking behaviors were further categorized into three different IM tactics. Job applicants used assertive tactics to acquire and promote favorable impressions by portraying themselves as a particular type of person with particular beliefs, opinions, knowledge, and experience. Further, job applicants used defensive tactics to protect images, and ingratiation was used to evoke interpersonal liking and attraction between interviewers and themselves.

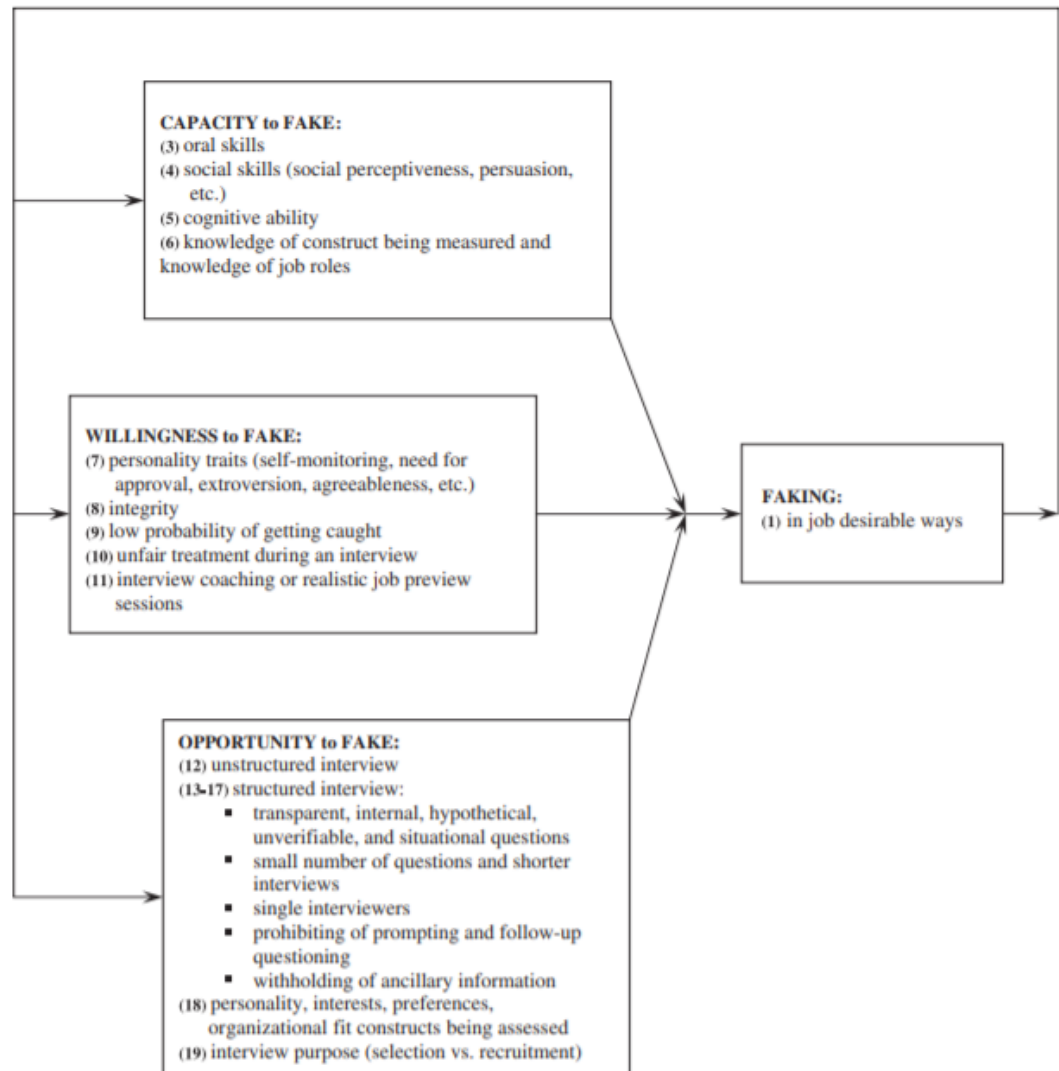
### ***2.4 A faking behavior model***

Levashina and Campion (2006) propose that the degree to which job applicants engage in interview faking is affected by the respondent’s capacity, willingness, and opportunity to fake. An equation is conducted corresponding to their statement in addition to a model that explains the process more precisely.

$$\text{Faking} = f(\text{Capacity} \times \text{Willingness} \times \text{Opportunity}).$$

This model (figure 1) is multiplicative, meaning that all factors need to be present to some extent for faking to occur. We want to link this model to our research because it is relevant to look at whether the companies have strategies that cope with interview faking to the extent of reducing applicants’ opportunity to fake. Without strategies that actually contribute to reducing faking behavior, the strategy itself will not be considered adequate. Applicants' capacity and their willingness to

fake might be difficult for recruiters to control, however, the degree of opportunities that arises when recruiters mismanage to cope with interview faking is rather relevant to look at.



*Figure 1. A Model of Faking Likelihood in the Employment Interview (Levashina & Campion, 2006)*

Opportunity to fake refers to environmental elements outside the applicants' control and can either enable or restrict faking. Such elements can be the type of interview (structured vs. unstructured) and the type of interview question (past-behavior vs. situational). Moreover, we will define the other two factors as well to provide a holistic understanding of the model. Capacity to fake refers to attributes that decide the effectiveness of faking behavior, such as social- and oral expression

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skills, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the construct being measured (Levashina & Campion, 2006). To which degree the applicants engage in faking behavior is also dependent on their willingness to fake, which is psychological and emotional characteristics such as motivation and personality. It is essential to be aware that while the model predicts the likelihood to fake, it does not differentiate between faking behavior and faking success. However, if an organization verifies the information provided by the job applicant during an interview, it will only impact faking success.

## ***2.5 Coping with interview faking***

Recruiters' opportunity to cope with interview faking is one of our primary concerns in this study. Hence, present research dealing with this issue is highly relevant to look at. Firstly, we will examine research evaluating the use of interviews as a selection tool and whether it is a good enough tool to detect faking. Secondly, various interview techniques and their qualities will be presented.

### **2.5.1 Interviews as a selection tool**

Before we take a closer look at interviews as a selection tool, employment interviews should be defined. Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, and Campion (2014) choose to define it “as a personally interactive process of one or more people asking questions orally to another person and evaluating the answers for the purpose of determining the qualifications of that person in order to make employment decisions.” This definition is grounded in the way we originally considered an interview, but also interviews that use newer and more modern techniques and tools.

Ho, Powell, Barclay, and Gill (2019) states that interview faking could have several negative impacts on organizations. Firstly, it weakens the validity of using interviews as a selection tool. Secondly, interviewers are incapable of accurately detecting faking. Actually, it is emphasized that interview faking is related to lower confidence in performing the job and poorer job performance. Hence, organizations need to find a way to reduce faking in interviews.

Melchers, Roulin, and Buehl (2020) have also looked at the question; “Can we detect faking in interviews?” Their answer to this is that it is difficult for

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interviewers to detect faking grounded in the statement that people are generally not effective lie detectors (decades of empirical research), despite using experienced interviewers. Even though studies in both social and forensic psychology are conducted, there is not yet found any relevant individual differences in lie detection. In addition, it is still a need for validating and implementing effective strategies to improve faking detection. Melchers and colleagues (2020) propose three strategies. The first one involves identifying faking by utilizing the right cues. The second one involves changing interview design aspects, for example, interview medium or interview questions. The third one is warning interviewers that they might fake.

There has been debate in previous research regarding if IM is an issue for the selection process (Roulin et al., 2015). Roulin and colleagues (2015) reviewed that several researchers are suggesting that deceptive IM used by applicants may attenuate interview validity (Delery & Kacmar, 1998; Gilmore, Stevens, Harrell-Cook, & Ferris, 1999; Levashina & Campion, 2006; Marcus, 2006, cited in Roulin et al., 2015). Thus, interviewers and organizations should have a prime concern of identifying deceptive IM (Arthur, Glaze, Villado, & Taylor, 2010; Vrij, Granhag, & Porter, 2010, cited in Roulin et al., 2015).

### **2.5.2 Interview structure and question types**

In the interview process, interviewers can try to find out why applicants want to do something in the future (situational questions) or why they did something in the past (past-behavior questions) (Lievens & Peeters, 2008). Henceforward, situational questions will be referred to as SQ and past-behavior questions are referred to as PBQ. Levashina and Campion (2007) found that job applicants would engage more often in all types of faking behaviors when answering SQ rather than PBQ. According to Levashina and Campion (2007), applicants may engage in interview faking as a response to fulfill the interview questions in an impressive way. It can be PBQ such as, “Can you give me an example of a project where you had a lot of responsibility?” Applicants without such past experience may make up a situation by telling a nonexistent one.

Levashina and colleagues (2014) reviewed that five other studies (Ellis et al., 2002; Kleinmann & Klehe, 2011; McFarland et al., 2003; Peeters & Lievens,

2006; Van Iddekinge, McFarland, & Raymark, 2007) have examined how structured interview content can give applicants less of an opportunity to use IM, such as practicing SQ and PBQ. The findings show that self-focused and defensive IM are more used by applicants when PBQ are asked compared to SQ. Further, it also indicates that other-focused IM are used more when interviewers ask SQ than PBQ.

Campion and colleagues (1997) defined structure as “any enhancement of the interview that is intended to increase psychometric properties by increasing standardization or otherwise assisting the interviewer in determining what questions to ask or how to evaluate responses” (Levashina et al., 2014). The structured interview usually requires that the interviewer asks the same questions to all applicants without use of follow-up questions (Blackman, 2002). In contrast, the unstructured interview has few rules regarding the questions asked, and follow-up questions are encouraged. Looking at the past research on employment interviews, the findings show that structured interviews are more valid and reliable than unstructured interviews (Levashina et al., 2014). For instance, previous research also shows that in unstructured interviews applicants frequently engage in IM behaviors. Additionally, researchers state that structured interviews can improve decision making, are easy to use, and simple and low-cost to implement. Levashina and Campion (2007) also found that follow-up questioning significantly increased all types of faking behaviors, including both SQ and PBQ. The job applicants perceived the follow-up questioning as a cue signaling what types of answers were important and critical rather than a response of verification. Furthermore, their study showed that situational interviews with follow-up questions were the least resilient to faking. In contrast, past-behavioral interviews with no follow-up questions were the most resilient to faking.

After reviewing existing research on applicant faking in selection interviews, Melchers and colleagues (2020) gave some recommendations to those practicing selection interviews. One of these recommendations was that interviewers should “understand that applicants can fake and that most applicants do fake (at least to some extent)”. On the contrary, as an attempt to reduce faking, they suggest that one should not ask follow-up questions. Furthermore, increasing the degree of structure in an interview is considered a good tool to decrease interview faking. We consider their review to be a good foundation for assessing

what is known about interview faking as it was done recently and covers much of the research that exists on the phenomenon. The tables they developed are given below.

Dos	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand that applicants <i>can</i> fake and that most applicants <i>do</i> fake (at least to some extent)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask follow-up questions as an attempt to reduce faking</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider that applicants fake partly because of their personality, values, or attitudes but also take cultural differences or contextual factors (e.g., attractiveness of the job, competition) into account</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use warning that faking can be detected (unless ready to deceive applicants about the actual possibility to detect faking)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase the degree of interview structure (e.g., use standardized and job-related questions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rely on interviewers' intuition, experience, or abilities (e.g., emotional intelligence) to try to detect when/how applicants fake</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When trying to assess the veracity of applicants' responses, train interviewers to focus on content and rely on a combination of indicators (e.g., level of details, plausibility)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rely on non-verbal behaviors to identify whether applicants are honest or faking</li> </ul>

*Table 1. Summary of recommendations for practitioners about interview faking (Melchers et al., 2020)*

Theme	Propositions	Research questions
What is faking?		1. What are non-verbal forms of interview faking? 2. What are the processes through which faking affects criterion-related validity for different criteria?
How common is faking?	1. Although faking is prevalent among applicants, it is still less common than honest IM 2. Faking is less common among more qualified applicants than among less qualified applicants, but more likely when the economy or industry is facing difficult times	
Antecedents of faking?	3. Increasing the structure of the interview reduces applicant faking and its effects on interview performance ratings 4. Contextual factors such as attractiveness of a job or labor market characteristics influence applicant faking	3. What influence do technology-mediated interviews have on applicant faking? 4. How effective are different types of warnings for reducing faking in interviews and how do applicants react to such warnings?
Does faking matter?	5. Faking has stronger effects on interview performance in simulated interviews and/or following instructions in experimental studies than in high-stakes selection interviews 6. Faking impairs interview criterion-related validity for predicting contextual performance	5. Does the level of interview structure moderate the relationship between applicant faking and interview performance? 6. How does faking affect interview criterion-related validity for predicting task performance? 7. How do different IM and faking tactics influence criterion-related validity?
Can we detect faking?	7. Training based on content-based lie detection strategies is a viable strategy to help interviewers deal with faking	

*Table 2. Summary of propositions and research questions about interview faking (Melchers et al., 2020)*

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In sum, interviews present unique situations for applicants to engage in faking behaviors, but it has not been given enough attention in the literature on employment interviews regarding strategies companies practice to cope with it. Grounded in the faking behavior model by Levashina and Campion (2006), recruiters should focus on decreasing applicants' opportunity to fake. However, as most researchers state, this is a difficult task for recruiters (Robie et al., 2006; Highhouse, 2008; Roulin et al., 2014; Roulin et al., 2015; Ho et al., 2019; Melchers et al., 2020). Finding ways to reduce and detect faking in the interview is a crucial issue for organizations (Roulin & Powell, 2018). One consequence of not detecting interview faking might be that the company hires the wrong applicant, as faking is related to lower confidence in performing the job and poorer job performance. Moreover, Levashina and Campion (2007) have identified IM tactics that applicants use during interviews to increase their chance of securing the job. However, research has yet to investigate what type of behaviors applicants engage in. The present study aims to contribute to the current employment interview literature by investigating what type of faking behaviors companies experience and how they cope with interview faking.

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## PART III: METHODOLOGY

### ***3.1 Introduction***

Describing the empirical process of our research is essential to provide an understanding of the choices made and the quality. To adequately explore our topic of choice, several decisions needed to be made during the project. We will start by briefly explaining the context of our research. Further, the choice of qualitative research method as well as the approach of abductive inquiry will be presented grounded in the theoretical foundation before enlightening the analysis process. Lastly, we will justify the quality of our research followed by ethical considerations.

### ***3.2 Research context***

This study focuses mainly on interview faking within recruitment processes. In this research, it was important to get a variety of views, experiences, and stories from the interviewers' perspective. Therefore, it was not desirable to deal with only one company but instead acquire a varied sample to answer the research question more correctly. The purpose was to see if there were similarities across different companies, industries and to some extent departments. To achieve the desired variation, we chose to ask both recruitment companies, HR departments, and others responsible for the recruitment of their department.

### ***3.3 Abductive inquiry***

Researchers are traditionally facing a dilemma between deductive and inductive forms of reasoning when choosing an appropriate approach. Deductive models of reasoning involve “testing theory against practice using a positivist epistemology” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, cited in Martela, 2012), and is most often used in quantitative research to test pre-formed hypotheses against a set of data (Martela, 2012). Meanwhile, inductive reasoning involves “developing theory from practice using an interpretive epistemology” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006 cited in Martela, 2012). It is usually used in qualitative research to draw theory from the richness of raw data (Martela, 2012). However, both deductive and inductive reasoning has some weaknesses associated with them. The difficulty with deductive reasoning is

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that it is not clear how to select the theory to be tested, whereas with inductive reasoning, there is a problem that no amount of empirical data will necessarily enable theory-building (Bell et al., 2019, p 24). As a result of limitations associated with inductive and deductive reasoning, a third form of reasoning has been argued for. Abductive reasoning can be explained as “an inferential creative process of producing new hypotheses and theories based on surprising research evidence” (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The result of abductive reasoning is a tentative hypothesis that has the most potential and would best explain the evidence to provide practical results, meaning that the result is not the final truth about the matter (Martela, 2012). In other words, researchers will select the “best” explanation from competing explanations of the data (Mantere & Ketokivi, 2013). Timmermans and Tavory (2012) have also distinguished abduction from deduction and induction because of its logical form. To investigate what type of faking behaviors companies experience and how they cope with interview faking, we will apply the logic of an abductive inquiry. We consider abductive inquiry to be appropriate to explore the “best” understanding of the phenomenon. It allows us to go back and forth between theory and at the same time be active researchers through the process, in addition to making our interpretations of the gathered data (Van Maanen et al., 2007).

### ***3.4 Research design and data collection***

The qualitative method became our choice of method as it seeks to explore and understand while emphasizing patterns and processes by contextualizing and interpreting (Nassaji, 2020). This matter is exactly what our research questions are considering. Consistent with what we wanted to find out from our research, we concluded that semi-structured interviewing was the best fit for our data collection. Generally, interviews are characterized as the most commonly used data collection method within qualitative research (Taylor 2005, p.37). The only way we could capture stories about interview faking was by having a conversation with the participants. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews are considered flexible and versatile (Kallio et al., 2016). For our research, it was not enough to just have a conversation with the participants, but a flexible dialogue where follow-up questions could be added in order to access all necessary information. We justify

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this with the fact that we could not know what information we were going to find pre-hand. In this way, a semi-structured interview could help us in that we could have a set of predetermined questions while asking new questions as we picked up information from the participant (Bell et al., 2019, p. 436). Furthermore, as we chose an abductive approach, we continuously shifted between theory and empirical data. How the interviews took place and the selection of data samples will be explained in more detail in the sections below.

### **3.4.1 The interviews**

The interviews were mainly conducted online, using the digital tools Teams and Google Meet. Only one interview, the first one, was conducted as a face-to-face interview in the office of our participant. Initially, we intended to conduct the interviews face-to-face, but we were somewhat forced to think new and digital due to the ongoing corona situation. Fortunately, we have experienced great benefits related to this. First of all, we had little trouble getting participants. This might be due to the convenience of using digital interviewing, as it is more flexible than face-to-face interviewing (Bell et al., 2019, p. 452). Since digital interviews make it easier for participants to make scheduling adjustments at the last minute, it might have encouraged some people, who would otherwise decline, to agree to be interviewed (Bell et al., 2019, p. 452). It is also important to emphasize that there is little evidence that the capacity to secure rapport in a non-face-to-face interview is reduced compared to a face-to-face interview (Bell et al., 2019, p. 452). Furthermore, one research has stated that researchers generally should be prepared and comfortable doing data collection employing “social distancing” since face-to-face methods might experience being hampered in the future (Lobe et al., 2020). Little research has otherwise been done in this area as the phenomenon is considered new, but we see no reason why our research should lose credibility based on this change in method.

These digital platforms allowed us to talk to participants "live" through video and voice. The advantage of not only hearing our participant but also seeing the person while he or she spoke made it possible for us to also see facial expressions, reactions, and gestures when they tried to tell their stories. As transcribing helps correct natural limitations of our own memories (Bell et al., 2019,

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p. 445) we voice-recorded all interviews in order to transcribe afterward. In addition, this allows for a more thorough examination of the participants' statements (Bell et al., 2019, p. 445). Thus, we considered this to minimize the risk of misunderstandings and misinterpretations. Minimizing as many misunderstandings as possible was necessary for the research as the topic may easily move within grey areas. To enhance the quality of the research accordingly, we both participated in each interview. This made it possible for us to evaluate the interviews with two sets of eyes, which has been of great advantage in those occasions where different perceptions have arisen. Since we also decided that both should ask questions, it opened the possibility of requesting a more detailed explanation from the participants when one of us was unsure. In other words, we will claim that being at least two investigators has increased confidence in our findings as this might bring different perspectives to the table (Eisenhardt, 1989). The fact that we were two present also meant that we were constantly able to dig as much as possible into each relevant story presented by the participants. It is found that different interviewers might evoke the same participant to respond differently (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Hence, on some occasions, we both asked the same question in an attempt to provoke the most truthful answer. Each interview lasted for about 40-70 minutes, depending on the participants' responses to our questions.

In accordance with our chosen method, we went through several phases when preparing for our research. As our first step, it was important to retrieve existing knowledge about the topic and utilize it to get a complete understanding (Kallio et al., 2016). We conducted an extensive literature review and eventually found gaps that we considered interesting. Our research question was then adjusted several times as our interest in study changed. As our second step, we managed to identify the prerequisites for why we should conduct semi-structured interviews. As argued further up, it was necessary to use a flexible and versatile method that gave access to follow-up questions to be able to find answers to our research questions. Our third step was to formulate a preliminary interview guide. When preparing the interview guide, the aim is to operationalize previous knowledge into a logical, coherent, and structural form (Kallio et al., 2016). This form should then act as a data collection tool (Kallio et al., 2016). The interview guide was changed several times as we found more interview faking aspects. An important part of the preparation was done in the fourth step, where we pilot tested our questions. The

advantage of pilot testing is to confirm that the questions we ask are relevant to the content, and that it covers whatever is necessary (Kallio et al., 2016). At the same time, you get to test the implementation and evaluate whether any questions should be reformulated (Kallio et al., 2016). The testing was conducted on a person who has experience with recruitment and is not a part of our sample. Our fifth and final step was then to complete the interview guide accordingly. We reformulated questions we considered to be leading, added new ones as we came across new perspectives, and removed those that were not relevant. See Appendix 1 for the complete interview guide. During the research, we also came across interesting situations given by the participants. Some gave us stories of interview faking that we had not previously imagined. When this occurred, we continued to stick to the interview guide but used follow-up questions to examine similar situations in interviews with other participants.

TABLE 3.: The 6 phases of our interview guide	
Question themes	Specifics
Q1: Background of participants	Questions related to the participants' education, profession, and most importantly, how long they have worked with recruitment. E.g., can you please start by giving us a brief biography of yourself and your professional background? A follow-up question would typically be about their level of interviewing experience. Overall, it was a warm-up phase with little guidance provided.
Q2: Episodes of interview faking	Questions about the participants' experiences of interview faking, e.g., can you think of an episode where an applicant engaged in interview faking? Typically, follow-up questions would be centered on details of the episode, e.g., what did the applicant fake about? What happened next? How did you detect it? Could you have done something different during the interview to detect it earlier?
Q3: Unsuccessful employment	Questions about hiring the wrong applicant due to interview faking, e.g., have you ever hired the wrong person because of faking? Typically, follow-up questions would be more direct, e.g., looking back, could you have detected the faking during the interview?

Q4: Interview faking patterns	Questions about the participants' perception of what is most faked during interview processes. This is a very open question with little direction given. If the participant believes it is a pattern, a typical follow-up question would be to elaborate on that.
Q5: Strategies to prevent and detect	Questions about the participants strategies to prevent, detect and respond to interview faking among applicants. Typically, follow-up questions would center on the participants' perception of success, e.g., is this strategy a good tool to detect interview faking? Why is this a good or bad strategy? Have you changed a strategy as a consequence of interview faking?
Q6: Reflections	We have continually, throughout the interview confirmed with the participants that we have understood them correctly. Thus, our last phase is only used to ask questions related to whether the participant wants to elaborate on anything other than what has been discussed. E.g., is there anything you like to add?

As stated, we considered semi-structured interviews to be the best method for this research. This method is characterized by how it allows for other questions to emerge from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee while being organized around a set of predetermined open-ended questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315). Being able to add and adjust the questions in accordance with the answers we got during the interviews definitely made it easier to uncover real-life stories that would otherwise not be revealed. While conducting the interview, we were highly aware that we should not ask loaded, leading, or presuming questions (Leech, 2002), but rather open-ended as stated by the theory of our method. In that way, the participants had to think, reflect, and come up with examples and opinions that they have devised themselves. Furthermore, we wanted to avoid biased and false answers (Schade, 2017). Example questions are considered one type of question one should ask the participants when conducting a semi-structured interview (Leech, 2002). Hence, the participants were encouraged to exemplify with real-life stories when this was experienced, or general examples whenever necessary to provide us with a better understanding. While some of our questions required the participants to give us concrete information, such as their strategies, others made demands that participants had to reflect upon. It is believed that participants that are being reflective are of great value to the creation of theory

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(Carlsen et al., 2004, p. 2). Further, an importance in our research was the rule not to interrupt while the participant was talking (Leech, 2002). We considered this to be particularly crucial as our topic highlights information that may be difficult to obtain. Thus, we did not want to miss unexpected or important points (Leech, 2002). When the participants then got off-topic, we let them finish talking before bringing them back to our topic of interest. This was also the starting point for why we scheduled each interview to last for about one to one and a half hours.

### **3.4.2 Participants**

Our data sample consists of 13 participants where they all have in common that they work with recruitment, either in a recruitment company, HR department, or others responsible for the recruitment of their department. Despite that the participants come from various positions and industries, several are mainly recruiting for management positions or positions within IT and technology. Invitation to participate was sent out to a number of HR departments and recruitment companies, and from there, the selection was random and decided based on those who wanted to participate. In addition, on three occasions, participants were retrieved through snowball sampling. This is because those we originally spoke to established contact between us and others who could be relevant to our research (Bell et al., 2019). In these three cases, they all agreed to participate. Further, the participants' gender and age are also random and varied, where the youngest is in mid 20s and the oldest in the age of 72. Hence, there was significant variation based on how long experience each participant had from recruitment. Some had over 30 years of experience, while others had worked in recruitment for a couple of years. In total, seven women and six men participated in this study. Despite the sample being random, we have managed to achieve equal participation of women and men.

We have not required that the participants should be able to follow applicants during their entire employment process, from onboarding to later period of employment. Thus, not all participants have had the opportunity to do so. Therefore, it has not been possible for them to answer questions related to this.

<b>Table 4.: Overview of participants</b>	
<b>Participant</b>	<b>Background</b>
Aaron	Recruitment Company
Briana	Head of HR Department
Clara	Head of Support Department
Dylan	Team leader
Emily	Recruitment Company
Felix	Recruitment Company
Gabriella	HR Department
Haley	Recruitment Company
Isaac	Recruitment Company
Jenny	Recruitment Company
Kate	HR Department
Liam	Recruitment Company
Max	Head of HR Department

To anonymize our participants' identities, we have chosen to give each of them fictitious names in alphabetical order. Further, we have decided to maintain the true gender of the participants in case of replicability to future research. Additionally, the background of the participants has been included to give an impression of the sample distribution.

### ***3.5 Data analysis***

We followed Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded theory approach because the techniques provided by this approach are extensively used by social actors in real settings (Gephart, 2004, p. 457). By paying attention to the contrast between what is actually going on in the daily reality (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 239) and interpretations made by those who participate in those daily realities (the "actors"), new theories can be developed (Suddaby, 2006). Accordingly, the aim of our

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research is to explore the grounded nature of our actors (participants/recruiters) based on their intersubjective experiences and interpretations in contrast to what is going on in the substantive area of interest (interview processes). It is essential to emphasize the expectations of logical consistency with how the reality is “known” and key assumptions about the social reality when using grounded theory (Suddaby, 2006). Glaser and Strauss (1967) have built their method upon two key concepts, where we have practiced the constant comparison concept. This technique violates the long-standing positivist assumptions about how research processes should work as it involves collecting data and analyzing simultaneously (Suddaby, 2006). In other words, there has not been a clean separation between our data collection and analysis, which has allowed us to be flexible throughout the process.

Coding is one of the most central processes in grounded theory (Bell et al., 2019, p. 523), and we chose to apply Strauss and Corbin’s (1990) three coding practices: (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding. Open coding is the part of the process where data is analytically broken down in order to compare similarities and differences in the events, actions, or interactions (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The use of open coding enables us as researchers to break through bias and subjectivity as it allows us to question and constantly compare data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). For this study, all interviews were voice recorded in order to transcribe subsequently. Transcription made it easier to break down the various events and then compare similarities in retrospect because we in the first step of the analysis used verbatim sentences to sort and categorize. We would like to emphasize that voice recording was not only beneficial for transcribing, but we were also able to listen to the participants' use of voice and tone when coding. This enhanced the results of our findings as we could discuss what the participant actually meant if we became unsure and perceived it somewhat differently. We coded the data by using a two-column table for analysis; the first column consisted of cases of interview faking companies had discovered (responding to our first research question), while the second column consisted of strategic measures companies used to cope with interview faking (responding to our second research question). The analysis of first-order concepts was done as follows; each case found and placed in our two-columned table was minimized up to several times. This was necessary as we started out using only verbatim sentences. Hence, we were determined to minimize the information to a small degree several times to avoid

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losing the significance of the information we had obtained. Finally, our first-order concepts were reduced to informant-centric terms and codes, and that is how the subcategories came to be.

In the second step of coding, axial coding, it is possible to connect categories to subcategories and verify the connections by testing them against the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The categories are further developed while one is continuing to look for indications of them (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). In this step, we created second-order themes based on the first-order concepts by assigning each first-order concept an explanatory and most appropriate category “title”. These “titles” helped us find similarities among the first-order concepts, which thus contributed to creating our second-order themes. Unlike the first-order concepts, which are based on informant-centric terms, the second-order themes were developed using researcher-centric themes. The table expanded to a four-column table where the second-order themes were placed in the column next to the representative first-order concepts. Afterward, we looked through the transcripts together again to ensure that we had not overlooked or omitted any information that we had not previously considered relevant. Some new cases were found. These were placed in the table and analyzed in the same way as the previous ones and helped us further develop the categories. We then tested the categories by going back and looking at the actual scenarios considering the language used to define each category. In that way, we were able to cross-check that the information the participant had provided us with had a close relationship to the assigned category.

As our third and final step, we conducted selective coding. For this process, the categories found in axial coding are unified around a “core” category (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The central phenomenon of the study should be represented in these “core” categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As Strauss and Corbin (1990) proposed, we asked ourselves: What do all the interactions seem to be about? Accordingly, the second-order themes were sorted based on highly relatable similarities, producing our main categories. As a result, we were left with up to several recognizable categories, or patterns as we call them, where four stood out in particular (see Table 3 and 4). These four stood out in such a way that they contained far more detected interview faking cases than the other themes we found. We considered the selection in this way; the main goal of our research was to find the main patterns of interview faking and then link strategies to these patterns. Since

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these four patterns contained most situations of interview faking, this should also be the situation companies should prioritize to prevent. We are aware that there are several different ways to select which of the patterns should be researched further in our study. We could choose based on the outcome severity of each interview faking theme. Or try to look at those patterns where few cases were detected with a suspicion that several similar cases might not be revealed. However, we believe that these four patterns should be considered serious if they occur at such a frequency corresponding to the number of detected cases one would imagine that there is always a percentage that is unrevealed. The four patterns were first provided with names that emerged from categories that were already identified, for later to be given more abstract terms to explain the main phenomenon. See Appendix 2 for our final five-columned table.

### ***3.6 Quality of the data***

Since the pursuit of truth is the hallmark of research (Roberts & Priest, 2006), we are dependent on assessing the quality of the study. Two ways of demonstrating the rigor of a research process and its trustworthiness is validity and reliability (Roberts & Priest, 2006). We will present these two in the following sections.

#### **3.6.1 Validity**

When considering the validity of a study one is concerned with the integrity of the generated conclusion (Bell et al., 2019, p. 46). More specifically, internal validity asks whether there is a good match between the developed theoretical ideas and the researchers' observations (Bell et al., 2019, p. 363). When conducting the study, we emphasized internal validity to a high degree. By being highly concerned with the "original voice" of our participants, staying true to their own language, we believe our findings are closely related to what is observed in the interviews. This is also in accordance with what Creswell and Miller (2000) expect of researchers; to use a second lens. They emphasize that validity should also be measured as to whether the research stays true to how the participants perceive the reality to be. Likewise, the researchers' responsibility is to promote honest and clear reporting without deception to readers (Arifin, 2018). Correspondingly, the use of sound recordings

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has helped to confirm the tone of voice, and we asked for confirmation in case of uncertainties. Further, Roberts and Priest (2006) highlight that validity looks at whether there is a closeness to what we intend to measure and what we believe we are measuring. In this regard, the interview as an instrument and its quality are vital (Abd Gani et al., 2020). We believe that validity is secured through the use of semi-structured interviews as it is somewhat structured, which ensures a form of equality in all interviews. The advantage of exploring what should be asked and how the questions should be asked in advance has made it more conceivable to be able to measure what we wanted to measure. As argued earlier, we believe that the use of semi-structured open-ended interviews was the most appropriate tool to use in order to measure what was intended.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

Reliability addresses the question of whether there is consistency in measurements applied to concepts in business and management (Bell et al., 2019, p. 46). Internal reliability is one concern focusing on whether there is an agreement among the members of the research team to what they see and hear (Bell et al., 2019, p. 362-363). During this study, we considered it urgently that both researchers should participate in all parts of the process. Hence, no one conducted interviews alone, and all the transcripts have been reviewed together. A joint decision has been made in all assessments, which has ensured a general agreement at all levels. So far, we have looked at strengths in the quality of the research, however, limitations will be considered later in this paper.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

To keep the balance between the research's potential risks versus its likely benefits, it is crucial through all stages of a qualitative study to consider the ethical issues (Arifin, 2018). Accordingly, when conducting our research, we had several ethical considerations in mind. In advance, details about the project were submitted to the Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) and a written informed consent was prepared in accordance with these guidelines. When obtaining consent, it is vital that the consent is given freely and that the participant should be able to

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understand what is being asked of them (Arifin, 2018). All participants were provided with the written informed consent before they agreed to participate, which consisted of sufficiently and accessible information about our research. Participation was voluntary, and the participants were free to decline or withdraw at any time. In addition, we repeated for all participants information regarding audio recording and deletion orally before we started each interview. Also, by only doing voice recording and not video recording, the participants are preserved from yet another identifiable documentation. It was important for us not to document more than necessary as it is not ethically justifiable. Furthermore, the voice recordings taken during the interviews were deleted at the end of the project on 01.07.2021.

Throughout the project, we have anonymized the participants, so it should not be possible to identify them. We attained this by excluding information we believe can be linked to the individual person, in addition to removing information that can also be recognizable in combination. For example, when transcribing, names were replaced with letters in alphabetical order. Regarding third-party data, the questions were asked in such a way that the interviewees did not include information that could identify the third person. We also gave oral information during the interviews that we did not need identifiable information and that it was only the stories and patterns in itself we were looking for. We would also like to comment on the fact of using digital video-conference tools and safety in connection to this. We deliberately chose to use only those we considered safe, Teams and Google Meet, with users linked to a corporate account. This provided extra security.

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## PART IV: FINDINGS

### 4.1 Introduction

Our qualitative research reveals four types of interview faking patterns; (1) Education Boosting, (2) Work Experience Boosting, (3) Other-Intentional Motivation, and (4) Personality Adjustment (see table 5). These patterns lead us to our most significant discovery of strategies companies use to prevent themselves from being deceived by applicants faking behaviors in interviews (see table 6). The patterns presented in Table 5 show the most common patterns amongst applicants that the companies have detected. As other patterns were found in our research, we do not claim that this is an exhaustive list. This also follows the companies' prevention strategies as we have connected these closely to the interview faking patterns presented.

TABLE 5. FOUR TYPES OF INTERVIEW FAKING PATTERNS	
Pattern	Definition
<i>Education Boosting</i>	Involves applicants being dishonest regarding education-related factors or behaving in a certain way to avoid being confronted with degrees of education and grades they do not want to promote.
<i>Work Experience Boosting</i>	Involves applicants being dishonest about former work experiences such as areas of responsibility, work achievements, or length of previous employment.
<i>Other-Intentional Motivation</i>	Involves applicants being dishonest about their motivation for applying to the specific job. While indicating to the recruiter that their motivation is high, they rather have other intentions that do not create a commitment to the job itself.
<i>Personality Adjustment</i>	Involves applicants either oversell or downplay their personality traits to appear as the desired applicant.

TABLE 6. COMPANIES COPING STRATEGIES OF INTERVIEW FAKING

Pattern	Strategy
<i>Education Boosting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most cases are detected during the interview process</li> <li>• Two strategy categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Preventing faking; warning the applicants about background checks</li> <li>○ Detecting faking; verification of diplomas, and follow-up questioning.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Work Experience Boosting</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several cases are discovered by coincidence, often after employment</li> <li>• Two strategy categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Questioning; follow-up questioning, and SQ</li> <li>○ References; comparing statements from applicants and references</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Other-Intentional Motivation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several cases are discovered by coincidence, often after employment</li> <li>• Two strategy categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Awareness; be aware that applicants may fake</li> <li>○ Questioning; follow-up questions, neutral questions, and SQ</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<i>Personality Adjustment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several cases are discovered by coincidence, all after employment</li> <li>• Three strategy categories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Questioning; structured interviewing, SQ and PBQ</li> <li>○ Roleplay; reflects the job position</li> <li>○ Demanding certain references; other references than provided by the applicant</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

The following section will present each interview faking pattern with a more detailed view of what the companies' experience before connecting each pattern to concrete coping strategies. Hence, under each pattern will we first respond to our first research questions before responding to our second research question. It is important to emphasize that the patterns that are found are only behaviors the interviewers have detected. In the following, we also present quotations, and these

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have been translated to the best of our ability into English as the interviews were conducted in Norwegian.

#### ***4.2 What kind of interview faking behavior have companies experienced?***

First of all, we would like to argue that some of our presented faking cases may be detected by only one of our 13 participants. Nevertheless, it is desirable to present them as evidence as they are closely related to the four main patterns. The reason why we think it is relevant to present these is because we have researched from one angle; the recruiters. The research is based primarily on seeing what recruiters are able to detect, and correspondingly what strategies they use. We have assessed it in such a way that even if only one of our participants has discovered a particular case, it does not mean that it does not happen to others. They may just not have managed to detect it. Our research has shown that a number of different strategies are being practiced among recruiters, hence, some might have used the right or wrong methods. In addition, we have seen that several cases of faking have not been discovered until after employment. This can indicate that it has simply been difficult to detect such faking, which may also be why only a few have detected these cases.

##### **4.2.1 Pattern 1: Detected cases of education boosting**

The first pattern we have chosen to name “Education Boosting”. This pattern is one of the four most common detected patterns of interview faking found in our study. Education boosting involves applicants being dishonest regarding education-related factors or behaving in a certain way to avoid being confronted with degrees of education and grades they do not want to promote. It is explained in the name, "boosting", that applicants choose to highlight a more positive image of education-related matters than what is the truth. Different degrees of interview faking cases have been discovered in connection to this pattern. Following, we will present some of these cases which the recruiters have detected.

One variant of which applicants choose to boost their education is by acting dishonestly about which educational institution they graduated from in addition to the educational degree. We would emphasize that this variant is detected by one of our 13 participants. To make the degree of education sound better, the applicant

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stated a higher degree than what the applicant actually had. Furthermore, by informing that the degree was taken at a high prestige school that the applicant had not even attended, it is likely to believe that the applicant stated this school based on prestige. Accordingly, we can say that the applicant utilized faking to the degree of lying. At the same time, it can also be considered as a decisive exaggeration as one might also call the applicant's statements an “upgrade”.

The applicant said he was a civil engineer from NTNU, and I asked him if he knew one of my friends who had attended the same class. He responded “no, I cannot recall him.” [...] I called him later on asking whether he was happy with the interview and if he still was interested in the job. I repeated that it was strange that he did not know my friend. [...] He became quiet and said “I’m resigning from the position, I’ve got another one.” I had in the meantime called NTNU and asked whether this person had attended the studies. [...] They called me back a few days later and said “no, we haven’t had anyone by that name attending that class. Actually, we haven’t had anyone by that name at NTNU.” The applicant had extended his profession to be a civil engineer, he was only an engineer. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

Some recruiters also detected cases where applicants had manipulated their diplomas. By manipulation, we mean that the applicant has chosen to edit his or her grades on the diploma. Considering these cases, we conclude that applicants are moving beyond exaggeration and rather towards outright lies. To be quite specific, these cases of manipulating do only involve original grades being replaced with even better grades, not the opposite.

The applicant sent a copy of his diploma, and we were a bit surprised that it consisted of almost only A’s, that is in many ways a bit strange for a master’s degree. [...] When we finally reached out to Vitnemålsportalen, it turned out that it did not match. [...] He tried making a move by saying that he sent us the wrong one, that he meant to send this to his parents. [Jenny, Recruitment Company]

One recruiter has detected cases where applicants deliberately choose not to upload their diplomas or upload only those diplomas they want to promote. It is believed that this has to do with the fact that they may not be completely satisfied

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with the grades. For example, applicants only upload their master's diploma and omit uploading the bachelor's diploma as it contains less good grades. This is claimed to be a recurring theme among several applicants. During the interview, the applicant explains that they have good grades and that they just forgot to upload it. However, when they submit the diploma, it turns out that the grades do not match what they said. The grades are poorer than informed. In other words, the applicant chooses to lie during the interview promoting him- or herself as a better applicant on incorrect terms.

I have noticed that people repeatedly forget to upload their diploma into our recruitment system [...] Some applicants try to delay uploading their diploma in the hope that we will forget it, trying to dodge out of it.. they may have expressed that “yes but I have good grades, I don't understand why you need to look at them”. When we then receive the grades in our system, it is either a lot of absence or poor grades. [Kate, HR Department]

Some recruiters have also detected cases where applicants' have deliberately omitted to inform that they have not completed their degree. The applicants have either portrayed “education” on their CV formulated in such ways so that the education seems to be completed or expressed that their education is completed in dialogue with the interviewer. Some recruiters express it as if the applicant has more or less mentioned it in a subordinate phrase too far into the recruitment process. This kind of faking is considered a form of exaggeration and/or outright lying, depending on how the applicant presents it.

We have experienced episodes where they say that they have completed an education that is not really completed, they are missing some subjects. When we try to verify the diplomas we see that it is not fully accomplished. [Gabriella, HR Department]

#### **4.2.2 Pattern 2: Detected cases of work experience boosting**

The pattern of work experience boosting involves that applicants are somehow dishonest about previous work experiences or other matters related to work situations. As explained in pattern 1, the concept of “boosting” means that

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applicants choose to highlight a more positive image of work-related matters than what is the truth. Different degrees of interview faking are discovered in connection to this pattern, and some of the detected cases will be presented below. This is definitely the pattern where most cases have been detected. Whether this means that it occurs more often than other faking patterns or whether recruiters have a greater opportunity to detect this type of faking, will be looked at later in this thesis.

Most commonly, applicants fake how much or what kind of competence they have worked up in a previous or current workplace. They will either exaggerate or inform the recruiter about areas of responsibility which the applicant has not actually possessed. For example, an applicant may express that they had a greater area of responsibility in a project, while it turned out that the person was only slightly involved. Applicants may also state that they have performed tasks that they do not really have. In addition, applicants may speak untruths about what they have managed to achieve on a previous project and its results. This is also considered a way of exaggerating the truth. We consider these cases to be a typical theme where applicants may find it easy to exaggerate based upon our findings. Many of our participants have mentioned a lot of the same aspects in relation to this. Hence, we find great similarities across our data. Below are some quotes from our participants illustrating such cases.

[...] They are asked to give examples of important things that they have achieved, so they might tell stories such as “When I started in the company, they had big problems. I started a project and we turned the results from such to such.” When I later check with references they might say “yes, the person was presented and took part in it, but had a very small role in that project” [...] I remember one case where the applicant had been a part of a subproject, but he presented it as if he had reversed the project and created a completely new and better process that saved the company for tens of millions. That variant is not abnormal. You exaggerate your own position in a project. There is a lot of that. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

My experience was that the whole CV fell through, he probably had 10% of what he had written [...] It said on the CV that he had created a website. So, I asked some questions regarding how he had created it. [...] And then he got really angry as he thought it was stupid of me to ask such questions [...] He

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kind of tried to explain how he had done it in the beginning of the conversation, however I think he quickly noticed that his explanation fell through. [Emily, Recruitment Company]

Associated issues of competence faking we find applicants exaggerating their system knowledge, experience, in addition to what they have managed to develop. Among the detected cases, a higher number of applicants state that they have "experience with..." various programming tools. Some of these are graduates who state that they can program in systems that they have only used in certain subjects throughout their studies. We have evaluated this to fall under the pattern of work experience boosting because it is most often referred to in the CV under a separate section called "programming language." It has not been categorized as belonging to an education context alone and therefore does not come out clearly enough to the recruiter until later in the recruitment process. For the recruiter, this may imply that they believe the applicant has this experience from a general basis if not specifically asked about.

They have written programming skills such as "C++", "PowerBI", and when they then attend the interview we ask "I see that you have experience with PowerBI and have programmed in Python.." where they reply "yes..or I had it as a subject at school" "does that mean that you have not actually done any programming?" "No, no I have not." [Kate, HR Department]

The applicant applied to a manager position for a website, and during the interview he said that he had created 400-500 websites, which is a huge number. So, I calculated it based on his age, which indicated that he had managed to create one website each month since the day he was born. When I then confronted him, he responded "you have to keep in mind that I worked in sales where the company sold websites [...]". It turns out that he did not actually create that many websites. [Liam, Recruitment Company]

Some also edit the length of previous employment on their CV. The cases we have been informed about deals with employment being made longer than what is reality. Whether the applicant has done this to appear better or hide whatever seems to appear negative is somewhat uncertain. One of our participants expresses

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that it may be due to embarrassment towards previous employment, hence, they want to hide it. Regardless of the reason, we consider this as faking.

[...] So, if you read the CV carefully you will quickly see that there are some dates and years that do not match. [Isaac, Recruitment Company]

Well, quite a few who have worked for approximately 20 years, they may have an employment that lasted for only a short period. [...] They did not succeed and were asked to quit, or they just quitted themselves. Then it is not uncommon for some to be a bit embarrassed about the short employment. So, then they pull the old employment forward, and then the new backwards so that it fits [...] And then somehow the employment that was in the middle disappears. Which was a failure. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

Recruiters have detected cases where applicants have edited or falsified their certificate, or simply faked their entire work history resulting in a certificate based on a fake employment.

[...] you did not like the certificate you have received from the company, so you have then written your own variant. Often with similarities to the one they originally got, but it is also added for example some sentences “he was one of my best men”, “I would not have omitted these years with -name-” and so on. Well, that was not written in the original certificate. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

It was an applicant who was going in as a top manager, thoroughly references and everything. Then the applicant starts (gets the job). [...] I do not know exactly how it was discovered, but it turned out that this person had recently been released from prison. Had used inmates in prison as reference, who pretended to work as top managers themselves. It was a sick case. We should have discovered it somehow, but we didn't. It was such good acting. [Haley, Recruitment Company]

#### **4.2.3 Pattern 3: Detected cases of other-intentional motivation**

The pattern of other-intentional motivation means that applicants are being dishonest about their motivation for applying to the specific job. While indicating

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to the recruiter that their motivation is high, they rather have other intentions which does not directly create a commitment to the job itself but instead other benefits they can achieve by getting the job. In reality, the applicant does not really want the job they apply for. Until now, we have not found studies examining interview faking related to this specific concern for other-intentional motivation. However, we consider this pattern highly relevant for recruiters to consider when carrying out interview processes. Mainly because hiring an applicant without motivation or lack of proper motivation can result in employing an ineffective person, which further may not be the most suitable applicant. We will present some of the findings related to this pattern below.

It is detected that some applicants only want a foot in the door of the company they apply to but are not actually motivated for the specific position. Hence, they fake to be extremely motivated for the position only to increase their chances of getting the job, and thus getting inside. Once they get the job, they rather want to move quickly within the company. They then apply for other internal positions within the company, or if they are not permitted to move, they are perceived as demotivated at work.

We have experienced that when we have advertised positions in only some areas, for example consulting, they are really just interested in working in one of those other areas which we have not advertised a position for. So, they apply anyway, and just hope that when they somehow get in they should be able to apply for another department. [Kate, HR Department]

Recruiters have also experienced episodes where applicants only want a better offer from their current employer and are therefore motivated to apply for a job he or she does not really want. For example, the applicant may only want a higher salary. This variant can be extra vulnerable for a company that recruits as the applicant will most likely decline anyways if offered the position. The companies may spend a lot of time and money on an interview process with an applicant who probably should have been excluded from the start.

For a position where the applicant was so motivated and so on, and when we think that everything is ok and this should be signed then “no, I just want to be

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where I was previously.” And many go through such processes to get a higher salary. “I have been offered a new job” and the employer wants to keep you, and then gets a higher salary because you got a good alternative, and that is quitting. [Felix, Recruitment Company]

Furthermore, it can be experienced, especially with recruitment companies that individuals apply for a bunch of jobs. It may seem that they do not care so much about what the job is about but simply just want a job. It can be questioned whether they are actually motivated for the jobs they are applying for.

I think you probably meet those even more when you work in a recruitment agency because you often are in contact with the same people over again. Those who are only looking for a job, it is not necessarily important where, as long as it is a job... [Emily, Recruitment Company]

He was super motivated, called me continuously because he wanted that job. Then he got the job and resigned after two weeks. It turned out that he really only wanted a job in an office, and when they were sent to home offices, it was not as relevant for him to sit there anyway [...] you experience that they say that they are very motivated for a position, but when you actually hire them you notice that they are more motivated to be employed in that company, not necessarily the position itself. [Jenny, Recruitment Company]

The way our participant presents the issue makes us interpret it as if applicants apply pretending to be motivated for the job. However, the recruiter perceives it as if they do not really care and only want the benefit of obtaining a job. Hence, we consider this a way of faking.

#### **4.2.4 Pattern 4: Detected cases of personality adjustments**

The pattern of personality adjustment is when applicants are faking their personality traits. Allport (1966), the first psychologist who systematically considered the concept of traits, defines traits as a dynamic organization within an individual's psychological system, a subject with will, feelings, emotions, self-awareness, and self-control. Boden (1996), however, refers to personality traits as an individual's unique characteristic behavior in different contexts. Hence, we refer to an

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applicant's possession of personality traits and characteristics and how these are transferred to actions in different settings. It is well known that certain characteristics are considered to be more or less beneficial to certain jobs or positions. One of our participants states this:

A standard question we use in every interview is “can you describe yourself as a person. What characteristics would others give of you?” Then 9 out of 10 men will be saying “dynamically inclusive, have a strong ability and willingness to cooperate, and progress and result oriented. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

We consider this pattern to be an important issue to be aware of in recruitment processes as it is a linear relationship between personality traits and job performance (Le et al., 2011). We will take a closer look at detected cases in the section below.

As mentioned, some traits are simply considered to be beneficial to specific positions. Recruiters have corresponding detected cases in which applicants label themselves as a certain type based on what is expected of the position. In this regard, we observe that applicants may choose to exaggerate upon their already possessed traits, downplay by leveling down their traits to what is desirable, or lie if stating that they possess traits that they really do not. When we indicate that an applicant exaggerates his or her personality traits, it is meant that the applicant highlights his qualities to such an extent that it no longer corresponds to the truth. The same is meant by downplaying. The applicant oppresses his or her traits to such an extent that it no longer gives a correct picture of the applicant.

An applicant self-promoted herself a lot, she was supposed to have responsibility [...] I remember we focused on emphasizing; how independent are you? [...] And she really self-promoted herself well. However, when it all came down to it, there was a lot of uncertainty. She needed a lot of guidance in a position where she was the one to guide others. [Clara, Head of Support Department]

I had a girl in an interview who had written “humble, generous, very team-oriented” on her CV, some very soft humble words. However, I perceive her

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as someone who does not want to admit that she is wrong, who always knows best, is very little humble. [Liam, Recruitment Company]

Otherwise, job advertisements often conduct a list of traits they expect the applicant to possess. Some recruiters have detected cases in which applicants, to some extent, adapt to the given traits in order to accommodate the job advertisement. Regardless of whether it is the truth. Hence, we observe yet another example of applicants being willing to simulate a particular character by exaggerating, downplaying, or lying.

You also notice that people have read our job advertisement. Because when they attend an interview, there is a word that may be a little abnormal that is listed in the advertisement, but that we have used quite frequently which they make sure to include maaaaany times during the interview. [Kate, HR Department]

There are some cases where we write in the advertisement personal qualities we believe one should have to succeed in the job. If you literally use the exact qualities when describing yourself, it probably can be assumed that they have put too much emphasis on it, instead of showing who they actually are. There are situations where you recognize it, and it's like okay this sounds very much like the job advertisement. [Gabriella, HR Department]

Furthermore, the recruiters perceive the applicants to be good at presenting their personality traits, how they would handle different situations at work, and their reaction in specific settings. However, when asked to provide concrete examples they are not able to. We consider this as a way applicants exaggerate their abilities and personality traits. It can be considered as proof of applicants choosing to state that they are in a certain way that may seem attractive, but it becomes difficult for them to provide examples because it may not match reality.

I see that those people that usually talk on a very general level such as “I usually do this”, but then you ask “okay, but do you have a concrete example of doing that? Since you do this all the time” and they say “no I cannot think of one specific episode right now.” [Jenny, Recruitment Company]

Another variant of personality adjustment faking, which directly comprises downplaying, is also detected by several of our participants. The recruiters may ask the applicant to provide some negative aspects of themselves or any areas of improvement. Whereas they often experience that the applicant omits to answer the question. On the contrary, they instead provide what appears to be a “negative trait,” which is, however, turned into yet another positive quality. Thus, we argue that this is a form of faking in that an applicant does not give an honest answer but instead chooses to hide, downplay, or silence the truth.

I think there are surprisingly many who don't come up with negative qualities, in general [...] Which is extremely annoying, some of the worst I experience. I would probably say that women have a tendency to say “I get a little too picky and a little too careful”. It is just a good quality they really want to tell you one more time. [...] I want to hear a real bad quality, like everyone has something.  
[Dylan, Team leader]

There are very few people who describe their personal and other qualities as less favorable. If you in particular ask a man “Do you still have some sides of yourself that you work on and should improve?” Then they will probably say some stuff that could make you throw up such as “I do have one thing, I probably am too eager to create good results which can go to the expense of some relationships, especially to those who are not as skilled. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

Also, there are detected additional cases of applicants oppressing negative aspects of themselves that can be perceived as important for a recruiter to be aware of. These cases deal with difficult situations from previous workplaces, such as labor disputes and cooperation disputes. This is relevant because, in some interview processes there might be a dialogue between the interviewer and the applicant regarding resignation causes. Especially if an applicant has terminated an employment relationship abruptly. We like to emphasize that some of these cases might be considered rather personal to an applicant or that the applicant sees the situation differently from one's point of view. The problem arises when the applicant chooses to fake to the extent that they avoid telling the truth. Instead of presenting that it is due to a conflict that may have different sides to the same story,

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they choose to pretend that nothing has happened.

Staff conflicts, conflicts with the boss, with colleagues, unfortunate competition conditions internally, etc. And the person's behavior in such contexts. This is not mentioned. For example, the person saying “no, fortunately I have been spared from such conflicts. I have seen a lot of it both in my department and also in other departments but.. no I have actually not experienced it myself. When you then talk to the references you get to know that “she very easily got into a defensive position and she created a lot of issues really”. So, on this topic I have discovered divergences between references and the applicants themselves. Quite often. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

#### ***4.3 What kind of strategies are the companies practicing in order to cope with interview faking?***

In this section we will present the findings of strategies the companies use to prevent and detect the four interview faking patterns given in the previous section. One of our main findings is that companies do not practice strategies with the purpose to detect interview faking. In fact, many recruiters express that interview faking is not something they believe is happening, despite being able to provide us with examples of experienced interview faking. In comparison, we observe that the statements of interview faking not being a reality are reflected in how few strategies the companies have developed to cope with the phenomenon. Here is one statement from a participant that illustrate the general views on interview faking:

If it is desirable for our customer, we have background checks where we verify employment and such. [...] However, it is not used by many because it is expensive and you do not think that people are lying. [...] There is something about it that makes it uncomfortable, it is very uncomfortable to indicate that someone is lying. You do not think that people do it. [...] I don't reflect or think much about this in everyday life, unless there are some specific situations where people have lied, where you think oh my god. But you do not think about it in everyday life because you don't believe that people have bad intentions. When you apply for a job yourself, you think that lying about your qualities will only bite you in the ass at some point. So, you think that people do not engage in it, but it is probably something you should be more aware of because

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there are probably many things you would have discovered if you had been more accurate or had it more in mind. However, as I said, I have been lucky and experienced it rarely, but it has happened once in a while. [Jenny, Recruitment Company]

Nevertheless, we have observed some strategies that are practiced, which were used when the companies managed to detect the various cases of faking, and these are the ones we will present below. We will emphasize that to understand the use of each strategy, we are going to include comments provided by our participants. In this way, we will be more able to make sense of how the various strategy tools are utilized in a real-life setting in connection to each observed pattern.

#### **4.3.1 Strategies to cope with education boosting**

Our findings have shown that the companies are practicing three different ways to cope with education boosting. However, a two-part direction has been found within this pattern. One company practices a strategy related to specifically preventing interview faking in advance, before an interview process begins. Therefore, we will divide strategies into two categories. We will first present how one company has chosen to prevent education boosting from occurring before looking at the two other strategies contributing to detection of interview faking.

An important note is that the study shows that most cases within this pattern were detected during the interview process, thus before potential employment.

***PREVENTION.*** One of our 13 participants informed us that everyone who applies to a position within their company will be warned already when working on submitting an application that a background check will be carried out if they were to be offered employment.

From the moment they upload their application, they are informed that a background check will be conducted if they get a job offer, so if they choose to do so, it is very stupid because it will be discovered. [Kate, HR Department]

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**VERIFICATION.** Several companies verify diplomas through a Norwegian verification service, called Vitnemålsportalen, or ask the universities directly to confirm whether the diploma is valid or manipulated. Vitnemålsportalen is a fully digitalized service that stores diplomas in collaboration with various colleges and universities.

There have been diplomas where when we ask to verify it, the applicant does not expect us to do it, so they say “by the way I have actually kind of completed it but I chose a slightly different combination, so it is not..”. We get those types of explanations, and explanations such as “I only have done one semester, but I intend to take the rest now” or they try to suppress it a bit. [Gabriella, HR Department]

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONING.** Several companies utilize the use of follow-up questions during interviews, which is the only questioning concept found related to education boosting. One participant state that the more follow-up questions are used, the more difficult it is for an applicant to hold on to a lie.

An applicant gave us a fake diploma, which became a very big case. [...] We try to use many follow-up questions, the more follow-up questions the harder it is to stick to a lie. [Jenny, Recruitment Company]

#### **4.3.2 Strategies for coping with work experience boosting**

An important finding associated with this interview faking pattern is that many of the cases found in this study have first been discovered after the applicant has been hired. Thus, first when the company has hired the person, become more familiar with the employee, and observed him or her in a work situation, they see that there are contradictions. However, some strategies are found.

Our study shows that the companies are mainly practicing two types of strategies to cope with faking related to work experience boosting; using questioning in various ways, and conducting dialogues with references. We will take a closer look at these.

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**QUESTIONING.** Within this overall strategy, we find different question concepts practiced by recruiters addressed to applicants. Among these are SQ, as well as follow-up questioning. To make sense of how the various questioning tools are utilized in a real-life interview process, various comments provided by our participants are included.

**Situational questioning.** SQ are a questioning concept observed to be practiced among our participants. Accordingly, the recruiters are asking for concrete examples from specific potential situations one might encounter in a work setting. This type of questioning is used to detect work experience boosting by requesting the applicant to provide a real situational example connected to what he or she has uttered. If the applicant is not able to provide an answer, it can create suspicion.

They mention “yes of course I have experience with that”. So, then we start asking about concrete examples “can you tell us a little more about this?” and then they are very quick to say “let's move on”. And they do it in such a way that you will notice that they get a little stressed out, they talk faster and you can somehow see that they rather not talk about it because there is probably a fear of being exposed. It is little cues and things you notice, and it is also important that you actually ask questions so that you don't just assume something and think “oh that's probably why”. You should ask follow-up questions over and over again. [Emily, Recruitment Company]

**Follow-up questioning.** The strategy of follow-up questions is another questioning concept practiced by some of our participants. Several recruiters recommend utilizing follow-up questioning to determine whether it is true or not what is uttered by the applicant. Regarding one of the interview faking cases presented in the pattern section, this questioning tool was used to detect incorrect editing of employment length. The question was direct in such a way that it is asked straightforwardly whether the applicant has any gaps in the CV that are not visible. This recruiter has developed a pre-prepared, structured questionnaire to which he submits all applicants:

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I ask the applicant “Interesting CV you have”, then I look at the CV and say “Very good, you have done a lot and probably had many good experiences” “Yes, yes” he says. “Have you had any jobs that we do not see on this CV?” and I look them straight in the eyes when I ask this. When doing this I have experienced that many of them start to hesitate “Yes, when you ask.. Yes I was, I can say it now. I worked in -company name- but it was very poorly arranged. The position was not the same as what had been communicated in advance. So, I figured that I wanted to quit. I have not included it here because it was only a year, so it was not..” So, then you can start to wonder maybe there are several such circumstances. Maybe there are three such circumstances? If so, you suddenly have a completely different applicant in front of you. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

Furthermore, one recruiter is determined to ask references the same questions regarding the applicant's responsibilities to see whether there is a match. We will now take a closer look at the strategy related to the use of references.

***REFERENCES.*** We have found that references are one of the most used strategies for detecting interview faking related to work experience boosting. The strategy is used in such a way that the recruiter contacts the applicant's past or current managers, colleagues, or other necessary references. In this way, the participants believe that they can find out whether there are inconsistencies from what the applicant has said. One concrete example of how this is done is provided by one of our participants:

So, you ask the reference “I see that the applicant writes here that he began working with you January 1 the year 2000”, then he says “Well.., was it 2000? I thought it was 2001 that he started working here. One moment, I will check it out”. Then he says “He started working January 1, 2001.” [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

#### **4.3.3 Strategies for coping with other-intentional motivation**

Some coping strategies are found associated with the pattern of other-intentional motivation. However, lack of strategies is also observed. On several occasions, the recruiters did not manage to detect faking associated with this pattern before

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employment took place or close to the step of signing. The two overall strategies are; awareness that faking occurs and questioning of various kinds. Below we will present these more closely.

**AWARENESS.** One of our participants acts critical and emphasizes that he is aware that applicants may fake their motivation. As a part of his awareness, he states that this is further strengthened by having a dialogue with the applicant related to his or her reason to resign from the current job. Mainly because he believes that resignation may be a potential thematic related to motivation faking. Afterward, he conducts a reference check, asking the same question as why the applicant is resigning. In this way, he can match the two answers against each other to see whether there are any contradictions.

It is tragic if you get an employee who does not really like or manage the tasks, or both. So you have to be very careful with such questions related to motivation. The reference check can be very important in these cases. [...] If we ask “why did you quit your job? It looks like you had a growing career..” “Because, you know they do not invest that much in electric cars, and I kind of see the future ahead of me, so I am applying for this position now at -company name- just to get into what's future-oriented.” That is only one version, not the truth. The truth could be that the person had a declining performance and that the company had started questioning whether he was really the right man for this position. [...] He wanted to get out before the truth was revealed. So, when it comes to reasons for quitting a job, there can often be two opposite explanations between the references and the applicant. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

Another participant also expresses her awareness. Their way of coping with other-intentional motivation, especially towards those who only want a foot in the door, is by making applicants very aware during the interview that they must wait a few years before they possibly can move between departments. This way of managing the applicants' expectations is grounded in her experience of impatience among some employees that are newly employed. She is aware that applicants' motivation is often to be employed in the company and not necessarily the department she recruits to.

A great deal of people start in our department with a desire to move further into the company, and that is very cool. We are usually the entrance gate, and they become very good in our department, and then they move further, but not everyone is supposed to move further. You have those who have very high expectations to move further in the company, and they perhaps did not mention it during their interview, even though we have said that we are very clear that you must expect to work at least two years in this department before moving further. However, they start getting impatient after a few months [...] In such cases, we may consider off-boarding. [Clara, Head of Support Department]

**QUESTIONING.** Different ways of questioning were found within this overall strategy; follow-up questioning, neutral questioning, and SQ.

**Follow-up questioning.** Several of our participants mention that follow-up questions are an excellent tool to uncover applicants' true motivation. One participant state that it is essential for him to ask whether they still want the job several times during the recruitment process. This is to constantly see if the motivation has changed as they get further into the interview process and the applicant has gained more knowledge of the position, salary, and other employees.

We ask several times about motivation “do you still want to get the job? what do you think now? Now that you have become more familiar with the leader and potential colleagues, what do you think? Do you still want to join? And we also ask about the salary “the salary is this much, is this in line with your expectations, do you still want it?” [Felix, Recruitment Company]

Some recruiters use follow-up questions to dig deeper and potentially disclose the applicants' degree of motivation specifically toward the advertised position. It is argued that if the applicant only wants a foot in the door, it is quickly revealed as their answer of motivational triggers might only be grounded in their desire for the company. The method of asking challenging questions toward the applicant is also proposed. Especially if there is a mismatch between the position which the applicant has applied for and his or her education.

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I think it's easy to map out what really motivates people, by asking the right questions. [...] Dare to ask more questions such as “what made you interested in this position?” then they say “I think -company name- is a cool company and it seems cool, and there are a lot of growth opportunities here.” Then I can respond “Oh it is so fun that you think -company name- is exciting, but considering this role, what was it that triggered you in this specific role? Try digging a little deeper in that sense. People will fall through quickly as a result, because then you quickly notice if they want this role or if they have seen the opportunities in the company. [Jenny, Recruitment Company]

We may challenge the applicant a little extra by asking them questions related to the choice of education, if these do not completely correspond to the job they have applied to. “So, I see that you have taken a very technical education, you go to NTNU, and you have chosen only programming subjects, but now you apply to Human Capital which works with people and organizational development. What do you think about that?” So, you kind of ask some extra questions about it, and some of them actually have very good answers, while others have problems answering such questions, so then you can dig even more into it. [Kate, HR Department]

**Neutral questioning and SQ.** Neutral questioning as well as SQ are emphasized as important tools by one of our participants when detecting the lack of motivation. This way of questioning resulted in him revealing, during the interview process, that the applicant did not really want the job. He highlights that neutral questions are helpful to determine what actually is the case.

The thing is to map the situation, the person and ask neutral questions to for example find out: “What do you mean? What is important? Why? [...] It is of course very important to ask neutral questions and some type of situational questions about how the person handles things, to be able to find out what really is the case. [Isaac, Recruitment Company]

#### 4.3.4 Strategies for coping with personality adjustments

Three overall strategies for coping with personality adjustment are found; various questioning techniques, conducting roleplay, and demanding certain references. Furthermore, findings show that several cases of faking were not detected before

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employment. Hence, we argue that companies lack awareness, or subsequently have not developed strategies that are specifically practiced to cope with faking related to personality adjustment. However, we will in the following take a closer look at each of the three strategies found.

**QUESTIONING.** Various forms of questioning contributing to coping with personality adjustment are found among recruiters. In the following, we will review the use of SQ, PBQ, and structured interviews as strategic tools. The overall strategy of using questioning techniques to detect personality adjustment is grounded in several similar statements from our participants; when digging deep enough, you will detect faking as the participant may choke on the answers, to the extent that they no longer make sense.

You will notice, with experience, that, for each interview you have, you will dig a little deeper. With questions like “how are you like that? Why do you consider yourself like that?” and then it stops in a way, because the answer you get does not make sense with the person you have in front of you. [Dylan, Team leader]

**Structured interviews.** Many recruiters practice the use of structured interviews. Some emphasize that a structured interview will help you as an interviewer to stick to a certain set of questions, hence, keeping you on the right track of what you intend to ask. In addition, it is conceived as a tool to keep a similar interview structure among a variety of applicants. One recruiter highlights that structured interview are beneficial to conduct a second interview round somewhat similar to the first and then compare and see whether the applicant’s personality appears the same in both interview rounds. To benefit from this strategy, one of the interviewers who participated in the first round should also participate in round two.

The second round is what is important, because then we are actually asking the same questions as in the first round, but in a different way. So, it is to see if you get the same answers really. [...] We are always several interviewers, I cannot say that it is a strategy we have, but we make sure there are more people involved and that they are not the same every time. So, we can make sure that

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we somehow get more eyes, and more people get a feeling of how the person is. And sometimes we miss. Especially from the first to the second interview, we can make a mistake. Sometimes we have one interviewer that participates in both the first and second interview, but both interviewers from the first round are not in the second. [Clara, Head of Support Department]

**Situational questioning.** To deliberately repeat how the applicant has uttered oneself to be and thereby place it in a situational context accordingly is a highly practiced method among the recruiters. In this way, one might be able to detect whether the applicant is true to his or her stated traits, or if it is a mismatch. Many use this questioning technique together with structured interviews.

Usually the case is that the questions have been set before the interview. A type of question guide, and it is kind of a system to see how the applicant will behave in different situations. So you are going to find out if this person, for example, is good at having many different tasks at the same time. So you can ask “okay have you experienced any such situations?” Where the applicant then says that there may be a situation. So you try to ask more about it by saying “what did you do in that situation?” to get the person to describe how they handled it. [...] It is a type of method where you have a situation, a type of behavior and a result. We call it the SAR method; situation, behavior, result. [...] But the whole purpose is to map out the situation.. or mapping the applicants and what they actually mean. [Isaac, Recruitment Company]

**Past-behavior questions.** PBQ is another technique quite similar to SQ, which is also found to be practiced among some of the recruiters. One then asks for examples from previous events experienced by the applicant, which should describe the given traits. If the applicant is not able to provide any past-behavior examples, it is believed that the applicant may fake. It is argued that if you actually have such a personality or possess the traits you utter to have, it should be possible to give concrete examples from reality.

We very often ask the applicant to give us examples of situations, because it is obvious that it is easy to say that “I am extremely creative” or “I am very, very great at working in teams”. But there you will sometimes see that when you

say “That is very exciting! Can you give me an example from the last time you challenged your group or that the group that in the first place did not agree with your ideas, changed because you managed to convince them?” What you often experience then is that it kind of stops. [...] So we will try to dig deeper by using that type of questions to actually check if you are what you say, because if you are you should be able to talk about it and say why. [Briana, Head of HR Department]

***ROLEPLAY.*** We have chosen to include a strategy which is only practiced by one recruiter. In their recruitment process, they conduct roleplays that are approximately similar to what the position entails. In this way, it is believed that one might figure out what the applicant's true personality traits are. Do they really have the traits accommodating this job which they state that they have, or not?

We have also conducted a task, and it is concerned about the fact that we work on the phone. Some are terribly weak at talking on the phone. It's an art in itself kind of. Some can be enormously good at talking at an interview setting and also tell that they are good at talking on the phone, so it is in this case, kind of a lie. Because they need that physical approach of being able to read people and being able to be real, and then they are on the phone, and you can hear that it is all completely staccato and has no flow because they are not able to reflect upon the person sitting there (on the other side of the line). So, we always run an interview on the phone where basically it is a roleplay. [...] By doing so, we have certainly found applicants who say one thing and are something else. [Dylan, Team leader]

***DEMANDING CERTAIN REFERENCES.*** An issue specifically related to personality faking is that applicants are willing to adjust their traits, and provide references that might be willing to fake accordingly on behalf of the applicant. Therefore, there are some recruiters who do not consider references in themselves as good enough, especially not if they are provided by the applicant. On the contrary, the recruiters demand specific individuals to be the reference for the applicant. In this way, they believe these reference statements are more trustworthy.

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With references it is a very common mistake to only use the references given by the applicant. He or she may write down two names [...] and many employers are very satisfied when they talk to them. They can often be both waterproof and bulletproof and everything [...] I have used a slightly different method, I have said “I can not recommend you (to the customer) if I do not get to talk to all your closest leaders for the last 15 years.” In every situation that it has been possible I have had a personal visit to the reference. Sitting across the table, not just on the phone as you get more valid information. [Aaron, Recruitment Company]

My experience with references is that yes it can give you some degree of value, however most people will give you someone who likes them, who they have a confidence in that will help them get the job. [...] So it's great to ask “who can we ask to be a reference in this case? Who was in charge?” In that way we can find references in the examples they give rather than the standard references they would otherwise provide. [Gabriella, HR Department]

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## PART V: DISCUSSION

### *5.1 Summary of findings*

We have presented the findings from a qualitative study investigating what companies have experienced and caught of interview faking and which strategies they are using to detect or prevent it. Based on 13 interviews, we identified four different patterns of faking behavior applicants have been caught engaging in. We found that the most common faking behaviors detected by interviewers were (1) Education Boosting, (2) Work Experience Boosting, (3) Other-Intentional Motivation, and (4) Personality Adjustment, as presented in Table 5. Moreover, even though we found some strategies to cope with interview faking, our overall finding was that there is a lack of strategies to help recruiters detect and prevent it.

The pattern of education boosting involves applicants faking education-related information or behaving in a certain way to avoid being confronted with degrees of education and grades they do not want to promote. Our findings show that recruiters have detected different cases of faking within this pattern. Applicants have chosen to downplay or avoid informing about negative aspects, such as avoiding mention that they have not finished their education or avoiding uploading a "less successful" certificate. Recruiters have also detected that applicants directly lie about having better grades or a higher degree than reality. The detected faking is linked to some degree of strategies to cope with education boosting. Firstly, we found that one recruiter applies a preventing strategy by warning applicants in advance that a background check will be done to decrease the chance of applicants submitting a fake application. Secondly, two common strategies were found amongst the recruiters; verification of diplomas and follow-up questioning.

The pattern of work experience boosting involves applicants being dishonest about previous work experiences and other work-related situations. Our findings show that applicants have exaggerated their possession of competence in both previous and current areas of responsibility, accomplished results, and system experiences. Recruiters have also detected that some applicants have a higher willingness to edit the length of previous employment to hide negative aspects to appear as a better applicant. Finally, it is found that some applicants falsify parts of their certification or their entire work history. The detected faking is linked to some

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degree of strategies to cope with work experience boosting. The two main strategies found are; questioning and references. Within questioning, the recruiters have used follow-up questioning, in addition to SQ. However, we observe that several of the faking cases discovered in this pattern have been detected by coincidence and often after employment has been made.

The pattern of other-intentional motivation involves applicants being dishonest about their motivation for applying to the specific job. Our findings show that applicants fake their level of motivation to increase their chance of getting the job. Such behavior has been faked to get a foot in the door of the desired company, increase salary in a present position, or obtain a job in general. Moreover, we found two main strategies to cope with other-intentional motivation; awareness and questioning. Within questioning, follow-up questions, neutral questions and SQ are especially emphasized. However, we have observed that recruiters still lack more clear strategies to consciously cope with this faking pattern.

The pattern of personality adjustment involves applicants faking their personality. By personality it is meant who you are as a person; how you act in different settings and what qualities/characteristics you possess. Our findings show that applicants are willing to exaggerate and lie about their personality traits to appear as better-suited applicants for the specific position. In several cases, it included repeatedly adjusting personality traits to suit the traits requested in the job advertisement. Additionally, several applicants have been unable to provide real-life past-behavior examples even though they overflow the recruiter with information regarding their abilities to handle certain situations. Last but not least, applicants tend to downplay, hide, or silence negatively related aspects of themselves or avoid such themes by expressing yet another good quality instead. Furthermore, we found that recruiters have practiced some degree of strategies to cope with this faking pattern. For instance, we found three categories of strategies; questioning, roleplay, and demanding certain references. Within questioning, we found three techniques; structured interview, SQ, and PBQ. Even though several of the cases were discovered during the interview process, some were detected after employment. Thus, there is still a lack of concrete strategies to cope with this faking pattern.

Finally, one of our major findings is that companies in general have few strategies to cope with interview faking. For instance, we found that strategies

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linked to three out of four faking patterns were poorly used as most of the cases were detected by coincidence. The one faking pattern where we found a higher level of detection success was education boosting, which may be easier to detect as companies today have access to digital verification tools to verify diplomas.

## ***5.2 Linking back to theory***

Previous research has already found that faking is a common activity within employment interviews (Melchers et al., 2020), of which we were eager to find out whether companies experienced specific patterns related to this. As presented in our findings, we have identified four different patterns of interview faking. All four patterns consist of faking behaviors that can be described as a conscious and deceptive IM that are used by applicants to portray themselves as a better applicant and create a favorable perception to the interviewer (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Furthermore, which coping strategies companies' practice was relevant to investigate. In order to decrease interview faking we believe that recruiters should focus on decreasing applicants' opportunity to fake, in accordance with Levashina and Campion (2006) faking behavior model. However, this study has enabled us to conclude that detecting interview faking is considered problematic for recruiters as a larger number of the detected cases were discovered only after employment and not through conscious strategies. This finding corresponds to previous research done by Roulin, Bangerter, and Levashina (2014). Detecting faking at this late stage can be considered unfavorable as it can cause a lot of inconvenience to the companies compared to if faking is detected during the interview process. Moreover, our observations show that companies, in general, do not consider faking as a critical issue to the interview processes, making recruiters easily verify information provided by the applicant. By doing so, recruiters may actually improve faking success (Levashina and Campion, 2006). Hence, development of strategies that can verify applicants' statements in other ways should be considered more seriously. This is mainly related to the patterns of work experience boosting, personality adjustment, and other-intentional motivation as these do not have the same opportunity to use a verification platform (Vitnemålsportalen) as within the pattern of education boosting. The need for validating and implementing effective

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strategies to improve faking detection is also proposed in the literature review by Melchers and colleagues (2020).

Levashina and Campion (2007) state that job applicants use assertive tactics to obtain and promote favorable impressions of themselves. The applicants are doing so by portraying themselves as a particular type of person with particular beliefs, opinions, knowledge, and experience. After having conducted our study, we experienced some of the same. For instance, we found that knowledge and experience were promoted with IM tactics within both education boosting and work experience boosting. Within education boosting, we found a case where the applicant was an engineer but embellished his education by saying that he was a civil engineer. The applicant used a slightly deceptive image creation tactic to create an image of a better applicant. The same applicant also told that he graduated from a high prestige school that he never attended and therefore also used extensive image creation tactics. Not only did the applicant use self-focused IM tactics to create an image of a higher educated person, but he also claimed to be graduating from a specific institute, which is considered lying (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Moreover, we also found applicants engaging in image protection. When applicants intentionally choose not to upload their diplomas because they are dissatisfied with their grades, they are faking to protect an image of a good applicant. This is a mild form of faking where the applicant engages in defensive tactics (Roulin et al., 2015). In addition, we found one participant who presented a more preventive tactic. The applicants are being warned before submitting their application that a background check will be conducted at a later stage in the recruitment process. As an applicant's willingness to fake depends on their psychological and emotional characteristics (Levashina & Campion, 2006) it is possible to assess whether this preventive strategy can affect the applicants' willingness. Nevertheless, in what way it impacts faking success or not is impossible to say without conducting more specific research on this subject. Melchers and colleagues (2020) recommended warning as a strategy. However, their recommendations were based upon research on noncognitive selection measures done by Dwight and Donovan (2003). Their study has shown that warned applicants tend to have lower predictor and faking scale scores compared to those who are not warned. Therefore, it may be relevant for further research to investigate whether the effect is the same on cognitive selection measures.

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Within work experience boosting, recruiters have experienced applicants exaggerating their system knowledge. By doing so, the applicants are engaging in IM tactics. In the literature of IM, exaggerating system knowledge would generally be labeled as “self-promotion” (Bourdage et al., 2018). This could indeed be the case, however, there are different levels of self-promotion tactics. For instance, the applicant may use honest self-promotion tactics by stating that they have experience with a specific system when it is true. However, as this is not considered faking, we do not have any cases with such tactics. If the applicant has basic skills but embellished it, they are using a slightly deceptive image creation tactic. This level of self-promotion is what we have observed from the recruiters we have interviewed. We have also found applicants using extremely deceptive image creation tactics by saying they have system knowledge when they do not have any. This is the worst type of self-promotion applicants can engage in for the companies (Bourdage et al., 2018), which we also experienced in our study resulting in wrong hiring.

Within our findings of other-intentional motivation, we found that a few recruiters showed awareness that applicants can fake and might be willing to fake. More closely, we saw how one participant utilized the strategy fully by not only being aware of it but using the awareness to double-check with other sources. The recruiter had an idea that resignation could be a potential factor that should be observed as it might indicate what an applicant's actual motivation is. According to Melchers and colleagues (2020), being aware that most applicants do fake is a highly recommended strategy for recruiters. Hence, we strongly recommend this way of approaching interview faking.

Mazar and colleagues (2008) put forward that people will typically engage in dishonest behaviors only to the extent that their dishonest acts will allow them to maintain their positive view of themselves. This indicates that the degree to which they fake may be considered difficult to detect by a recruiter. Slight adjustments may be considered acceptable by an applicant but may have greater consequences for a recruiter in terms of understanding who the person really is. Related to the pattern of personality adjustment we see this especially as applicants might more easily downplay or level up their traits. We have not looked upon the reasons for this, but it is conceivable that it may be because it is harder to evaluate what the truth is. However, in today's modern interview process, we are aware that many

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companies conduct personality tests on their applicants, but how good these tools are will not be discussed here. We also found that applicants used defensive image protection tactics during interviews, of which they exclude important information intentionally or hide their true personality (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Recruiters experience that applicants avoid answering the questions related to negative aspects of themselves, or turn their answer into just another favorable trait. By doing so, they hide parts of their personality. As one of our participants stated: “I want to hear a real bad quality, like everyone has something” [Dylan, Team leader]. In other words, no one is perfect, and for recruiters, it is crucial for the employment to know who you really have in front of you when interviewing. Furthermore, our findings show that applicants exclude important and necessary information such as whether they have been a part of labor- or cooperation disputes previously, which is perceived as intentionally by the recruiters.

Our study shows that companies use follow-up questions as a strategy to detect faking in three of the four faking patterns. We believe that this finding is particularly interesting as it opposes what previous research has found as effective. Levashina and Campion (2007) found that follow-up questioning significantly increased all types of faking behaviors, including both SQ and PBQ. Indeed, applicants perceived follow-up questioning as a cue signaling what kinds of answers were important rather than a response of verification. This is also supported by Melchers and colleagues (2020), which says that one should not ask follow-up questions if you want to avoid faking. In contrast, our findings show that recruiters use follow-up questions to detect faking and have also stated that “the more follow-up questions the harder it is to stick to a lie” [Jenny]. It might be that recruiters detect faking when they ask follow-up questions because they have increased the faking themselves by asking such questions.

Levashina and Campion (2007) found that job applicants would engage more often in all types of faking behaviors when answering SQ rather than PBQ. Compared to our study, we found that both PBQ and SQ is a common strategy used by recruiters. We did not observe that the recruiters had any criticism towards these strategies even though past research shows that it can increase faking. For instance, previous findings show that self-focused and defensive IM tactics such as image creation and image protection are more used by applicants when PBQ are asked. At the same time, other-focused IM tactics such as ingratiation are more used when

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recruiters apply SQ. By being aware of what type of questioning triggers different IM tactics, in addition to what type of IM that is usually used within each pattern, the recruiters could try to use the opposite type of questioning as a strategy to decrease faking.

To some degree, we observed that recruiters were practicing the strategy of pre-prepared structured interviews. Despite structured interviews being considered more valid and reliable than unstructured interviews (Levashina et al., 2014), it demands, according to Blackman (2002), that interviewers ask the same questions to all applicants without the use of follow-up questions. However, our study shows that recruiters combine the use of structured interviews with follow-up questions. In this way, the interview technique is considered more semi-structured, and whether this impact faking success is unknown.

As a final discussion, we would emphasize that our study is mainly based on cases of interview faking which is detected by recruiters, and we can therefore not state anything concerning how commonly it is to fake in relation to these four patterns. However, as Levashina and Campion (2007) found that over 90% of undergraduate job applicants fake during employment interviews, it is likely to believe that there are many more cases than those included in this study. Accordingly, there might be a correlation between this and our findings related to the recruiters' poor ability to use strategies to detect faking.

### ***5.3 Contribution to the interview faking literature***

We consider our research to be a contribution to the already existing literature on interview faking in such matters that we have found four main patterns of faking which have not previously been observed. We would argue that these patterns make it easier to gain an understanding of what applicants are faking in the sense of what recruiters manage to detect. We hope that it is desirable for some to look further into these.

Furthermore, we believe in having found evidence that a larger proportion of recruiters lack focus on developing strategies to cope with faking. Hence, we have also strengthened previous findings that indicate that detecting faking is a difficult task for recruiters. It is to be considered even more difficult if one does not take into account and accept that faking occurs. However, we did find some

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strategies which have previously been studied, while others have not. On the one hand, researchers have previously looked at the use of questioning techniques such as follow-up questions, structured interviews, SQ and PBQ, in addition to awareness. This has been discussed in the section above. On the other hand, we have not found anyone who has validated the use of roleplay, demanding certain references, and more specifically the use of warnings in cognitive selection measurements (not testing, but regular interview dialogue where intuition is a huge part of the selection). It would have been exciting to see further research on the effect of these strategies.

#### ***5.4 Limitations and further studies***

The aim of our study was to explore whether companies utilize strategies that are able to detect interview faking among applicants. Despite all the precautions we have taken in connection to our research method, there are some limitations in the study. As the sample was random, it was somewhat difficult to control the type of positions the recruiters mainly recruited for. We may consider this a limitation as most of our participants were primarily recruited for management positions or positions within IT and technology. However, not all of our participants had this affiliation. Hence, this does not mean that our findings are not trustworthy, but rather that the findings have some restriction in the variation among the participants. Therefore, we suggest that further studies are needed to validate the generalizability of the findings. Further, there should also be a different variation in the sample to investigate whether this also applies to other recruitment groups.

A second limitation is that it can be difficult to create trust between us as interviewers and the participants. Since almost all participants were currently working, trust is considered specifically important to avoid doubt in information sharing in fear of appearing unprofessional. However, we experienced that we established a good connection with all the interviewees. Everyone willingly shared stories while highlighting their interest in the topic. Nevertheless, we do not know if important information has been omitted. Further studies might be conducted on recruiters who have recently resigned. In that way, one may be able to obtain answers that are related to recent practice, at the same time as there might be a lower threshold to withhold information in fear of appearing unprofessional.

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In addition to limitations within this study and further studies in connection to these, we have also found subjects of interest which should further be investigated. Firstly, research on the effect of warning applicants in advance that regulations of faking will take place in cognitive selection measures should be conducted. Secondly, we hope someone wants to look further at the four main categories of faking to see to what degree these are generalizable across search groups. Thirdly, three strategies to cope with interview faking have not yet been validated upon their effectiveness; roleplay, demanding certain references, and the use of warnings in cognitive selection measurements. We recommend further studies to research their impact on faking success.

Other topics of interest that are closely related to this study are recommended for further studies. The similarity effect might be a strong influence on why applicants choose to fake during interviews as it is conceivable that applicants try to adapt to the interviewer. Hence, further research on this phenomenon in connection to interview faking is recommended. Furthermore, our study focuses on statements and views from the recruiters alone and not statements from the applicants. It may be interesting to research further into the background of why applicants fake. Some of our participants mentioned an unequal distribution between the companies that recruit and the applicants. More specifically, more is required of the applicants than of the companies. Applicants are asked to share a lot of information about themselves, while companies may share only a small amount, which may lead to applicants being more triggered to fake. We hope someone finds this interesting and wants to do further research on it.

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## PART VI: CONCLUSION

*Interviewing is rather like a marriage: everybody knows what it is, an awful lot of people do it, and yet behind each closed front door there is a world of secrets.*

- Oakley (1981, p. 3)

In this thesis we have explored what kind of interview faking behavior companies have experienced and caught job applicants engage in, and what coping strategies companies use to detect and prevent it from happening. Despite the limitations of this study, we have been able to make interesting observations for both theory and practice. Our study contributes to the current literature by providing real-life examples experienced by recruiters, which gives a broader understanding of what type of behaviors applicants actually fake when they get caught. Previous research on interview faking has not yet focused on patterns among faking behaviors. In addition, extant research has stated that recruiters, in general, are poor at detecting faking without emphasizing how they try to cope with it. In contrast, we have studied how companies handle interview faking grounded in their experiences. Based on the interviews, we identified four main patterns of interview faking; education boosting, work experience boosting, other-intentional motivation, and personality adjustment. Within each of the four patterns, we found some degree of coping strategies conducted by the recruiters. However, we recognize that some of the strategies were not done purposely with detecting faking in mind, it was rather in most cases simple interview techniques conducted mainly to get to know the applicant better. One of our major findings is that companies generally have few strategies to cope with interview faking. For instance, we found that strategies to cope with three out of four faking patterns were poorly used as most cases were detected by coincidence.

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## APPENDIX

### *Appendix 1: Complete interview guide*

<b>Mentioned to the participants at the beginning of each interview:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What we define as faking.</li> <li>• Audio recordings are taken, which will be deleted at the end of the project.</li> <li>• We only want information about cases/stories/situations where interview faking was discovered and not identifiable information about third parties.</li> </ul>	
<b>Question themes</b>	<b>Questions</b>
Q1: Background of participants	<b>1. Can you please start by giving us a brief biography of yourself and your professional background?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What industry, how long, etc.?</li> <li>○ How long have you been working within recruitment?</li> </ul>
Q2: Episodes of interview faking	<b>2. Can you think of an episode where an applicant engaged in interview faking?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What did the applicant fake about?</li> <li>○ What happened next?</li> <li>○ How did you detect it?</li> <li>○ Could you have done something different during the interview to detect it earlier?</li> </ul> <b>3. Do you have specific examples of where faking has been discovered in retrospect?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Could something have been done differently so that it could have been discovered in retrospect?</li> </ul> <b>4. Do you believe that there is a degree to how “dishonest” or honest a applicant should be?</b>
Q3: Unsuccessful employment	<b>5. Have you ever hired the wrong person because of faking?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What did the applicant fake?</li> <li>○ Looking back, could you have detected the faking during the interview?</li> <li>○ Were there any signs or signals there that you should have intercepted?</li> </ul> <b>6. Did you experience any cases that put the company in a difficult situation after hiring because the applicant had provided incorrect information during the interview process?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you want to tell what the applicant was dishonest about and how this affected the company?</li> </ul>

Q4: Interview faking patterns	<p><b>7. In what matter do the applicants usually fake?</b></p> <p><b>8. Have you experienced some changes in applicants faking patterns over the years?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If yes: What has changed? When?</li> <li>○ Are there any specific patterns that have stood out in the last years of your career?</li> <li>○ Can you imagine a reason for why there has been this change?</li> </ul> <p><b>9. Have you experienced a pattern among the applicants who fake?</b></p>
Q5: Strategies to prevent and detect	<p><b>10. Do you have any strategies to prevent and detect dishonest applicants before an interview process?</b></p> <p><b>11. Did you have any strategies to rule out exaggeration/hiding of characteristics <i>during</i> the actual interview?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Did the strategy work?</li> <li>○ If so: How did you find out they had not told the truth?</li> <li>○ If not: why do you think it did not work? What could have been done differently?</li> </ul> <p><b>12. Did you have any strategies <i>after</i> the interview to detect faking?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you have any stories you can share with us about just this, where applicants were caught for being "dishonest"?</li> </ul> <p><b>13. If you are conducting several interviews: How do you decide who will interview the applicants?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Do you consider this a strategy? In what way?</li> </ul> <p><b>14. Have you ever had to change strategies on the basis of experience with faking?</b></p> <p><b>15. How many interviewers do you usually have in an interview and have you experienced that you (the interviewers) have had a different experience of whether an applicant seems dishonest or not in an interview?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If so: what do you think is the reason?</li> </ul>
Q6: Reflections	<p><b>16. Is there anything you would like to add?</b></p>

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**Appendix 2: Coding of data**

<b>RQ 1 - Faking Behavior</b>		<b>Faking Patterns</b>	<b>RQ 2 - Strategies</b>	
<b>First-order concepts</b>	<b>Second-order themes</b>		<b>Second-order themes</b>	<b>First-order concepts</b>
- Fake education institute	Education institution	Education Boosting	Prevention	- Give information of background check in advance
- Manipulate diploma - Manipulate diploma - Fake good grades and then “forget” to upload unsuccessful diploma	Grades		Verification	- Verify diploma with university - Verify through Vitnemålsportalen - Verify through Vitnemålsportalen
			Follow-up questioning	- Detect by using many follow-up questions
- Fake education level - Fake accomplished education - Fake accomplished education	Education level		Coincidence	- Detected faking by a coincidence
- Fake size of responsibility and results in project - Fake size of responsibility and results on project - Exaggerate work experience and responsibility - Fake work competence - Exaggerate work experience on CV - Overselling work experience on CV - Fake responsibility at work - Fake work competence - Fake responsibility at work - Faked entire work history - Fake responsibility on project - Fake work competence - Fake responsibility at work	Work experience, competence, responsibility, and results	Work Experience Boosting	Questioning	- SQ - Control-questioning, follow-up questioning - SQ - Follow-up questioning - Dialogue with the applicant, digging - Ask follow-up questions about their CV - Ask follow-up questions - Ask follow-up questions, digging - Confront the applicant - Ask whether everything is listed on their CV

- Fake work experience - Fake responsibility at work - Faked entire work history				
- Exaggerate experience with systems - Overselling experience with systems - Exaggerating knowledge with systems	System knowledge		References	- Ask references - Reference check - Ask references - Ask references - Reference check
- Edit length of employment on CV - Dates on CV was edited	Length of employment		Coincidence	- Detected by a coincidence - Not detected before after employment - Not detected before after employment - Detected as a coincidence after employment - Not detected before after employment - Not detected before after employment
- Edit certificate from leader - Faked certificates - Faked certificates	Edit/falsify certificates			
- Wanted a foot inside the company - Wished to work for another department	A foot in the door	Other-Intentional Motivation	Awareness	- Aware to the question of motivation - Aware that some may lack motivation for the position
- Wished to get higher salary in current position	Better offer in current position		Questioning	- SQ, and neutral questions - Mapping, asking the right questions - Ask challenging questions - Ask for their knowledge of the company - Ask neutral questions
- Wanted to work in an office				- Detected when one was supposed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applied for a undesired job</li> <li>- Applies for any kind of job</li> </ul>	Obtain a job in general		Coincidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to sign</li> <li>- Not detected before after employment</li> <li>- Not detected before after employment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Describes oneself as gentle, not perceived that way</li> <li>- Overselling a beneficial trait</li> <li>- Overselling a beneficial trait</li> <li>- Overselling oneself as independent</li> <li>- Overselling oneself as extrovert</li> <li>- Overselling oneself as extrovert</li> </ul>	Traits associated to certain positions	Personality Adjustment	Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Neutral questions, question-guide, SQ, SAR-method</li> <li>- SQ</li> <li>- Avoids leading questions, structured interviews</li> <li>- Structured interview, similar questions in first and second interview</li> <li>- SQ</li> <li>- Follow-up questioning</li> <li>- Asks for negative traits</li> <li>- Asks for improvement areas</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reflect traits uttered in the ad</li> <li>- Reflect traits uttered in the ad</li> </ul>	Adjusting traits to job advertisement		Roleplay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make applicants perform roleplay similar to the job</li> </ul>
			Demanding certain references	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ask for certain individuals to be references</li> <li>- Ask who's in charge, demand that reference</li> <li>- Ask for additional references besides the given</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not answering to questions regarding negative aspects</li> <li>- Not answering to questions regarding improvement area</li> <li>- Downplaying work-conflict and cooperation-conflict</li> </ul>	Downplaying negative traits		Coincidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not detected before after employment</li> <li>- Not detected before after employment</li> <li>- Not detected before after employment</li> </ul>