Social Anxiety and Evaluative Interviews*

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Abstract

Evaluative social interactions are pervasive in labor markets. Inequality in these settings can arise not only from how individuals are treated or perform when evaluated, but from whether they enter evaluation at all. We study these margins in the context of social anxiety. In a controlled online experiment (N = 922), applicants decide whether to complete a live video interview that determines a monetary hiring bonus. We find that inequities associated with social anxiety are concentrated in participation rather than in performance or treatment. Socially anxious applicants are substantially less willing to interview, hold more pessimistic beliefs about being hired, and correctly anticipate a worse experience. Yet they perform no worse and are evaluated no differently. Interview experience does not attenuate the relative pessimism of socially anxious individuals, a pattern that is inconsistent with Bayesian updating under comparable signals. We use our rich audio-visual data and open-ended reflection texts to show that, instead, socially anxious applicants interpret similar interactions more negatively. We then provide evidence on organizational interventions aimed at closing social anxiety gaps. Finally, we show that social anxiety explains a meaningful share of inequalities commonly attributed to gender and social skill differences and is associated with significant earnings gaps in national data.

Keywords: Social anxiety, job interviews, beliefs, mental health, discrimination, learning.

JEL Codes: D83, J71, I10, C90.

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1 Introduction

Social anxiety is the fear of being scrutinized and negatively evaluated by others. It is increasingly prevalent, particularly among young adults (Heimberg et al., 2014; Goodwin et al., 2020). At the same time, labor-market returns to social skills have grown sharply (Deming, 2017; Edin et al., 2022), and access to many economic opportunities relies on social evaluation. These trends imply that a sizable and growing fraction of the population faces psychological frictions precisely in the interactions that are increasingly important in determining upward economic mobility. Yet economists know little about whether social anxiety hinders performance in evaluative settings, leads to discrimination by evaluators, or causes individuals to opt out of opportunities altogether. Distinguishing among these margins is necessary for understanding the role of mental health in labor-market access and for designing effective interventions.

This paper provides the first experimental evidence on how social anxiety shapes participation, performance, and treatment in a consequential evaluative interaction: a live, face-to-face interview that determines whether the applicant is hired for a sizable bonus. We recruit 922 online workers, measure social anxiety using a clinically validated scale, and place each worker in a live evaluative interview. Interviewers, trained on a standardized protocol and blind to applicants' mental-health status, are tasked with assessing performance on an objective task. Our design isolates three possible sources of inequality: self-selection into interviews, performance in interviews, and differential treatment by interviewers. It also allows us to collect incentivized beliefs before and after the interview to study how social anxiety relates to expectations and belief updating. We complement these measures with open-ended responses, transcripts, and audiovisual data to characterize how applicants experience and interpret the interviews.

Our first set of results concerns avoidance and prior beliefs about the interview. Socially anxious individuals are substantially less willing to interview, requiring higher compensation to participate. They are also more pessimistic about how unpleasant the interview will feel. These findings confirm that social anxiety—measured as self-reported avoidance of and apprehension about a range of social situations—manifests as expected in our economic setting. Less is known about how social anxiety relates to performance beliefs. We find that socially anxious individuals hold markedly more pessimistic expectations about their probability of being hired and about being judged competent and likeable by interviewers. Importantly, this social-anxiety gap in performance beliefs does not reflect a general pessimism bias: socially anxious applicants are no less confident about their performance on a non-social task for which they are being interviewed. Social-

anxiety gaps in anticipated enjoyment and performance beliefs strongly predict avoidance, and participants' open-ended explanations emphasize hedonic considerations and expected performance as key drivers of their stated willingness to pay.

Our second set of results examines actual interview performance and experience. We find no evidence that social anxiety reduces interview performance. Socially anxious and socially secure applicants are hired at identical rates, receive indistinguishable performance assessments, and are rated as equally likeable by interviewers. The performance deficits anticipated by socially anxious applicants are therefore not borne out in realized outcomes. In contrast, their expectations about the hedonic experience are accurate as socially anxious applicants report significantly worse interview experiences. Taken together, these findings suggest that inequality arises primarily from self-selection rather than from discrimination or performance deficits. To the extent that socially anxious individuals avoid interviews because they expect to perform poorly, this avoidance appears excessive: unlike their anticipated discomfort, their anticipated performance disadvantage is not realized.

Our third set of results is concerned with whether experience narrows social anxiety gaps in beliefs. This speaks to a longstanding puzzle in the psychology literature on social anxiety. Even very socially anxious individuals are exposed to social interactions with some frequency, and exposure has been found helpful in treating many other phobias (Clark and Wells, 1995). So how can social anxiety persist? Indeed, we find that experience does not narrow social-anxiety gaps in beliefs. Leveraging the structure of our data, we show that the magnitude and direction of belief updating are inconsistent with Bayesian updating under the assumption that socially anxious and socially secure applicants receive similar signals. Updating among the socially anxious is systematically less positive. To distinguish differential treatment from differential interpretation, we analyze coded transcripts, facial-expression measures, tone-of-voice indicators, and structured reflection texts. Interviewers behave similarly toward the two groups on all relevant observable dimensions, implying that socially anxious applicants do not receive more negative signals. Instead, they interpret similar interactions differently. Open-ended reflection texts reveal that socially anxious applicants focus more on negative aspects of the interview, impose excessively high performance standards on themselves, and articulate negative beliefs about how they were perceived, with these patterns strongly predicting posterior beliefs. Social anxiety thus operates as a bottom-up process, directing attention to negative aspects of inherently ambiguous social interactions. And, as a result, relative pessimism is invulnerable to exposure, contributing to and potentially explaining the persistence of social anxiety.

Our findings have implications for how organizations might seek to reduce the mental-health inequity we document. One might have hypothesized that interviewers discriminate against socially anxious applicants, perhaps inadvertently mistaking markers of anxiety for signals of lower ability. Because we find no such discrimination, interventions targeting implicit or explicit bias are unlikely to close social-anxiety gaps. Similarly, simple exposure to interviews is unlikely to eliminate pessimism, which we show to be insensitive to experience. We therefore ask whether the interpersonal quality of the interview can improve belief updating. Random assignment to interviewers whom other applicants rate as warmer or more comforting does not lead to more positive relative updating by socially anxious individuals. In contrast, changing the cost of interviewing matters: reducing participation frictions increases the representation of socially anxious applicants among interviewees.

One unorthodox feature of our approach is our use of clinical-style scales in an economics experiment. Using a validated instrument such as the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale provides a well-established construct with clear psychometric properties and ensures comparability with a large psychological and medical literature. Importantly, however, all of our results are robust to a much simpler measure: participants' own answer to the question "Are you socially anxious?". Social anxiety is salient enough to those who experience it that self-reports strongly align with the validated scale. At the same time, one might worry that our measure is simply capturing correlated conditions—a concern we take seriously, as mental-health conditions are often comorbid. Indeed, we observe similar qualitative patterns for depression, generalized anxiety disorder, neuroticism, and low self-esteem. Yet these patterns disappear once we control for social anxiety. This suggests that social anxiety is not merely a proxy for comorbid conditions, but a distinct and economically meaningful trait in its own right.

A separate concern is that our stylized interview may not reproduce the features of real interviews that socially anxious individuals find most challenging, or the avoidance they exhibit in real labor markets. To assess this, we fielded a nationally representative survey of early-career U.S. adults (N = 1,003). Socially anxious respondents are significantly more likely to report having avoided applying for a job or having withdrawn from an application because they did not want to interview, mirroring the participation wedge we document in the experiment. Moreover, the features they report worrying about in real interviews are well matched by our paradigm.

Our last set of findings places the experiment in the context of broader labor-market inequality. We first show that the participation wedge extends to other career-relevant interpersonal decisions involving social risks. In vignettes featured in our nationally

representative survey, socially anxious individuals report lower willingness to negotiate their salary and to approach senior colleagues for networking. We then show that, in our experiment, social anxiety accounts for a substantial share of the predictive power of the Deming (2017) social skills index for interview avoidance and hiring beliefs, but not for actual performance, suggesting that the index captures both social competence and anxiety-driven avoidance and pessimism. Motivated by the higher prevalence of social anxiety among women (Asher, Asnaani and Aderka, 2017), we show that social anxiety accounts for roughly one-third of the gender gaps in willingness to interview and hiring beliefs. Finally, using data from the National Comorbidity Survey, we document that socially anxious individuals face an earnings penalty of 0.08 to 0.25 standard deviations, even after controlling for other mental-health conditions.

Taken together, our findings show that inequities associated with social anxiety arise primarily because socially anxious individuals opt out of evaluative situations due to relative pessimism, not because they are treated worse or perform worse when they participate. Because this relative pessimism does not respond to experience, simple exposure is unlikely to close gaps. Policies that lower the frictions to showing up – for example, low-stakes preliminary interactions, asynchronous introductions, flexible formats, or default scheduling – may hold greater promise for improving participation. Given that social anxiety can account for a meaningful share of labor market inequality, addressing it directly is an important component of any policy aimed at achieving equity.

Our paper contributes to the growing literature on mental health and labor market outcomes (Lund et al., 2019; Angelucci and Bennett, 2024; Biasi, Dahl and Moser, 2023; Ridley, 2025). Correspondence experiments show that disclosing mental illness reduces employer callbacks (Hipes et al., 2016; Baert et al., 2016; Bjørnshagen, 2021), and Ridley (2025) demonstrates that individuals are willing to pay to avoid working with depressed or anxious partners despite no objective differences in productivity. These studies document discrimination in settings where mental health conditions are disclosed. We instead study a setting in which the mental health condition is not disclosed, though it could in principle be observable. Our design allows us to identify both selection into interviewing and performance conditional on interviewing. We find that inequality is concentrated on the selection margin: socially anxious applicants are less willing to interview and hold more pessimistic expectations about their performance, despite being hired at similar rates. Our results thus identify a participation wedge that, for social anxiety, appears more important than the demand-side mechanisms emphasized in prior work.[1]

[1]A related literature in psychology studies interview anxiety and performance (see Powell, Stanley and Brown (2018) for a review). A small subset of this work examines social anxiety specifically (Strahan and

Relatedly, a burgeoning body of work documents how stereotypes or inaccurate beliefs about group-level differences can generate discriminatory treatment by evaluators (Möbius and Rosenblat, 2006; Bordalo et al., 2016; Bohren, Imas and Rosenberg, 2019; Bordalo et al., 2019; Coffman, Exley and Niederle, 2021; Campos-Mercade and Mengel, 2024; Lepage, 2024; Bohren et al., 2025). We find no evidence of such discrimination. Instead, the relevant belief distortion arises on the applicant side. Our findings therefore connect to a nascent literature on anticipated discrimination, which shows that beliefs about unfair treatment can shape educational investment (Lepage, Li and Zafar, 2025), identity disclosure (Charness et al., 2020; Aksoy, Chadd and Koh, 2023), and cooperation (Rustagi and Schief, 2024). We show that social anxiety is associated with unwarranted relative pessimism about evaluative outcomes, which manifests as a participation wedge in entry into evaluative settings.

Our paper also contributes to the literature on the labor-market returns to noncognitive skills (Heckman, Stixrud and Urzua, 2006; Lindqvist and Vestman, 2011). This work has examined the association of social skills (Deming, 2017; Aghion et al., 2024) and socially relevant traits such as extraversion (Izadi and Tuhkuri, 2024) with favorable labor market outcomes. There is some conceptual overlap between social anxiety and these measures. For example, Deming's (2017) social skills index includes questions about shyness in childhood and adulthood. However, reduced-form evidence on labor market outcomes typically does not allow researchers to disentangle whether inequalities arise from self-selection, discrimination, or lower performance, nor does it isolate which dimensions of sociality drive these inequalities. Leveraging experimental control, we pinpoint social anxiety as a source of self-selection out of evaluative social tasks and of persistent relative pessimism about such tasks, but not as a source of lower performance within them. Social anxiety accounts for roughly one third of the relationship between Deming's (2017) social skills index and interview avoidance, yet social skills remain conceptually distinct and continue to robustly predict hiring outcomes after controlling for social anxiety.

Relatedly, our findings speak to the literature on gender gaps in confidence (Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007; Exley and Kessler, 2022). Biasi and Sarsons (2021) show that confidence in talking to strangers, a construct related to social anxiety, partially accounts for gender gaps in salary negotiations. We show that controlling for social anxiety reduces gender gaps in willingness to interview and in beliefs about performance by around one

Conger, 1998; Lazar, Kravetz and Zinger, 2004; McCarthy and Goffin, 2004; Budnick, Kowal and Santuzzi, 2015; Budnick et al., 2019; Feiler and Powell, 2016). Of these, only Strahan and Conger (1998) and Feiler and Powell (2016) use clinically validated measures of social anxiety, and none benchmark interviewer evaluations against objective measures of task ability, measure selection into interviewing, or elicit beliefs about interview performance. Two of these studies also rely on a single confederate as the interviewer.

third, suggesting that social anxiety may be an important microfoundation of gender differences in labor-market behavior.

Finally, our work contributes to the literature on belief updating. A number of studies document how instrumental and hedonic motives for holding positive beliefs generate asymmetric updating, with negative signals weighted less heavily than positive signals (Möbius et al., 2022; Coutts, 2019; Schwardmann and van der Weele, 2019; Schwardmann, Tripodi and van der Weele, 2022). This motivated cognition literature provides theories of when and why individuals are prone to optimism. By contrast, there has been little theorizing or empirical evidence on when and why individuals are prone to pessimism. Using coded interview transcripts and open-ended reflections analyzed with large language models, we show that social anxiety directs attention toward negative evaluations of social encounters. Unlike the top-down self-deceptive processes that give rise to optimism, social anxiety operates as a bottom-up process associated with persistent pessimism.

2 Experimental Design

2.1 Design Overview

Our experiment is designed to mirror a hiring setting in which applicants' task ability is evaluated through an interview. We recruit participants to serve as applicants, and separately recruit experienced interviewers, whom we train on a standardized interview protocol.

Applicants complete live video interviews, with incentives aligned to real-world hiring decisions: applicants benefit from being hired, and interviewers benefit from hiring high performers. Our design allows us to observe features typically unavailable in real-world hiring: task ability for both hired and non-hired applicants, and willingness to participate in the interview. We obtain an objective measure of task performance for all applicants prior to the interview, and elicit applicants' reservation prices for participating in the interview, providing an incentivized measure of interview avoidance.

We also collect detailed belief measures before and after the interview to study belief gaps between socially anxious and socially secure participants, and the effects of interview experience on these gaps. Given evidence in psychology suggesting that rumination leads to more pessimistic beliefs among the socially anxious (Clark and Wells, 1995; Brozovich and Heimberg, 2008), we randomly assign applicants to reflect on the interview experience either before or after reporting post-interview beliefs. The full study timeline is summarized in Figure 1.

As we do not exogenously vary social anxiety, one concern is that the patterns we observe may reflect other characteristics correlated with social anxiety rather than social anxiety itself. To help address this, we measure a wide range of potential correlates including personality traits, psychological characteristics, social skills, and demographics.

2.2 Procedures

Applicant Task. Applicants complete a transcription-error task in which they identify the number of discrepancies between handwritten text and typed transcriptions.[2] We chose this task because it resembles typical online gig work and, given that social anxiety varies by gender (Asher, Asnaani and Aderka, 2017), we wanted to avoid tasks with documented gender differences in performance or performance expectations.

After seeing a worked example, applicants first complete a three-minute practice round with five text pairs, after which they receive feedback on their performance. They then complete the main task, also three minutes long with five text pairs, on which interviewers evaluate their performance. Scores on the main task are withheld to ensure applicants cannot simply report them during the interview. Applicants earn \$0.10 for each correct answer in both the practice and main task rounds. We elicit applicants' beliefs about their main task performance, incentivized with a \$0.20 bonus for exact accuracy.

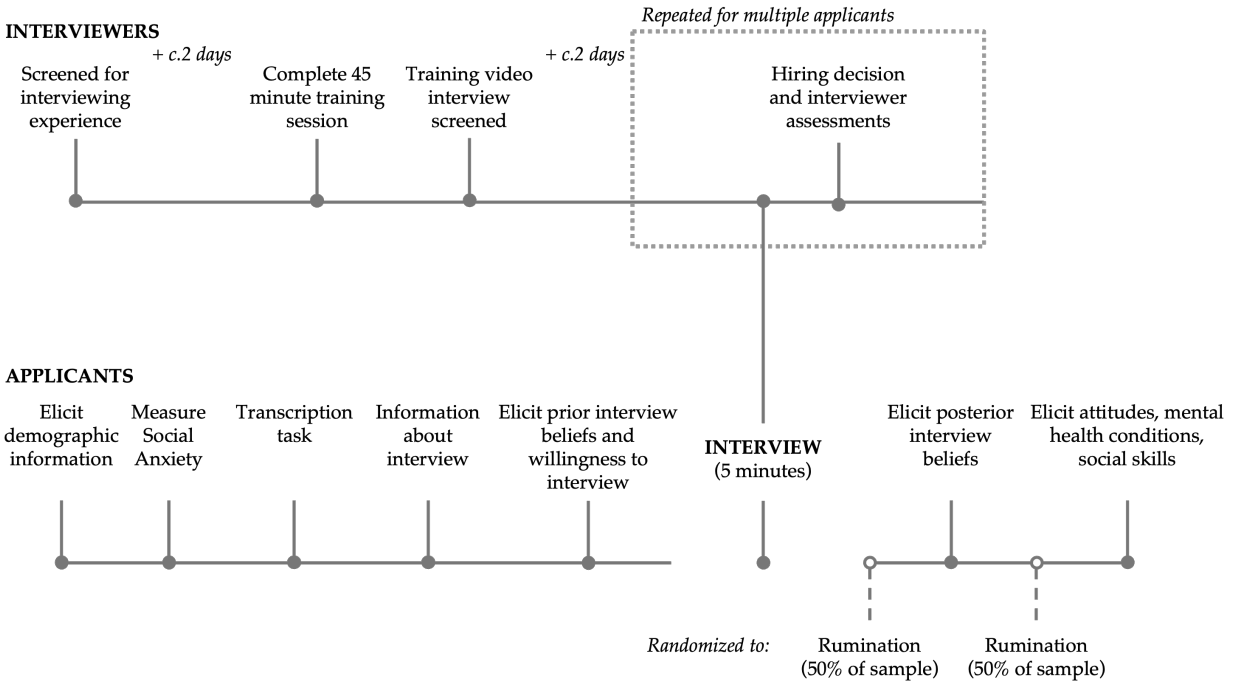
Interview Structure. The interview is a live, two-way video call lasting up to five minutes.[3] Interviewers follow a standardized script comprising three questions designed to resemble a typical interview format and to allow an assessment of the applicant's task performance. The questions are as follows:

1. "Can you tell me a bit about yourself?"
2. "Can you describe a situation in your life where you had to be very careful or conscientious in solving a task or where there was little margin for error? How did you do?"
3. "Talk me through how you would go about solving this particular question," where applicants are shown a question similar to those in the task.

Interviewers are instructed not to ask follow-up questions, provide feedback, or deviate from the script, with violations potentially resulting in forfeiture of payment for that

[2]See Appendix E for full study instructions including example task screens.
[3]The interview may be stopped early at the interviewer's discretion. Average duration is 3 minutes and 17 seconds (SD 56.74 seconds).

Figure 1: Study Timeline



interview. Each interviewer conducts multiple interviews during their session, with the number depending on applicant flow.[4] Interviewers are not informed of applicants' task performance and do not see any information about applicants' beliefs.

After completing the interview, the interviewer decides whether to hire the applicant. If hired, the applicant receives a $2 bonus, and the interviewer receives $3 if and only if the applicant answered at least 3 of 5 questions correctly in the task. If the interviewer chooses not to hire the applicant, the interviewer receives $1.50, and the applicant receives no additional bonus. This payment scheme incentivizes applicants to perform well and interviewers to hire good performers. To ensure interviewers begin from a common prior, they are informed that approximately 50 percent of applicants meet the "good" hiring threshold of at least 3 correct answers. Both interviewers and applicants are informed that the interviewer can hire as many applicants as they wish.[5]

Interviewer Beliefs. After the interview, interviewers provide several assessments. First, they estimate the likelihood (0–100 percent) that the applicant answered at least 3 out of 5

[4]Interviewers conduct just under 13 interviews on average.

[5]As a result, beliefs about relative ability within the applicant pool and preferences for competition are not relevant in our setting.

questions correctly on the task (i.e., meets the "good hire" threshold).[6] Interviewers then estimate the number of questions (0–5) the applicant answered correctly and predict what the applicant reported as their own performance on the same scale.[7] Finally, interviewers rate the applicant's likeability on a 1–10 scale and make their hiring decision. After submitting their decision, interviewers provide a brief written explanation of the reasons underlying their choice.

Applicant Beliefs. After completing both tasks, applicants are informed about the interview structure and payment scheme. They then report prior beliefs about how the interviewer will evaluate them, including: (i) the likelihood (0–100 percent) that the interviewer will judge them as meeting the 'good hire' threshold, (ii) the likeability rating (1–10) they expect to receive, and (iii) their likelihood (0–100 percent) of being hired.[8] After the interview, we elicit posterior beliefs for the same measures. Applicants also report their expected enjoyment of the interview on a 1–10 scale, incentivized to match the enjoyment they report after the interview.

To test whether applicants use belief elicitations strategically—either as a soft commitment device for interview performance or by reporting actual enjoyment to match predictions—all prior belief elicitations are payoff-relevant with 50 percent probability. Whether priors are payoff-relevant is communicated immediately after elicitation but before the interview, allowing us to compare interview performance and reported enjoyment between applicants whose priors were and were not incentivized.

Willingness to Interview. We measure applicants' willingness to pay to participate in (or avoid) the interview using an incentive-compatible multiple price list. Applicants are informed that with some probability, they will be selected to be a "decider," in which case their stated preferences determine whether they complete the interview.[9]

Applicants complete a series of nine binary choices, each involving a trade-off between completing the interview and spending five minutes on a wait screen. Payments range from an additional $2 for completing the interview to an additional $2 for the wait screen, in $0.50 increments. To ensure consistency, we flag any monotonicity violations; warn-

[6] All likelihood elicitations in the experiment use a quadratic scoring rule. Participants are told they maximize their chance of winning a $0.20 bonus by reporting their best guess, with the option to view the full formula if desired, following Danz, Vesterlund and Wilson (2022).

[7] Each elicitation is incentivized with a $0.20 bonus for accuracy.

[8] Likelihood beliefs are incentivized as detailed above. Other belief measures are incentivized with a $0.20 bonus for accuracy.

[9] Approximately 2.5 percent of applicants are randomly selected as deciders, allowing us to elicit incentive-compatible preferences while ensuring most applicants complete the interview.

ing text appears explaining the issue and remains visible until the applicant addresses it. One choice is randomly selected for implementation if the applicant is chosen as a decider. After making their choices, applicants provide a brief written explanation of the considerations underlying their willingness to participate in the interview.[10]

We calculate willingness to pay to interview as the switching point in the price list, with positive values indicating willingness to pay to participate and negative values indicating that payment is required to participate.

Rumination Treatment. Motivated by theories in clinical psychology that post-event rumination leads to pessimistic interpretations of social experiences (Clark and Wells, 1995; Brozovich and Heimberg, 2008), we test whether reflection affects belief updating after the interview. Applicants are randomly assigned to complete a short reflection exercise either before or after posterior belief elicitation. The exercise asks applicants to spend three minutes writing about how the interview went, with a minimum of three sentences. A timer ensures applicants spend the full duration on the task. These written responses also provide text data on applicants' interpretation of the interview experience.

Social Anxiety. We measure social anxiety using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (LSAS; Liebowitz (1987)), which has well-established psychometric properties and is widely used in clinical settings (Heimberg et al., 1999; Fresco et al., 2001). The scale captures both fear and avoidance across 24 social interaction and performance situations (for example, meeting strangers, being observed while working, speaking in front of others). For each situation, participants rate the degree of fear they experience (none, mild, moderate, severe) and the frequency with which they avoid it (never, occasionally, often, usually). We classify participants as socially anxious if they score 50 or above on the LSAS, indicating at least moderate social anxiety and consistent with established clinical cutoffs.

As supplementary measures, we also elicit self-reported social anxiety severity (none, mild, moderate, severe) and whether participants have ever been diagnosed with or treated for social anxiety disorder.

Individual Characteristics. We collect psychological, social, and demographic measures that may correlate with social anxiety. Psychological and social measures include depression (PHQ-8), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD-7), self-esteem (Rosenberg Self-Esteem

[10] Applicants also report, ahead of the willingness to interview screen, how much they would like to participate in the interview (not at all, a little, quite a lot, or very much). The answer to this question correlates strongly with the willingness to pay that we obtain from the price list ($r = 0.54$, p pt < 0.01pt pt > -0.01pt < 0.01).

Scale), neuroticism (Big Five subscale), social intelligence (Weidmann and Xu, 2024), and the social skills questions from Deming (2017) drawn from the NLSY79. We record applicants' prior interview experience, including the number of interviews completed and their familiarity with common interview frameworks. Demographic variables include age, gender, education, employment status, and work history.

Perceptions of Interviewers. To examine how applicants' interpretations of the interviewer vary with social anxiety, and whether the effects of social anxiety depend on interviewer characteristics, we measure applicants' subjective impressions of the interviewer. After the interview, applicants rate the interviewer on three 1–7 scales: perceived warmth ("How friendly or warm did the interviewer seem to you?"), perceived judgment ("How judgmental did the interviewer seem to you?"), and comfort ("How comfortable did the interviewer make you feel?").

To obtain measures of interviewer characteristics that are independent of an applicant's own ratings, we compute leave-one-out (L-O-O) averages based on the ratings of other applicants who interacted with the same interviewer.

2.3 Sample and Recruitment

Interviewers. We recruited interviewers through Prolific. Eligibility required professional experience conducting job interviews in roles such as manager, supervisor, HR personnel, or recruiter, as well as willingness to conduct video interviews and technical capacity to participate in video calls. All eligible candidates were invited to attend a mandatory 45-minute training session led by the study team. The training familiarized interviewers with the task applicants would perform, reviewed interview procedures, included a video demonstration of a mock interview, and incorporated a paired practice session in which interviewers conducted a short trial interview with one another. We assessed these practice interviews for adherence to the standardized interview protocol and for professional conduct, excluding candidates who did not meet these standards.[11]

Interviewers then participated in 2-hour sessions conducting live interviews with applicants. The final sample consists of 72 interviewers. On average, they had between 3 and 5 years of experience conducting interviews. Interviewers earned $8 for participating in pre-session training and $20 base pay for the 2-hour session plus bonuses averaging just under $26. Appendix Table A1 provides summary statistics on interviewer characteristics.

[11]The exact code of conduct that interviewers agreed to comply with is presented in Appendix Section D.

Applicants. We recruited applicants through Prolific and CloudResearch. Eligibility required willingness to participate in surveys including video and audio interactions.[12] Applicants had to pass three initial attention checks to participate in the study. Following task completion, a technical check ensured applicants could proceed to the video interview portion of the study.

The analytic sample is restricted to applicants who completed the study and passed both attention and technical screening checks. Of those excluded, 91 failed the initial attention check and 390 did not meet technical requirements.[13] The final sample comprises 922 applicants; we exclude the 23 deciders from the analyses, as specified in the pre-registration. Applicants earned on average between 12 and 15 dollars base pay on the respective survey platform plus bonuses averaging $2.21.

Appendix Table A2 presents summary statistics for the full sample. Around half (47 percent) of applicants score 50 or above on the LSAS, a commonly used clinical cutoff corresponding to at least moderate social anxiety symptoms. Fifty-five percent have a college degree, 49 percent are employed full-time, and 57 percent are women. Mean age is 41 years.

Socially anxious applicants are more likely to be women, younger, and to have lower educational attainment and household income than socially secure applicants. They also score higher on measures of generalized anxiety, depression, and neuroticism, and lower on self-esteem and social skills. We discuss these correlations in more detail in Section 4.1.

Software. We implement the recruitment surveys through Qualtrics. The main experiment is hosted on oTree (Chen, Schonger and Wickens, 2016) in an adapted version of the application developed by Braghieri, Schwardmann and Tripodi (2024), which uses the Daily API to host and record one-on-one video interviews.

2.4 Text and Video Analysis

Our analysis draws on text data from open-ended survey responses and from algorithmic transcription and diarization of the interview recordings. Transcription and diarization

[12] We do not observe differences by social anxiety status in eligibility. However, if socially anxious individuals are less likely to sign up for such surveys in the first place, our estimates would be a lower bound on the true avoidance gap.

[13] Attrition rates differ by social anxiety status: 40 percent for socially secure applicants compared to 48 percent for socially anxious ($p < 0.01$). We take differential attrition to reflect greater unwillingness to interview among socially anxious applicants, and so view our estimates as a lower bound on the effects of social anxiety on interview avoidance.

are performed using a state-of-the-art model (GPT-4o Transcribe Diarize). We use GPT-5 to label the resulting text data.[14]

We further exploit the interview recordings to extract audio-visual features that capture non-verbal expression across segments in which participants are actively communicating. As indicators of arousal, we quantify gesturing using MediaPipe Pose (Bazarevsky et al., 2020), which detects hand and arm movements, and voice loudness using openSMILE (Eyben, Wöllmer and Schuller, 2010). We also capture smiling intensity using OpenFace (Baltrušaitis et al., 2018).

3 Results

We organize our results according to when the underlying measurements occurred during the experiment. We begin with the transcription task, willingness to interview, and beliefs about interview enjoyment and performance, and then turn to the actual interview experience and the belief updating it induced. Unless otherwise noted, we standardize outcomes by the socially secure group's mean and standard deviation, reporting differences in standard deviation units for comparability across measures.

3.1 Prior Beliefs and Preferences

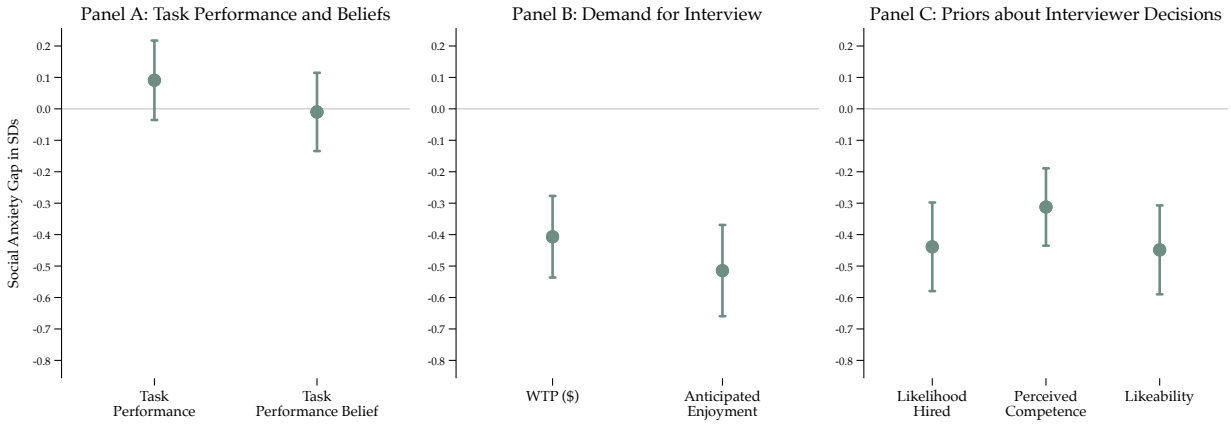
3.1.1 Transcription Task Performance and Beliefs

Performance on the transcription task determines whether an applicant is a profitable hire for interviewers. Applicants' beliefs about their performance, to the extent that they are accurate, reflect private information about their own ability. We start by asking whether there are differences in task performance and beliefs across socially anxious and socially secure applicants.

The average participant answers 2.67 (SD = 1.29) out of 5 questions correctly in the transcription task, with 54 percent meeting the 'good hire' threshold of three correct answers. Panel A of Figure 2 shows that socially anxious and socially secure applicants perform nearly identically on the task (0.09 SD, SE = 0.06). Beliefs about task performance also do not differ significantly across groups (-0.01 SD, SE = 0.06).

[14]Prompts are engineered against a training set of hand-coded observations. Label definitions and final prompts are provided in Appendix Section C.

Figure 2: Social Anxiety Gaps in Task Performance, Interview Beliefs and Interview Avoidance



Notes: Panel A reports social-anxiety gaps in actual main-task performance and applicants' beliefs about their main-task performance. Panel B reports social-anxiety gaps in willingness to interview and anticipated interview enjoyment. Panel C reports social-anxiety gaps in pre-interview beliefs. For each outcome, the reported estimate is the coefficient from a regression of the outcome on an indicator for social anxiety. Panel B and Panel C specifications include a control for main-task score. All outcomes are standardized relative to the socially secure group. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

3.1.2 Interview Avoidance and Anticipated Enjoyment

Our measure of social anxiety, the LSAS, captures self-reported avoidance of, and apprehension about, engaging in various social behaviors. Here, we examine whether social anxiety predicts avoidance and apprehension in our incentivized economic setting. We measure avoidance as willingness to pay to participate in the interview, a choice that is implemented with 5 percent probability, and apprehension as applicants' predicted enjoyment of the interview on a 10-point Likert scale.[15]

Panel B of Figure 2 shows that socially anxious applicants are 0.41 SD (SE = 0.07) less willing to interview. Socially anxious applicants also anticipate less pleasant interviews (-0.52 SD, SE = 0.07). These results establish that social anxiety manifests as expected in our paradigm. Less is known, however, about whether socially anxious applicants hold more pessimistic beliefs about how they will be evaluated.

[15]Predicted enjoyment is incentivized by how close this prediction is to the applicant's actual self-reported enjoyment. To test whether participants report expected enjoyment and prior beliefs strategically, we randomize participants to either be paid for pre-interview elicitations or not, with the state revealed to participants immediately prior to the interview. Reassuringly, we find no difference in interview performance, posteriors or reported actual interview enjoyment depending on the payment scheme.

3.1.3 Prior Beliefs About the Interview

Before the interview, applicants report their beliefs about how they will be evaluated. As Panel C of Figure 2 shows, socially anxious applicants are less likely to believe they will be hired (-0.43 SD, SE = 0.07). They also believe interviewers are less likely to view them as a 'good hire'—defined as answering at least three questions correctly (-0.32 SD, SE = 0.06)—and expect to be judged as less likeable (-0.45 SD, SE = 0.07). The lack of a belief gap on the transcription task suggests that the greater pessimism among socially anxious applicants is not general, but specific to socially evaluative settings.

For comparison, we examine gender differences. Prior work finds that women tend to exhibit lower confidence in competitive and evaluative settings (e.g., Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007; Exley and Kessler, 2022). We find gender gaps of -0.20 SD (SE = 0.07) for the perceived likelihood of being hired and -0.20 SD (SE = 0.06) for perceived competence.[16] These gaps are roughly half the size of those associated with social anxiety. In Section 5.3, we further examine the role of social anxiety in explaining these gender disparities.

Overall, socially anxious applicants hold systematically more pessimistic expectations prior to the interview. Consistent with this pessimism contributing to an avoidance gap, lower willingness to pay to participate is associated with lower beliefs about being hired ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.01$) and lower anticipated enjoyment ($r = 0.31$, $p < 0.01$). To better understand the drivers of avoidance, we asked participants which considerations informed their stated willingness to pay (Appendix Figure A1). In line with the performance and hedonic expectation gaps we document, the three most frequently cited considerations concern payoff maximization, anticipated enjoyment of the interview, and confidence in performance.[17]

3.2 Interview Performance

3.2.1 Hiring Outcomes and Interviewer's Evaluations

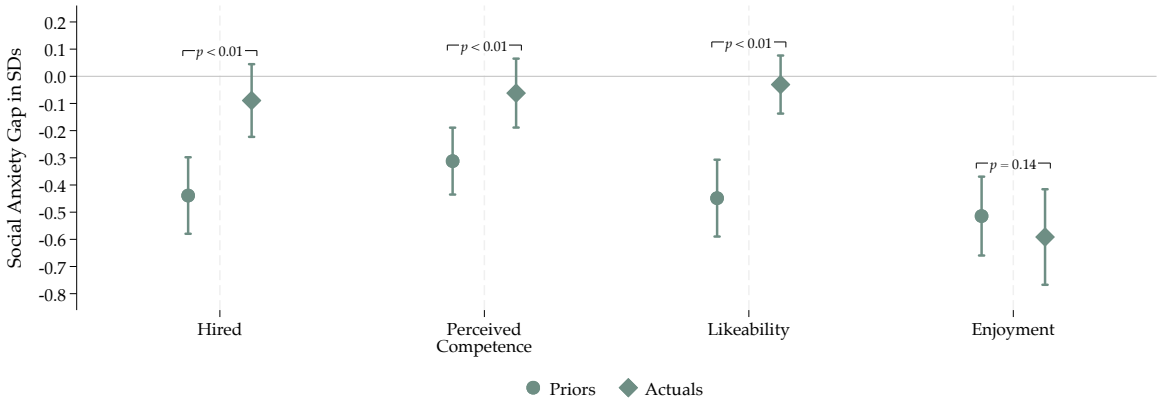
We have seen that socially anxious applicants are relatively pessimistic about their performance in the interview. We now turn to their actual interview performance to assess whether this pessimism is warranted. More broadly, we ask whether social anxiety manifests in ways that impede performance in interviews. Given similar performance on the transcription task, such a pattern would be consistent with taste-based discrimination[18]

[16] In contrast to social anxiety, we find no difference in expected likeability (-0.09 SD, SE = 0.07).

[17] Very few participants mentioned privacy concerns or being caught off guard by the interview, and none cited confusion.

[18] See Ridley (2025) for experimental evidence of discrimination against individuals with symptoms of depression or anxiety, despite comparable task performance.

Figure 3: Prior Beliefs and Actual Outcomes



Notes: This figure reports social-anxiety gaps in standardized prior beliefs as well as social-anxiety gaps in standardized interview outcomes. For each outcome, the reported estimate is the coefficient from a regression of the outcome on an indicator for social anxiety with controls for main-task score. Post-interview specifications control for interviewer fixed effects and include standard errors clustered on interviewer level. All specifications control for Task Performance. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

or a form of inadvertent discrimination, in which interviewers mistake markers of social anxiety for signals of lower task performance.

Figure 3 reveals no statistically significant differences in the likelihood that socially anxious and socially secure applicants are hired (-0.09 SD, SE = 0.07). Socially anxious applicants are also not deemed less competent or less likeable (-0.06 SD, SE = 0.06, and -0.03 SD, SE = 0.05, respectively). As a result, social-anxiety gaps in expected performance outcomes are substantially larger than gaps in actual performance.

The picture changes when we examine differences in the hedonic experience of the interview. Socially anxious applicants enjoy the interview significantly less than socially secure applicants (-0.59 SD, SE = 0.09), mirroring the social-anxiety gap in expected enjoyment.

Could the absence of performance differences simply reflect noise in the interview process, in which little information is exchanged and few inferences are drawn? To the contrary, Appendix Figure A2 shows that interviewers rate 'good hires' as more competent and also hire them at higher rates, indicative of a relatively high signal to noise ratio.

One might also worry that interview performance is driven primarily by fact-based responses, leaving little room for social aptitude—a dimension along which socially anxious individuals might be disadvantaged—to influence outcomes. We find little support for this concern: interviewer ratings of likeability predict hiring decisions, as does a mea-

sure of social skills commonly used in the economics literature (see Section 5.2).

3.2.2 Interviewers' Perceptions of Socially Anxious Applicants

Although socially anxious applicants perform similarly in interviews and are rated as equally competent and likeable, they may still be perceived differently in subtler ways. Appendix Figure A3 shows that the absence of social-anxiety gaps extends to interviewers' open-ended reflections. Socially anxious applicants are no less likely to signal competence, come across as competent, appear confident, be engaged, or display a winning personality. Despite being more avoidant and pessimistic beforehand and enjoying the interview less, they appear able to mask their apprehension effectively.[19]

In sum, we observe an interview participation wedge without a corresponding performance wedge. Part of this wedge likely reflects hedonic costs—socially anxious applicants expect to enjoy the interview less, and they do. But willingness to interview also likely reflects beliefs about performance outcomes. Here, the relative pessimism of socially anxious applicants is not borne out by interviewer evaluations, suggesting that entry into evaluation may be inefficiently low. Whether the interview experience itself can correct such belief gaps is the question we turn to next.

3.3 Updating from the Interview Experience

3.3.1 Social Anxiety Gaps in Posterior Beliefs

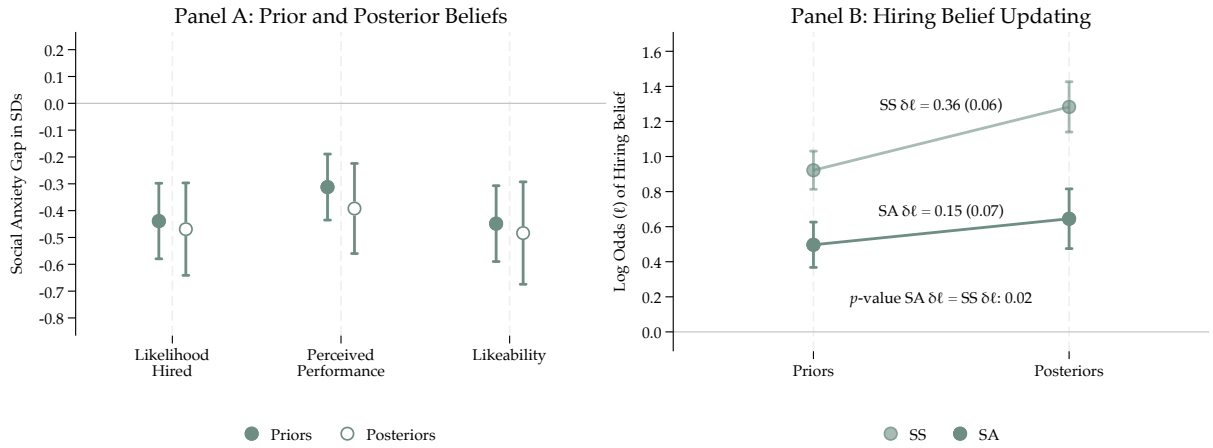
Socially anxious applicants enter the interview with more pessimistic beliefs but perform similarly and are evaluated no differently. Does the interview experience correct this pessimism?

Panel A of Figure 4 displays social-anxiety gaps in prior and posterior beliefs about interview performance, with posteriors elicited after the interview but before any payoffs are communicated. The non-discriminatory interview experience does not reduce these gaps. Posterior gaps are statistically indistinguishable from prior gaps and, if anything, slightly larger in magnitude.

We next examine whether these persistent gaps are consistent with Bayesian updating from similar interview signals, and if not, whether the asymmetry reflects differences in how socially anxious individuals are treated during the interview or differences in how the same experience is interpreted.

[19] See Goffman (1963) and Pachankis (2007) on concealment of stigmatized identities.

Figure 4: Belief Updating



Notes: Panel A reports social-anxiety gaps in standardized prior and posterior beliefs about interview outcomes. Each estimate is the coefficient on an indicator for social anxiety from a regression with controls for main-task score. Panel B reports mean priors and posteriors for hiring likelihood in log-odds separately for socially secure (SS) and socially anxious (SA) applicants, estimated from a stacked specification with a post indicator interacted with social anxiety. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals. Annotations report within-group updating and the p-value for the difference in updating between SA and SS.

3.3.2 Are Social Anxiety Gaps Consistent with Bayesian Updating?

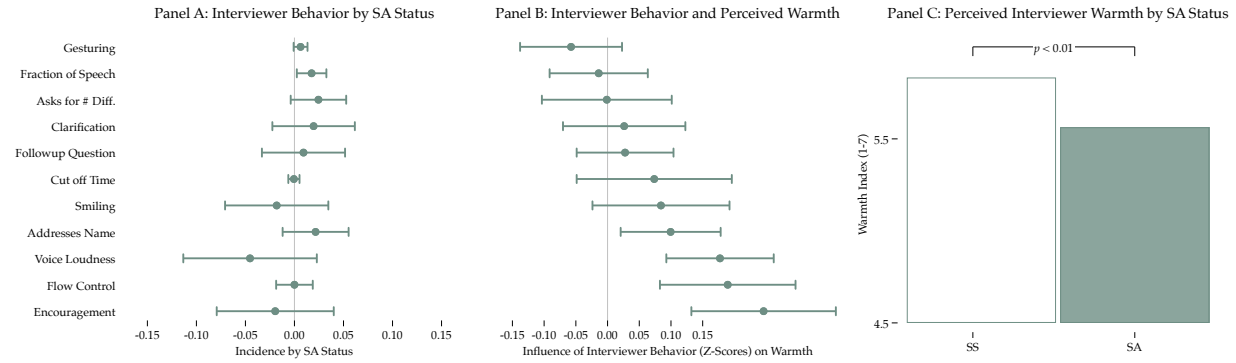
To test whether the posterior gap can be explained by Bayesian updating from similar signals, we compare the change in log-odds from priors to posteriors across groups.[20] Panel B of Figure 4 shows that the log-odds update is significantly smaller, i.e. less optimistic, for socially anxious applicants ($p = 0.02$). This asymmetry must arise either from differences in the signals received during the interview (e.g., interviewer behavior) or from differences in how similar signals are interpreted.

3.3.3 Differences in Objective Interview Experience (Signal)

Did interviewers treat socially anxious applicants differently? Using coded transcripts and video-based measures, we examine whether interviewer conduct varies by applicant social anxiety status. Panel A of Figure 5 reports differences in interviewer behavior across a range of dimensions: verbal behaviors (encouragement, flow control, follow-up questions, clarifications, addressing the applicant by name), paraverbal behaviors (voice loudness, fraction of speech, cutting off the applicant), and nonverbal behaviors (smiling,

[20]Comparing raw gaps in posterior and prior probabilities is not informative about whether groups receive similar signals. Under Bayesian updating, identical likelihood ratios imply equal changes in log-odds, but the posterior probability gap may widen, narrow, or remain unchanged because the mapping from log-odds to probabilities is nonlinear. See Appendix section B for a formal derivation.

Figure 5: Interviewer Behavior and Perceived Warmth



Notes: Panel A reports coefficients from bivariate regressions of interviewer behaviors on an indicator for social anxiety. Panel B reports coefficients from bivariate regressions of applicants' perceived interviewer warmth on standardized interviewer behaviors. Panel C reports mean perceived interviewer warmth by social-anxiety status. Interviewer behavior measures in Panels A and B are standardized relative to the socially secure group. Interviewer behavioral features are extracted using LLM methods; Appendix Table C1 provides a detailed overview of each measure and its processing. Error bars in Panels A and B denote 95 percent confidence intervals obtained from regressions with standard errors clustered on interviewer-level.

gesturing). We find no significant differences across these measures by applicant social anxiety status, with the exception of the interviewer's fraction of speech.

These measures capture important facets of the interviews. Panel B shows that several of these behaviors predict applicants' perceptions of interviewer warmth.[21] In particular, encouragement, smiling, voice loudness, and addressing the applicant by name are all positively associated with perceived warmth. Fraction of speech, the only measure that differed by applicant social anxiety status, does not predict warmth.

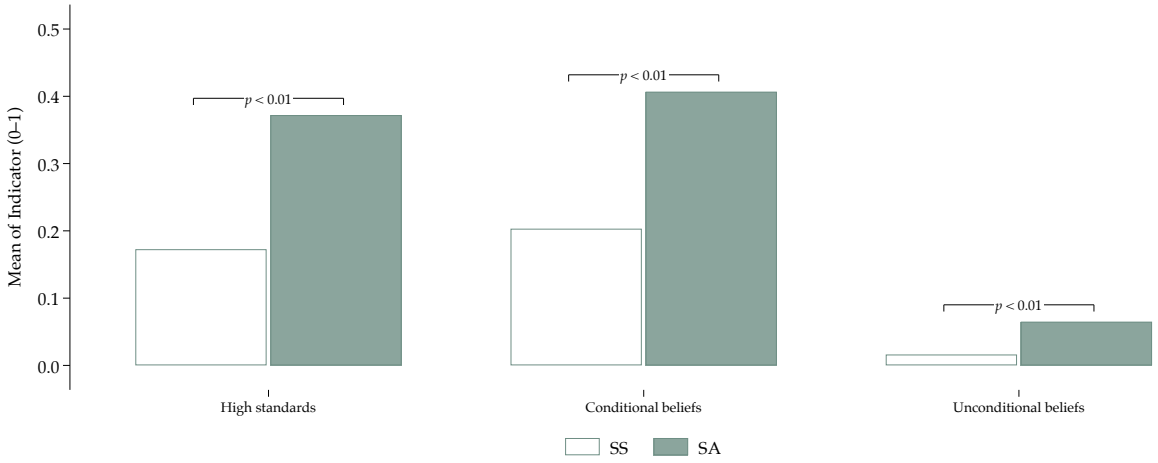
However, despite similar objective treatment on measures that predict perceived warmth, socially anxious applicants perceive interviewers as significantly less warm (Panel C; -0.21 SD, SE = 0.07). This suggests that the asymmetry in belief updating documented above is unlikely to reflect differences in interviewer behavior, i.e. the signal obtained during the interview. Instead, socially anxious applicants appear to interpret objectively similar experiences less favorably, a possibility we examine next.

3.3.4 Differences in Subjective Interview Experience (Updating)

To examine whether social anxiety alters how individuals interpret the same evaluative signal, we analyze open-ended reflections on the interview experience. Applicants were asked to spend a few minutes writing down their thoughts about how the interview went, providing a window into how applicants process the interaction.

[21] Our index of perceived interviewer warmth averages three measures: perceived friendliness, perceived judgment (reverse-coded), and comfort, all rated on a 7-point scale.

Figure 6: Thinking Patterns by Social Anxiety Status



Notes: Bars report the prevalence of three thought patterns among applicants by social-anxiety status: high standards, conditional beliefs, and unconditional negative self-beliefs. Thought patterns are based on Clark (2001) and coded from applicants' post-interview open-ended reflections. Appendix Table C2 provides a detailed overview of each thought-pattern measure and its processing. Brackets report *p*-values from two-sample *t*-tests of equality of means.

We code whether each reflection contains thought patterns associated with social anxiety in the clinical psychology literature (Clark, 2001; Jose, Wilkins and Spendelow, 2012): excessively high performance standards (e.g., "I should always have something smart to say"), conditional beliefs about social consequences (e.g., "If my hand shakes, people will think I'm incompetent"), and negative self-beliefs (e.g., "I am incompetent"). Figure 6 shows that all three patterns are significantly more common among socially anxious applicants—20, 20, 5 percentage point differences, respectively. Each pattern is also negatively associated with posterior beliefs about being hired (r = -0.30, -0.32, -0.21).

We might wonder whether prompting reflection causally affects beliefs by making certain memories of the interview more salient (Conlon, 2024). As the reflection was elicited either before or after eliciting posterior beliefs, we can test this. Table A3 presents regressions of posterior beliefs on indicators for social anxiety, assignment to reflect before posterior elicitation, and their interaction. We find no evidence that reflection timing affects beliefs, either overall or differentially by social anxiety status. The relative pessimism of socially anxious applicants therefore appears to arise from their initial appraisal of the interaction rather than from rehearsal-induced distortion.

Together, these results indicate that socially anxious applicants are more likely to exhibit negative thought patterns in their interpretation of the interview. Given comparable interviewer behavior across groups, differences in interpretation offer the most plausible

explanation for the persistent gap in beliefs, consistent with clinical models emphasizing biased interpretation of social signals as a maintaining factor in social anxiety (Clark and Wells, 1995).

3.4 Closing social anxiety gaps

Our results narrow the set of plausible interventions for closing social anxiety gaps. We find no evidence of discrimination: Interviewers evaluate socially anxious and socially secure applicants similarly. Interventions aimed at reducing implicit or explicit bias against the socially anxious are therefore unlikely to close the gap.

At the same time, simple exposure to evaluative interactions does not appear sufficient. Despite experiencing an interview in which performance and interviewer behavior are similar across groups, socially anxious applicants remain relatively pessimistic. Unlike phobias that attenuate with repeated neutral exposure, the belief gap we document persists following direct interaction. Indeed, the persistence of social anxiety despite myriad social exposures is a central feature of the condition that clinical models seek to explain (Clark and Wells, 1995).

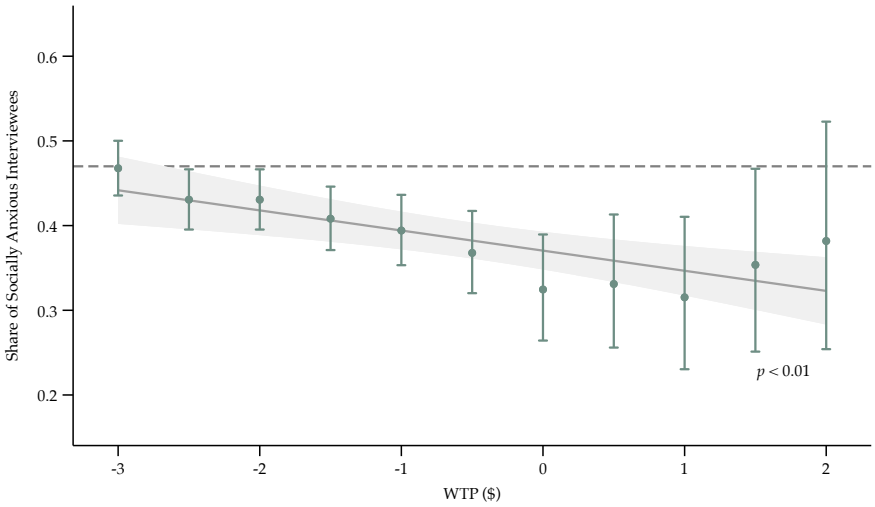
Given these findings, we consider two margins along which organizations that rely on evaluative interviews might reduce social anxiety gaps. First, if inequality arises through differential entry into evaluation, reducing barriers to participation may increase the representation of socially anxious individuals in evaluative settings. Second, if pessimism reflects sensitivity to ambiguous social cues, improving the interpersonal quality of evaluators may attenuate belief gaps and thus reduce participation differences.

3.4.1 Varying the price of interviewing

One approach to increasing participation among socially anxious applicants is to reduce the cost of interviewing, whether through direct subsidies, lower time commitments, or less demanding interview formats.

Figure 7 shows how the composition of interviewees varies with the interview "price." For each willingness-to-pay amount, we compute the share of interviewees who are socially anxious among those willing to complete the interview at that price. The share of socially anxious interviewees declines as the interview becomes more expensive (i.e., as willingness to pay increases). Relative to the overall share of socially anxious applicants in the sample (0.47; dashed line), socially anxious applicants are underrepresented among interviewees when participation is more expensive, indicating that higher interview costs disproportionately screen out socially anxious applicants.

Figure 7: Proportion of Socially Anxious Participants by Willingness to Pay for Interview



Notes: For each willingness-to-pay amount, points report the share of socially anxious applicants among participants willing to complete the interview at that price. Willingness to pay is elicited using a multiple-price list; negative values indicate required compensation to participate, and the lowest value corresponds to accepting the interview under all payment scenarios. The dashed line marks the overall sample share of socially anxious applicants (47 percent). Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

Reducing interview costs may, however, involve tradeoffs: higher applicant volume increases administrative burden, and screening value may decline if willingness correlates with job-relevant traits. In our setting, the latter concern is limited as socially anxious applicants perform equally well on the underlying task, but in other contexts the tradeoff may be more acute.

3.4.2 Investing in interviewer quality

If gaps in belief updating discourage socially anxious applicants from pursuing future opportunities, then improving interviewer demeanor may reduce future self-selection out of evaluative settings. We therefore test whether assigning applicants to interviewers viewed as warmer or less judgmental might attenuate belief gaps.

We leverage variation across interviewers in how they are rated by other applicants. For each interviewer, we construct leave-one-out averages of perceived warmth, comfort, and judgmentalness. We then estimate whether these interviewer characteristics differentially affect belief updating among socially anxious applicants.

Table 1 presents the results. None of the interaction terms between social anxiety and interviewer perceptions are statistically significant. Socially anxious applicants do not update more favorably when assigned to interviewers who are generally rated as more supportive. This suggests that investments in interviewer interpersonal style are unlikely to close belief gaps, consistent with such gaps arising from applicant-side processing of

Table 1: Applicants' Interviewer Perceptions

	Belief Updating: Likeability	Belief Updating: Perceived Competence	Belief Updating: Hired	Updating: Enjoyment
Panel A: Full Warmth Index				
Socially Anxious × Interviewer Warmth Index (L-O-O)	0.08	2.05	3.70	-0.06
	(0.20)	(2.31)	(2.62)	(0.24)
Panel B: Interviewer Comfort				
Socially Anxious × Avg. Interviewer Comfort (L-O-O)	0.02	1.39	3.20	-0.09
	(0.16)	(2.10)	(2.16)	(0.23)
Panel C: Interviewer Judgmentalness				
Socially Anxious × Avg. Interviewer Judgmentalness (L-O-O)	0.13	2.87	4.39	-0.12
	(0.21)	(2.40)	(2.89)	(0.24)
Panel D: Interviewer Warmth				
Socially Anxious × Avg. Interviewer Warmth (L-O-O)	0.03	1.09	1.76	-0.02
	(0.16)	(1.79)	(2.15)	(0.21)
Observations	922	922	922	922
Main-task Score Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: Each panel-column reports a separate regression where the dependent variable is belief updating (posterior minus prior) for the indicated outcome. The key regressor is the interaction between an indicator for social anxiety and the interviewer-style measure listed in each panel. Panel A uses the full interviewer warmth index, which takes the mean of the three components presented in Panels B–D. All panels use leave-one-out interviewer averages so that each applicant's own rating is excluded. All specifications control for main-task score. Standard errors are clustered at the interviewer level and reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

evaluative signals rather than interviewer behavior per se.

4 Robustness and External Validity

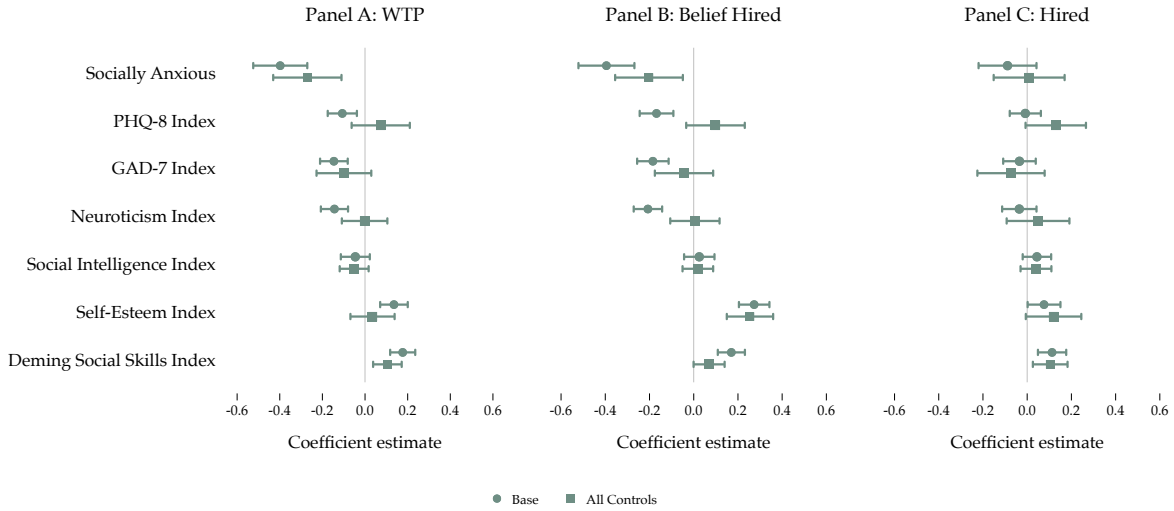
4.1 Social Anxiety and Related Traits

Social anxiety is correlated with several other measures of mental health and social abilities, including generalized anxiety (r = 0.54, $p < 0.01$), depression (r = 0.48, $p < 0.01$), neuroticism (r = 0.56, $p < 0.01$), and self-esteem (r = -0.48, $p < 0.01$). This raises the question of whether social anxiety has independent predictive power, or whether the patterns we observe are driven by correlated traits.

Figure 8 plots coefficients from separate regressions of willingness to pay to interview (Panel A), beliefs about being hired (Panel B), and actual hiring (Panel C) on various measures of mental health and social ability, estimated both without controls and controlling for the other measures shown.

A number of measures are associated with willingness to interview in unadjusted specifications, including higher depression (PHQ-8), anxiety (GAD-7), neuroticism, and lower self-esteem and social skills. In the fully controlled specification, however, only social anxiety and social skills remain statistically significant. A similar pattern holds for hiring beliefs, although self-esteem remains statistically significant across specifications.

Figure 8: Predictors of Avoidance, Priors and Actual Hiring



Notes: Panel A reports coefficients from separate regressions of willingness to pay (WTP) on each predictor. Panels B and C report analogous specifications for prior belief of being hired and actual hiring. Psychological indicators and all outcomes are standardized on the full sample. Two specifications are shown for each predictor: "Base" includes the predictor and a control for main-task score; "All controls" additionally includes all other predictors shown. Panel C specifications additionally include interviewer fixed effects. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

Consistent with earlier results, social anxiety does not predict hiring, even when controlling for other measures (Panel C). In contrast, depression, self-esteem, and social skills are significant predictors in the fully controlled specification. Among these, social skills emerges as a robust predictor of preferences, beliefs, and performance. We examine the relationship between social anxiety and social skills further in Section 5.2.

Together, these results indicate that social anxiety is a distinct predictor of beliefs and willingness to participate in evaluative settings, and not merely a proxy for related psychological and social traits.

4.2 Alternative Measures of Social Anxiety

Our preferred measure of social anxiety uses the LSAS, which captures both fear and avoidance components. Figure A5 shows that our main results are robust to alternative definitions: self-reported social anxiety (a single-item measure asking participants whether they consider themselves socially anxious) and a fear-only measure (using only the fear subscale of the LSAS). Across both definitions, socially anxious applicants show lower willingness to interview and more pessimistic beliefs, with no statistically significant difference in hiring outcomes.

4.3 Reported Interview Concerns

A possible concern is that our experimental interview omits features of job interviews that are especially anxiety-inducing, and therefore most likely to affect performance among the socially anxious. For example, our design removes uncertainty about performance on the job if hired, and limits the possibility of embarrassment from others learning that the interview was unsuccessful. To assess whether these features are central to interview-related anxiety, we fielded a nationally representative survey of early-career (aged 18-39) U.S. adults and ask respondents, "When you are going for a job interview, what are you most apprehensive or worried about?"[22] We coded the free-text responses and report the most common concerns in Appendix Figure A6.

The responses suggest that the design of our experimental interview captures the concerns respondents most commonly cite. Socially anxious and socially secure respondents rank concerns similarly. In both groups, the most common concerns are self-presentation (SA: 67.7 percent; SS: 55.9 percent; $p < 0.01$), answering questions competently (SA: 51.8 percent; SS: 52.1 percent; $p = 0.92$), and situational features of the interview (SA: 31.9 percent; SS: 30.5 percent; $p = 0.63$). By contrast, less than 1 percent of respondents in either group mention embarrassment from an unsuccessful interview or concerns about performance if hired.

4.4 Interview Avoidance Outside the Experiment

The survey data on interview concerns suggest that our experimental design preserves the main sources of interview-related anxiety. But the participation wedge we observe could still be specific to the experimental setting. For example, applicants may find it easier to opt out of an experimental interview than to withdraw from, or avoid applying for, a real job because it requires an interview. We therefore examine whether interview avoidance appears in reported job-search behavior outside the experiment. In our nationally representative survey of early-career adults, we asked respondents whether they had ever avoided applying for a job or withdrawn from an application because they did not want to do an interview.

Fifty-one percent of socially anxious respondents report doing so, compared with 30 percent of socially secure respondents. We ask the same retrospective avoidance ques-

[22] The survey sample consists of 1,003 U.S. adults aged 18-39 recruited to match the joint distribution of age, gender, employment status, and ethnicity among 18-39-year-olds in the U.S. population, as measured in the 2024 American Community Survey. Because Prolific's nationally representative recruitment tools do not allow targeting the full joint distribution of these characteristics, we developed a custom recruitment app to draw samples matching that distribution.

tion of our experimental participants and find similar magnitudes: 50 percent of socially anxious applicants report having avoided applying for a job or withdrawn from an application because they did not want to do an interview, compared with 24 percent of socially secure applicants. These patterns mirror the participation wedge documented in the experiment, suggesting that the interview avoidance we elicit experimentally corresponds to a margin that also appears in job-search behavior outside the experiment.

5 Social Anxiety and Labor-Market Inequality

Our experiment isolates one margin through which social anxiety can shape labor-market access—socially anxious applicants are less willing to enter evaluation, despite performing no worse conditional on doing so. We now examine how social anxiety relates to broader labor-market disparities. We first study whether social anxiety predicts other career-relevant interpersonal choices, then examine its relationship to social skills and gender, and finally document its association with earnings in national data.

5.1 Social Anxiety and Interpersonal Workplace Decisions

Interviews are a natural starting point for studying social-anxiety gaps because they are interpersonal interactions that are nearly universally required for access to employment. But many other career-relevant decisions also involve social risk. To examine whether social anxiety predicts behavior in such settings, we asked respondents in our nationally representative survey of early-career adults to make decisions in three vignettes: negotiating for a higher salary, approaching senior colleagues at a professional event, and declining non-promotable work. We chose these scenarios because they are consequential for career progression, as evidenced by research on gender gaps in these domains, and because each involves social risk or uncertainty.

In the negotiation vignette, respondents are offered a new job at a salary in the middle of the advertised range and decide whether to ask for a higher salary. In the networking vignette, respondents decide whether to approach a group of more senior colleagues at a work event. In the non-promotable-work vignette, respondents decide whether to accept a recurring note-taking task that helps the team but is unlikely to advance their careers.

Appendix Figure A7 plots social-anxiety gaps in responses to the three vignettes. Socially anxious respondents are 12.34 percentage points less likely to ask for a higher salary (SE = 3.11) and 22.33 percentage points less likely to approach senior colleagues (SE = 3.02). We find no statistically significant difference in willingness to decline the non-

promotable task (0.41 pp, SE = 2.22), though this null should be interpreted in light of the high baseline acceptance rate (86 percent among socially secure respondents). The negotiation and networking gaps remain statistically significant but attenuate after controlling for generalized anxiety disorder, depression, self-esteem, and social skills. These results—though interpreted cautiously given the hypothetical nature of the elicitation—suggest that social anxiety predicts career-relevant choices beyond formal hiring interviews.

5.2 Social Anxiety and Social Skills

Next, we ask how social anxiety relates to social skills, an interpersonal trait that has received growing attention in labor economics. Labor-market returns to social skills have grown sharply (Deming, 2017; Edin et al., 2022), but the mechanisms behind these returns are difficult to separate in observational data. One reason is that standard measures of social skills may conflate performance in interpersonal settings with selection into them. Our experiment helps separate these margins as we observe both willingness to enter an evaluative social interaction and performance conditional on entering it.

We measure social skills using the index developed by Deming (2017) using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. The index is based on self-reported shyness, shyness at age six, and club and sports participation in high school. The literature generally interprets this index as reflecting social skills. An alternative interpretation is that such measures partly capture avoidance rather than skill per se. Indeed, socially anxious applicants score lower on the index, in line with the shyness and participation components correlating with interview avoidance. It is of course rational for an individual who anticipates being less skilled at a social task to avoid such a task at a higher rate. However, if social skills, as they are usually measured, capture at least in part individuals' social anxiety, then selection decisions may be suboptimal, as they may be based on undue relative pessimism about skill and performance.

Panel A of Table 2 shows how social skills manifest in our experiment. The social skill index predicts willingness to interview (Column 1), beliefs about being hired (Column 2), and hiring outcomes (Column 3). However, socially skilled applicants' relative optimism about performing well in the interviews is only partly borne out in their actual performance.

Next, we see that social anxiety accounts for around a third of the relationship between social skills and willingness to interview (Column 4) and beliefs about being hired (Column 5), consistent with the social skill index partly capturing avoidance and an un-

due relative pessimism of the less socially skilled.[23] Indeed, after controlling for social anxiety the social skill gap in hiring beliefs is entirely borne out in participants' actual performance.

Finally, turning to performance, social anxiety accounts for less than 1 percent of the relationship between social skills and actual hiring outcomes (Column 6), vindicating the interpretation of the social skill index as a robust predictor of performance in social settings.

Our results suggest that the social skills index widely used in labor economics reflects at least three conceptually distinct traits: genuine social competence, the avoidance of and aversion to social situations associated with social anxiety, and the pessimistic performance beliefs that anxiety induces. This matters because the appropriate response differs across these dimensions. Skill differences may warrant investment in training programs, and the self-selection they induce may be efficient. By contrast, when selection is driven by the belief distortions and hedonic costs of social anxiety rather than accurate self-assessment, it is unlikely to be welfare-maximizing, and relevant interventions need to account for and tackle social anxiety. Disentangling the contribution of each dimension to observed labor-market gaps is therefore an important direction for future work.

5.3 Social Anxiety and Gender

Social anxiety may also help account for gender disparities in labor-market behavior. Women are more likely than men to meet diagnostic criteria for social anxiety disorder (Asher, Asnaani and Aderka, 2017),[24] suggesting that the social-anxiety gaps we observe may be more prevalent among women and, in turn, that gender gaps in evaluative settings may partly reflect social anxiety.

Table 2, Panel B, examines whether social anxiety contributes to gender gaps in interview avoidance and beliefs. Consistent with prior work on gender differences in confidence (e.g., Niederle and Vesterlund, 2007; Exley and Kessler, 2022), women are less

[23] Panel A of Appendix Table A4 extends the analysis to the vignette choices. Social skills predict two of the three choices—a 1 SD increase in social skills is associated with a 7.11 percentage point increase in willingness to negotiate salary and a 14.43 percentage point increase in willingness to approach senior colleagues. Controlling for social anxiety reduces the social-skills coefficients by 20 percent and 16 percent, respectively, while the remaining coefficients remain statistically significant. Unlike the experimental outcomes, these vignette choices do not allow us to separate willingness to enter the interaction from performance conditional on entering. Still, the attenuation is consistent with the earlier interpretation that standard social-skills measures partly capture avoidance of interpersonal settings, while retaining independent predictive power.

[24] Our sample mirrors this pattern with 54 percent of women meeting the threshold for social anxiety, compared to 37 percent of men ($p < 0.01$).

Table 2: Social Skills and Gender Gaps Across Outcomes

	(1) WTP for Interview	(2) Prior Belief: Hired	(3) Hired	(4) WTP for Interview	(5) Prior Belief: Hired	(6) Hired
Panel A: Social skills						
Deming Social Skills Index	0.18***	0.17***	0.11***	0.12***	0.11***	0.11***
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Socially Anxious				-0.30***	-0.31***	0.00
				(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.08)
$1 - \frac{\beta_1}{\beta_0}$				0.34	0.36	-0.00
Panel B: Gender						
Woman	-0.20***	-0.18***	-0.02	-0.14**	-0.11*	-0.01
	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Socially Anxious				-0.37***	-0.38***	-0.09
				(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)
$1 - \frac{\beta_1}{\beta_0}$				0.31	0.36	0.63
Observations	922	922	922	922	922	922
Main-task Score Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interviewer FE	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes

Notes: Panel A reports regressions of each outcome on the Deming Social Skills Index. Panel B reports analogous regressions with a binary indicator for being a woman. Columns (1)–(3) include the focal regressor and a control for main-task score; Columns (4)–(6) additionally control for an indicator for social anxiety. The row $1 - \beta_1/\beta_0$ reports the proportional change in the focal-regressor coefficient when adding the social-anxiety control. Columns (3) and (6) include interviewer fixed effects. All outcomes are standardized on the full sample. Standard errors in parentheses: robust in Columns (1)–(2) and (4)–(5); interviewer-clustered in Columns (3) and (6). * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

willing to interview (Column 1; -0.20 SD, SE = 0.07) and more pessimistic about being hired (Column 2; -0.18 SD, SE = 0.06). Controlling for social anxiety (Columns 4 and 5) attenuates the gender gap in willingness to interview by 31 percent and in hiring beliefs by 36 percent; both gaps remain statistically significant but are substantially reduced.

Panel B of Appendix Table A4 extends the analysis to the vignette choices. The gender gap is small and statistically insignificant for salary negotiation (-0.77 pp, SE = 3.13).[25] Women are 7.15 percentage points less likely to approach senior colleagues at a professional event (SE = 3.04 pp) and 4.33 percentage points less likely to decline the non-promotable task (SE = 2.21 pp). Controlling for social anxiety accounts for 49 percent of the gender gap in networking, but does little to explain the gap in declining non-promotable work. This difference is consistent with the social-anxiety results above. Social anxiety predicts lower willingness to initiate interactions that involve the possibility of rejection, such as approaching senior colleagues, but does not predict willingness to decline the non-promotable-task request.

Our results suggest that social anxiety accounts for a meaningful share of gender dis-

[25] We cannot rule out a gender gap of up to roughly 6.90 percentage points in the direction of women being less likely to negotiate. At the same time, recent evidence suggests that the gender gap in negotiation has narrowed over time, making a small or null gender gap less surprising (Kray, Kennedy and Lee, 2024)

parities in entry into evaluative settings. This pattern has parallels elsewhere: Biasi and Sarsons (2021) document a related finding in salary negotiations, where confidence in talking to strangers, a construct closely related to social anxiety, partially accounts for gender gaps in bargaining. Two implications follow. First, policies aimed at closing gender gaps in evaluative settings should account for social anxiety as a contributing mechanism. Interventions that target anxiety directly, whether through treatment, accommodation, or belief correction, may reduce these gaps more effectively than approaches focused on gender alone. Second, because social anxiety and gender do not perfectly overlap, gender-stratified analyses may obscure meaningful heterogeneity. Accounting for mental health alongside demographic characteristics in diagnosing and addressing labor-market inequalities may therefore improve targeting and avoid leaving affected workers behind.

5.4 Social Anxiety and Earnings in National Data

The preceding sections show that social anxiety is associated with career-relevant interpersonal choices, relates closely to social skills, and accounts for part of gender gaps in entry into evaluative settings. Next, we ask whether social anxiety matters on the aggregate, by testing for whether it is associated with a wage gap in national data.

Appendix Figure A8 reports the association between social anxiety and individual earnings in the original National Comorbidity Survey and the follow-up reinterview. We restrict the sample to non-retired respondents and use both lifetime and 12-month definitions of social anxiety. We measure earnings in levels and with standard transformations that account for skewness and zero earnings. Across survey waves, social-anxiety definitions, and earnings transformations, respondents with social anxiety have lower earnings. The estimated gaps range from 0.18 to 0.35 SD without controls, and from 0.08 to 0.25 SD after controlling for demographic characteristics and other mental-health conditions, including major depressive disorder and generalized anxiety disorder.

These earnings gradients situate the experimental findings within a broader pattern of labor-market inequality. They are consistent with the hypothesis that the decisions and beliefs we link to social anxiety in this paper—i.e., reduced willingness to enter socially evaluative settings and relatively pessimistic beliefs about performance—are consequential and cumulative, ultimately giving rise to the substantial earnings penalty observed in national data.

6 Discussion

We examine how social anxiety shapes outcomes in evaluative settings. Socially anxious applicants are substantially less willing to interview and hold more pessimistic beliefs about their performance—gaps roughly twice the magnitude of gender differences on the same measures. This pessimism persists despite similar objective interview performance and interviewer treatment, consistent with social anxiety shaping how evaluative signals are interpreted. We thus identify a participation wedge: inequality arises not from discriminatory treatment or lower performance, but from differential selection into evaluation.

Having identified the primacy of the participation wedge, it is natural to ask whether social anxiety should be conceptualized as a simple preference against social evaluation or as a mental health condition with broader cognitive implications. Our evidence favors the latter. Social anxiety does not manifest solely as avoidance. It is also associated with relative pessimism about performance in social, but not non-social, tasks, and with differential interpretation of complex social signals. Participation decisions thus appear linked to a broader pattern of belief formation rather than to a simple taste for non-participation. This distinction matters because such "preferences" are malleable. Cognitive behavioral therapy, for example, has been shown to reduce the symptoms of social anxiety (Kindred, Bates and McBride, 2022).

The changing nature of work and the documented returns to socially relevant traits have increased interest in the impact of higher-order skills on labor market outcomes (see Deming and Silliman (2025) for a review). Our findings suggest that estimated returns to social skills may combine productive interpersonal ability with differential willingness to enter evaluation. If so, the policy response depends on which component dominates. Building interpersonal skills addresses one margin; reducing the cost of entry or treating social anxiety addresses another. For roles where avoidance is the primary barrier, interventions targeting evaluation formats—structured interviews, asynchronous assessments, AI-assisted screening (Jabarian and Henkel, 2025)—may yield gains even absent changes in skill.

Whether alternative formats reduce scope for negative interpretation depends on understanding how such interpretation arises. In rich feedback environments like interviews—where performance cues are numerous, ambiguous, and socially embedded—belief updating is not a simple function of a single observable signal. Individuals must decide which aspects of the interaction to attend to and how to weight them. Our evidence suggests that socially anxious applicants disproportionately focus on negative elements

and update less favorably from comparable signals. Whether this operates through selective attention, expectation-consistent processing, or differential weighting of affectively salient cues remains open. Distinguishing among these channels would clarify both the microfoundations of persistent pessimism and which interventions are likely to be effective.

More broadly, the mechanism we identify may extend beyond interviews. In vignettes included in our nationally representative survey, socially anxious respondents report lower willingness to negotiate salary or approach senior colleagues. Many other settings, such as promotion decisions, funding competitions, graduate admissions, and client pitches, involve voluntary entry into ambiguous social evaluations. If socially anxious individuals systematically avoid such settings or interpret feedback more negatively, similar participation wedges may arise throughout their careers. Whether these wedges cumulate over time, and whether early intervention can prevent such accumulation, are questions for future work.

Another question for future work is whether participation wedges persist in competitive labor markets. In our design, all recruited applicants complete the interview, so we observe performance even for those who report low willingness to interview. In organizations, however, workers who avoid applying or interviewing are typically unobserved, so firms observe only the applicant pool and cannot directly assess the productivity of workers deterred by evaluation. Our setting also features a single standardized interview for a generic role, abstracting from sorting across jobs and firms based on match quality. In richer labor markets, avoidance may affect both the decision to enter evaluation and the choice of where to apply. Whether competition induces firms to adjust screening practices, or whether participation wedges persist in equilibrium, remains an open question.

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A Additional Tables and Figures

Table A1: Interviewer Summary Statistics

	(1) Mean	(2) SD	(3) Minimum	(4) Maximum
Demographics				
Age	46.57	11.14	25	67
Woman(0/1)	0.39	0.49	0	1
Interview Characteristics				
Number of Applicants	12.92	3.94	3.00	23.00
Share of Socially Anxious Applicants	0.47	0.14	0.13	0.80
Share of High Performers	0.54	0.17	0.10	0.88
Hiring Rate	0.65	0.18	0.25	1.00
Hired Zero Applicants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hired All Applicants	0.06	0.23	0.00	1.00
Applicant Ratings of Interviewer				
Warmth Rating (1-7)	5.77	0.71	3.67	7.00
Judgmentalness Rating (1-7)	2.14	1.30	1.00	6.00
Comfort Rating (1-7)	5.48	0.66	3.33	7.00
Observations	72			

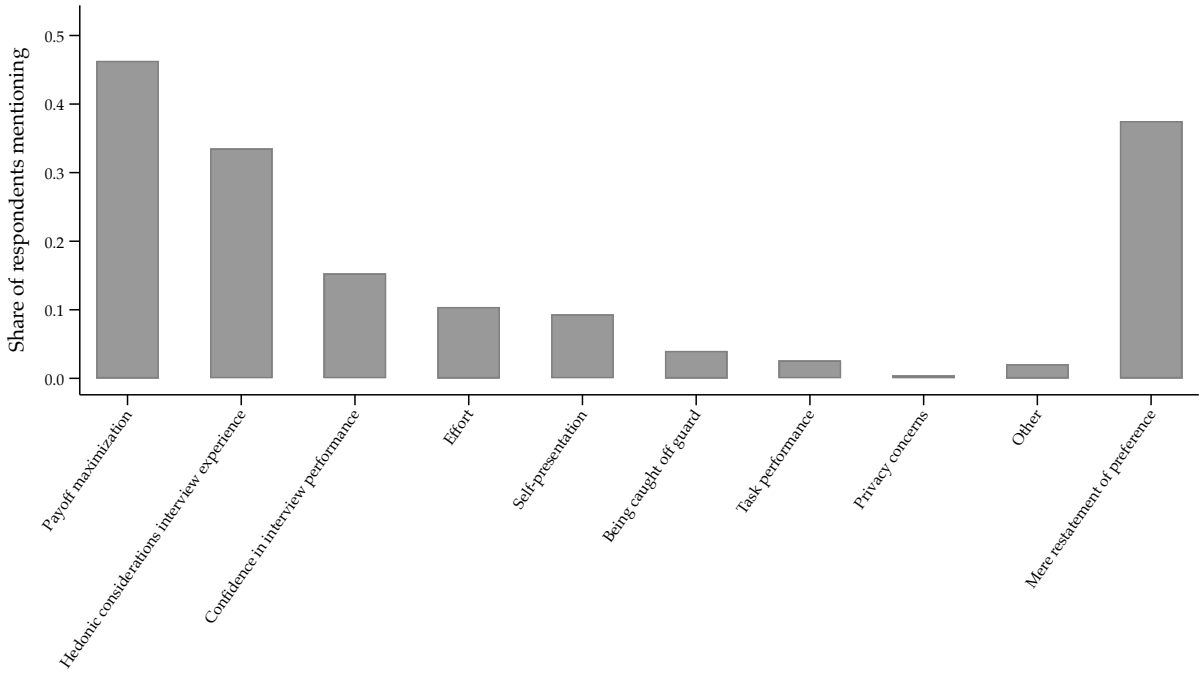
Notes: The table reports interviewer-level summary statistics. Columns (1)–(4) report the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum across interviewers. Shares and rates are computed at the interviewer level based on the applicants interviewed by each interviewer. Ratings of interviewer warmth, judgmentalness, and comfort are averages of applicants' 1–7 ratings at the interviewer level. Observations are interviewers.

Table A2: Applicant Summary Statistics

	(1)	(2) Mean (SE)	(3)	(4)	(5)
	Full Sample	Socially Anxious	Not Socially Anxious	p-value of diff.	Corr. with SA (p)
N	922	430	492		
Demographics					
Woman (1/0)	0.57 (0.02)	0.66 (0.02)	0.49 (0.02)	<0.01	0.20 (<0.01)
Age in years	41.21 (0.42)	39.77 (0.58)	42.46 (0.60)	<0.01	-0.13 (<0.01)
College educated	0.56 (0.02)	0.47 (0.02)	0.63 (0.02)	<0.01	-0.19 (<0.01)
Full-time employee	0.49 (0.02)	0.44 (0.02)	0.53 (0.02)	<0.01	-0.09 (<0.01)
Urban resident	0.70 (0.02)	0.67 (0.02)	0.73 (0.02)	0.04	-0.09 (<0.01)
Household income > USD75k	0.45 (0.02)	0.37 (0.02)	0.53 (0.02)	<0.01	-0.18 (<0.01)
Number of adults in household	2.05 (0.03)	2.14 (0.05)	1.98 (0.04)	0.01	0.10 (<0.01)
Mental Health and Social Skill Measures					
Self-Esteem Index	0.01 (0.03)	-0.41 (0.05)	0.38 (0.04)	<0.01	-0.48 (<0.01)
GAD-7 Index	-0.02 (0.03)	0.47 (0.05)	-0.43 (0.04)	<0.01	0.54 (<0.01)
PHQ-8 Index	-0.02 (0.03)	0.38 (0.05)	-0.36 (0.04)	<0.01	0.48 (<0.01)
Neuroticism Index	-0.01 (0.03)	0.49 (0.04)	-0.44 (0.04)	<0.01	0.56 (<0.01)
Social Intelligence Index	0.01 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.05)	0.03 (0.04)	0.59	-0.01 (0.70)
ONET Social Jobs Index	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.11 (0.05)	0.07 (0.05)	<0.01	-0.11 (<0.01)
Deming Social Skills Index	0.00 (0.03)	-0.42 (0.04)	0.38 (0.04)	<0.01	-0.48 (<0.01)

Notes: Socially anxious is defined as LSAS $\geq$ 50. Columns (1)–(3) report means with standard errors (in parentheses) for the full sample, socially anxious applicants, and not socially anxious applicants. Column (4) reports p-values from regressions of each row variable on an indicator for social anxiety. Column (5) reports Pearson correlations between each row variable and the social-anxiety indicator, with p-values in parentheses. Index variables are standardized to mean zero and standard deviation one in the full sample.

Figure A1: Considerations Underlying Willingness-to-interview Decisions



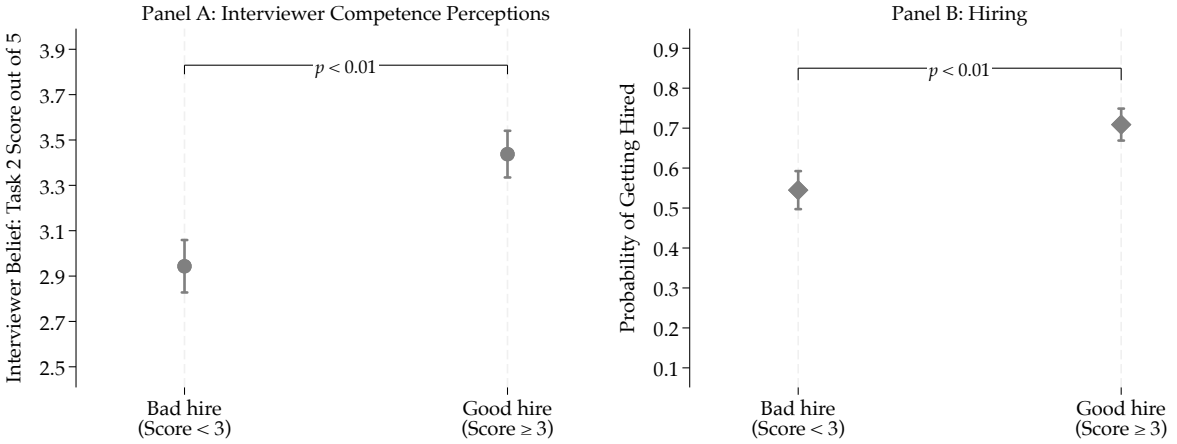
Notes: Bars report the share of respondents mentioning each consideration in open-ended explanations of willingness-to-interview decisions. Considerations are coded using a multi-label GPT-5 classification with a structured prompt, so each response can contribute to multiple categories. Appendix Table C4 provides a detailed overview of each consideration category and its processing.

Table A3: Rumination Treatment Effects

	(1) Posterior Belief: Perceived Competence	(2) Posterior Belief: Likeability	(3) Posterior Belief: Hired	(4) Posterior Belief: Perceived Competence	(5) Posterior Belief: Likeability	(6) Posterior Belief: Hired
Rumination	-2.64	-0.32**	-2.59	-2.09	-0.19	-1.01
	(1.62)	(0.14)	(1.61)	(1.94)	(0.16)	(2.07)
Socially Anxious	-7.88***	-0.82***	-10.36***	-7.27***	-0.68***	-8.61***
	(1.67)	(0.16)	(1.88)	(2.36)	(0.18)	(2.48)
Rumination × Socially Anxious				-1.18	-0.27	-3.38
				(3.06)	(0.24)	(3.41)
Observations	922	922	922	922	922	922
Main-task Score Control	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Interviewer FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

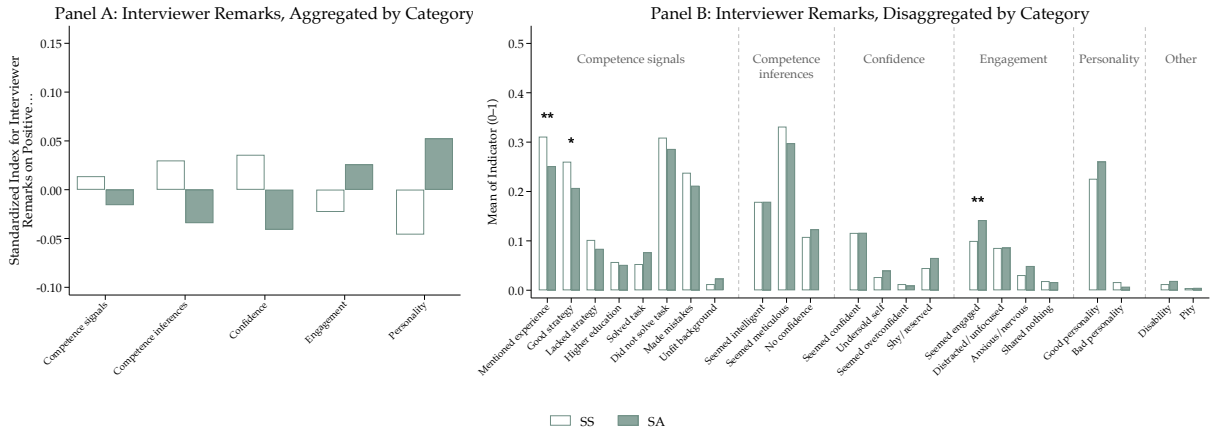
Notes: Each column reports a regression of posterior beliefs about the indicated interview outcome on a rumination-treatment indicator and controls. Columns (1)–(3) estimate the main effect of rumination controlling for an indicator for social anxiety; Columns (4)–(6) additionally include the Rumination × Socially Anxious interaction. All specifications control for main-task score and include interviewer fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the interviewer level and reported in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A2: Applicant Competence and Interviewer Perception



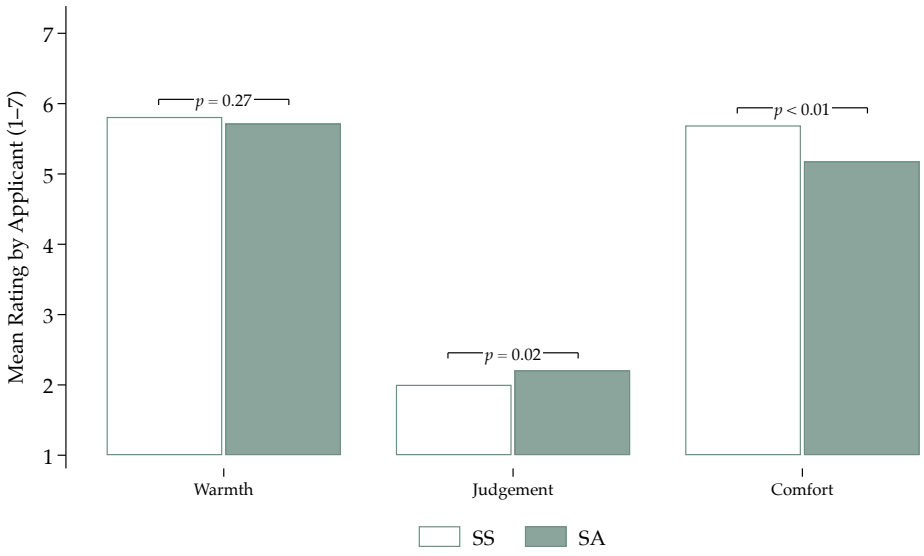
Notes: Panel A reports interviewers' mean belief about applicant main-task performance separately for low-performing applicants (main-task score < 3) and high-performing applicants (main-task score ≥ 3). Panel B reports mean hiring rates for the same performance groups. Points are sample means and error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

Figure A3: Interviewer Remarks from Hiring Justification Texts



Notes: Panel A reports standardized aggregate category indices of interviewer remarks coded from open-ended hiring justifications using GPT-5. Panel B reports mean values of the underlying disaggregated signals by social-anxiety status. Signals with negative valence enter the aggregate indices in Panel A with a negative sign. Appendix Table C3 provides a detailed overview of each coded signal and its processing. For each SS-SA bar pair, stars denote significance from two-sample t-tests of equality of means. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A4: Disaggregated Warmth Index



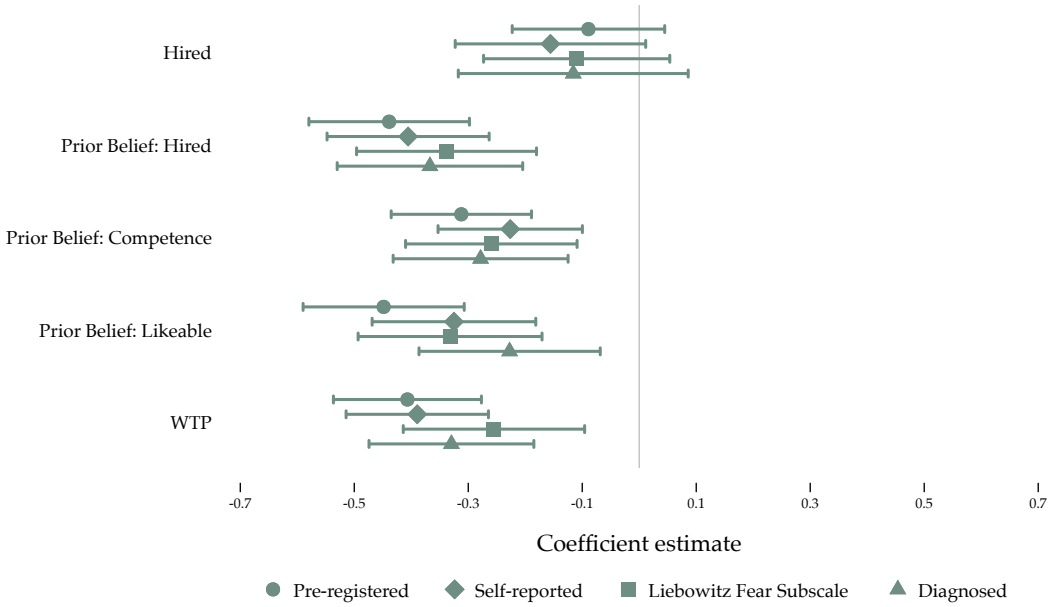
Notes: Bars report mean interviewer-trait ratings by social-anxiety status for warmth, judgment, and comfort, each measured on a 1–7 scale. Brackets above each trait pair report *p*-values from regressions of the trait on an indicator for social anxiety, with standard errors clustered on interviewer level.

Table A4: Social Skills and Gender Gaps in Social-Risk Vignettes

	(1) Negotiating Salary	(2) No to Non-Promotable Task	(3) Networking	(4) Negotiating Salary	(5) No to Non-Promotable Task	(6) Networking
Panel A: Social skills						
Deming Social Skills Index	0.07***	-0.01	0.14***	0.06***	-0.01	0.12***
	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Socially Anxious				-0.08**	-0.00	-0.14***
				(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
$1 - \frac{\beta_1}{\beta_0}$				0.20	-0.06	0.16
Panel B: Gender						
Woman	-0.01	-0.04*	-0.07**	0.01	-0.05**	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Socially Anxious				-0.13***	0.01	-0.22***
				(0.03)	(0.02)	(0.03)
$1 - \frac{\beta_1}{\beta_0}$				—	-0.04	0.49
Observations	1003	1003	1003	1003	1003	1003

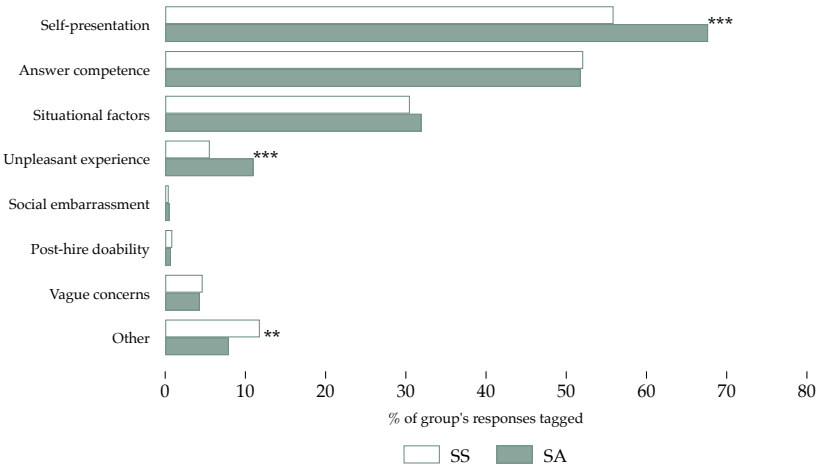
Notes: The table replicates the structure of Table 2 using data from the supplementary labor-market survey ($N = 1{,}003$). Outcomes are binary social-risk vignette choices—whether the respondent would negotiate salary (Columns (1) and (4)), decline a non-promotable task assignment (Columns (2) and (5)), or pursue networking opportunities (Columns (3) and (6))—each a raw binary outcome (0/1). Panel A reports the coefficient on the standardized Deming Social Skills Index; Panel B reports the coefficient on an indicator for being a woman. Columns (1)–(3) include no additional controls; Columns (4)–(6) add an indicator for social anxiety (LSAS ≥ 50). The row $1 - \beta_1/\beta_0$ shows the share of the raw gap accounted for by social anxiety. Robust standard errors in parentheses. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A5: Social Anxiety Gaps Across Definitions



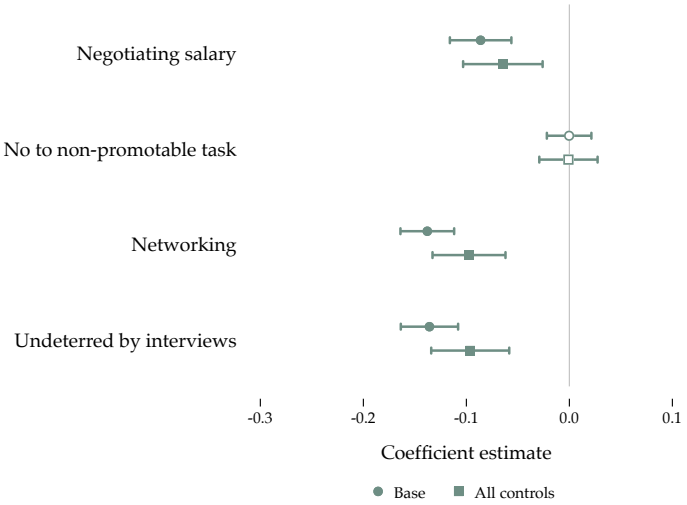
Notes: Markers report coefficients from regressions of outcomes on alternative indicators for social anxiety. "Pre-registered" is the main binary indicator based on LSAS $\geq$ 50; "Self-reported" is a binary indicator based on applicants' self-reported social anxiety; "Liebowitz Fear Subscale" is a binary indicator based on the fear-only LSAS subscale (threshold 26); "Diagnosed" indicates self-reported prior diagnosis of social anxiety. Outcomes are standardized relative to the socially secure group within each indicator definition. Specifications include controls for main-task score; hiring specifications additionally include interviewer fixed effects. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

Figure A6: Interview Apprehension Reasons



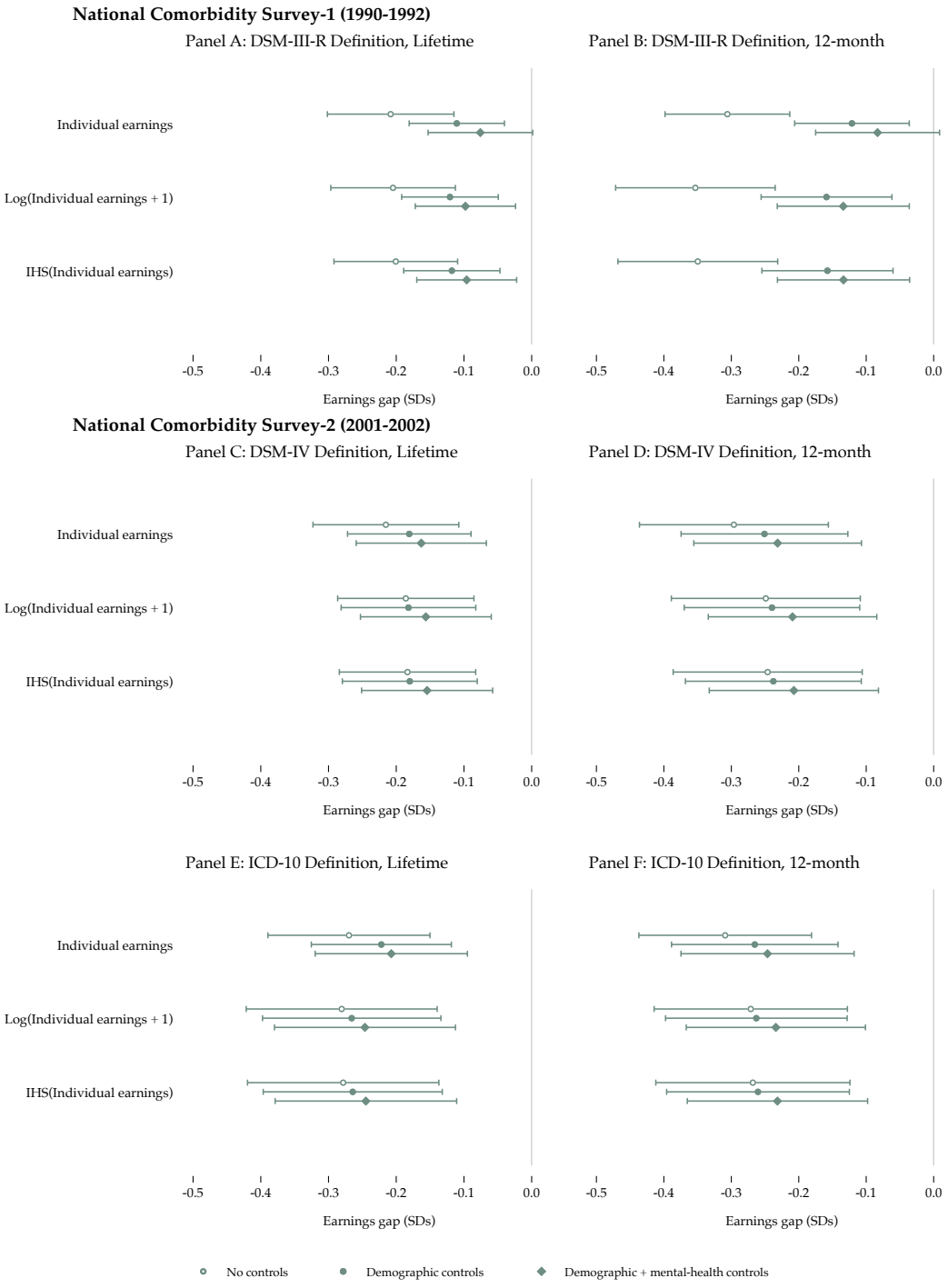
Notes: Bars report the share of free-text interview-apprehension responses from the supplementary labor-market survey classified into each of eight categories, reported separately for socially anxious (SA) and socially secure (SS) applicants. Respondents were asked to describe, in their own words, what concerns or worries they would have about interviewing for the job. Responses were coded using a large language model applying an 8-class scheme (Scheme A); coding was conducted blind to SA group assignment, and multi-label classification was permitted when a response genuinely spanned more than one category (so shares do not sum to 100 percent). Significance stars denote two-sample t-tests comparing the SA and SS proportions tagged in each category. * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$.

Figure A7: Social Risk and Interview Apprehension



Notes: Markers report OLS coefficients on the standardized LSAS score for four outcomes measured in the supplementary labor-market survey. The first three outcomes are vignette-based social-risk choices—whether the respondent would negotiate salary, decline a non-promotable task assignment, or pursue networking opportunities—and the fourth is a self-reported behavioral measure of whether the respondent applied to jobs despite interview apprehension. Circles correspond to the base specification (standardized LSAS only); squares correspond to the specification with all controls (additionally including standardized GAD-7, PHQ-8, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Deming Social Skills Index). Filled markers indicate statistical significance at the 5 percent level; open markers indicate $p \geq 0.05$. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

Figure A8: Social Anxiety and Income among Non-Retired Respondents



Notes: Each panel plots the survey-weighted earnings gap between socially anxious and socially secure non-retired respondents across three earnings outcomes: raw personal earnings, log(personal earnings + 1), and the inverse hyperbolic sine (IHS) of personal earnings. Outcomes are standardized using the survey-weighted mean and standard deviation of earnings among non-retired respondents without social anxiety disorder. Panels A and B use data from the National Comorbidity Survey-1 (NCS-1, 1990–1992); Panels C–F use the National Comorbidity Survey-2 (NCS-2, 2001–2002). Each panel applies a different clinical definition of social anxiety disorder: DSM-III-R (Panels A and B), DSM-IV (Panels C and D), and ICD-10 (Panels E and F), shown separately for lifetime and 12-month prevalence. Open circles show estimates with no controls; filled circles add demographic controls (gender, age, age squared, and race/ethnicity in NCS-1; gender, age, age squared, Census region, household size, and marital status in NCS-2); filled diamonds further add mental-health controls (lifetime major depression and generalized anxiety disorder). All regressions use sampling weights. Error bars denote 95 percent confidence intervals.

B Appendix B. Bayesian Updating in Log-Odds

We want to test whether socially anxious and non-anxious applicants update differently in response to the interview. Section B.1 presents the Bayesian updating framework. Section B.2 defines the common signal assumption and derives the null hypothesis. Section B.3 describes implementation details.

B.1 Bayesian updating in log-odds

Let $H \in \{0, 1\}$ denote success (e.g., hired). For group $g \in \{\text{SA}, \text{SS}\}$, let $p_g^{\text{prior}} = \Pr_g(H = 1)$ and, after observing signal s, $p_g^{\text{post}}(s) = \Pr_g(H = 1 \mid s)$. Define log-odds $\ell = \log(p/(1-p))$. Bayes' rule gives

$$\ell_g^{\text{post}}(s) = \ell_g^{\text{prior}} + \Lambda_g(s),$$

where

$$\Lambda_g(s) := \log \frac{f_g(s \mid H = 1)}{f_g(s \mid H = 0)}$$

is the log-likelihood ratio, and $f_g(s \mid H)$ is the likelihood of signal s given state H, for group g. The log-odds update is therefore

$$\Delta\ell_g := \ell_g^{\text{post}} - \ell_g^{\text{prior}} = \Lambda_g(s).$$

[1]

Note that to compute $\Delta\ell_g$ the analyst only needs to know prior and posterior beliefs, not the realization of H.

B.2 Common signal assumption

The groups face a common signal if the diagnostic content of s, i.e., its informativeness about H, is the same across groups:

$$f_{\text{SA}}(s \mid H) = f_{\text{SS}}(s \mid H) \text{ for } H \in \{0, 1\} \quad \iff \quad \Lambda_{\text{SA}}(s) = \Lambda_{\text{SS}}(s) \text{ for all } s.$$

Let F_g be the marginal distribution of realized signals for group g (integrating over H). Because $\Delta\ell_g = \Lambda_g(s)$,

$$\mathbb{E}[\Delta\ell \mid g] = \int \Lambda_g(s)\, dF_g(s).$$

Under a common signal and equal exposure to signals ($F_{\text{SA}} = F_{\text{SS}}$), the null is

$$H_0 : \ \mathbb{E}[\Delta\ell \mid \text{SA}] = \mathbb{E}[\Delta\ell \mid \text{SS}].$$

If Bayesian agents in both groups receive signals of equal diagnosticity and distribution, they should exhibit the same average log-odds update. Rejecting H_0 implies that priors

[1] By contrast, the probability update $\Delta p_g := p_g^{\text{post}} - p_g^{\text{prior}} = \sigma(\ell_g^{\text{prior}} + \Lambda_g(s)) - \sigma(\ell_g^{\text{prior}})$, where $\sigma(x) = 1/(1 + e^{-x})$, varies with the prior even for a fixed signal.

alone cannot explain the posterior gap, and instead the gap must reflect differences in signals received, differences in interpretation (i.e. a deviation from Bayesian updating by at least one group), or both.

B.3 Implementation

We compute $\Delta\ell$ at the individual level from stated prior and posterior probabilities, trimming probabilities to $[0.01, 0.99]$ before the logit transform to avoid infinite values.

C Appendix C. Machine Learning Approaches

Table C1: Interviewer Behavioral Measures

	(1) Scale	(2) Prompt	(3) Method	(4) Obs
Panel A: Text-based				
Asks for Number of Differences	0,1	Interviewer explicitly asks applicant to state the number of differences even though such a question is not part of the interview script. E.g., any request for a concrete number of differences found, such as 'Can you name the number of differences you see.'	GPT-5, manual	922
Clarification	0,1	Interviewer clarifies or rephrases a question or task, or explains what is meant by a question (e.g., 'by that I mean...', 'what I'm asking is...', 'just to clarify...').	GPT-5	922
Follow-up Question	0,1	Interviewer asks additional, unscripted follow-up questions to get more detail, clarification, or examples beyond the main scripted questions. Not counted as follow-up: rhetorical questions; technical/practical/administrative talk; simple acknowledgments; flow control; encouragement; or merely rephrasing the scripted question.	GPT-5, manual	922
Cut off – Time	0,1	Interviewer refers to time constraints or moves to cut the participant off or wrap up due to time (e.g., 'we're short on time', 'I'll have to stop you there', 'we need to move on now').	GPT-5	922
Addresses Name	0,1	Interviewer addresses the applicant by name directly, e.g. Hi Brad, hi Paul, without the applicant introducing themselves beforehand.	GPT-5	922
Flow Control	0,1	Interviewer manages the flow or structure of the interview (e.g., 'let's move on to the next question', 'we'll start with...', 'now I'll ask you about...', 'we're almost done').	GPT-5	922
Encouragement	0,1	Interviewer provides reassurance or encouragement (e.g., 'take your time', 'you're doing great', 'that's a good answer', 'no worries', 'that's fine').	GPT-5	922
	Scale	Description	Method	Obs
Panel B: Audio-visual				
Fraction of Speech	seconds	interviewer's total speaking length as a share of the entire video length	manual	922
Gesturing	$[0,\infty)$	computed from wrist landmarks as the mean Euclidean displacement between consecutive processed frames; displacements are computed with a 3-frame step and averaged over time	MediaPipe Pose	905
Smiling	[0,5]	measured as the mean per-frame AU12 output; continuous, unitless model score averaged across frames with a detected face	OpenFace	905
Voice Loudness	R	numerical measure of how loud the speech audio is	openSMILE	905

Notes: "Follow-up Question" is distinctly different from "Asks for Number of Differences." Instances of follow-up questions were checked manually to minimize false positives and verify correct classification of pure follow-ups vs. asking for number of differences.

Table C2: Thought Pattern Extraction

	(1) Description	(2) Prevalence	(3) Prevalence (hand-coded)
High standards	Excessively high standards in social performance (e.g., "I should always have something smart to say")	27%	33%
Conditional beliefs	Conditional beliefs about the consequences of performing a certain way (e.g., "If my hand shakes, people will think I'm incompetent")	30%	33%
Unconditional beliefs	Unconditional negative beliefs about the self (e.g., "I am incompetent")	4%	15%
Observations		922	100

Notes: Binary thought-pattern scores were elicited using an NLP model trained on 100 hand-coded observations. Rumination texts were first vectorized using TF-IDF and then predicted using a logistic regression classification model.

Table C3: Applicant Impression Measures Derivation

	(1) Prompt	(2) Prevalence
Competence signals		
Mentioned experience	Mentions any professional experience relevant to decision	28%
Good strategy	Interviewer says candidate had a good or effective strategy during the task	24%
Lacked strategy	Mentions candidate lacked a good strategy or approach to the task	9%
Higher education	Mentions or implies education beyond high school (college, med/law school, etc.)	5%
Solved task	Mentions candidate solved the entire in-interview task correctly	6%
Did not solve task	Mentions candidate did not fully solve the task or got parts wrong	30%
Made mistakes	Mentions that candidate made mistakes or answered some questions incorrectly	23%
Unfit background	Mentions that the candidate's professional background is unfitting for the role	2%
Competence inferences		
Seemed intelligent	Mentions candidate was smart, intelligent, eloquent, or well-spoken	18%
Seemed meticulous	Mentions candidate was detail-oriented, conscientious, or meticulous	32%
No confidence	Interviewer expresses that they have little to no confidence in the applicant	11%
Confidence		
Seemed confident	Mentions candidate was confident, self-assured, or secure	12%
Undersold self	Candidate downplayed or undersold themselves, expressed insecurity or self-doubt	3%
Seemed overconfident	Candidate described as arrogant, cocky, overconfident, or brazen	1%
Shy/reserved	Candidate described as shy, aloof, reserved, short, or impersonal	5%
Engagement		
Seemed engaged	Candidate described as enthusiastic, engaged, or interested	12%
Distracted/unfocused	Candidate described as distracted, unfocused, or bored	9%
Anxious/nervous	Mentions candidate was nervous, anxious, intimidated, or scared	4%
Shared nothing	Candidate shared little or nothing personal; seemed closed-off or overly reserved	2%
Personality		
Good personality	Mentions candidate has a good, pleasant, or likable personality	24%
Bad personality	Mentions candidate has a bad, unpleasant, or off-putting personality	1%
Other		
Disability	Mentions or implies a disability or health limitation (physical or mental)	2%
Pity	Decision or evaluation appears motivated by pity or sympathy	0%
Observations		922

Notes: All measures were identified using GPT-5. The specific prompt for the coding task was: "You are coding recruiter justifications about applicants. For each variable below, assign 1 if present (explicitly or implicitly) and 0 if absent." Prevalence is computed over the full sample.

Table C4: WTP Text Indicators

	(1) Label	(2) Prevalence
Payoff maximization	Choices driven primarily by which option pays more; these are participants who discuss eagerness to make money without revealing strategies or beliefs about the interview	46%
Hedonic considerations about interview experience	Considerations about enjoying or not enjoying the interview; this includes both wanting to do the interview out of curiosity and being worried about the interview	34%
Confidence in interview performance	Expressions of confidence (or lack thereof) with regards to potential performance in the interview	15%
Effort	Mentions effort, energy, inconvenience, camera setup being annoying, opportunity cost of time, preferring the easier option	10%
Self-presentation	Worries about how they look/sound/come across (appearance, voice, being judged), including not feeling "ready" (not dressed, hair/makeup, in PJs, just woke up, on camera)	9%
Being caught off guard	Expresses surprise or frustration that an interview/video component was unexpected or sprung on them; emphasis on lack of forewarning/ability to prepare	4%
Task performance	Thoughts about how performance in the task will impact the interview, both positively and negatively	3%
Privacy concerns	Mentions data security, distrust of being recorded/on camera, deepfakes, AI training, or worries about personal information being used/misused; motivation is privacy/safety rather than social discomfort	0%
Mere restatement of preference	Restating choices in terms of the multiple-price list, both strategically and if backed by thoughts about wanting or not wanting to do the interview	38%
Other	Main justification outside of canon labels	2%
Observations		922

Notes: Measures were extracted manually from open-ended WTP-consideration texts. Prevalence is computed over the full sample.

D Appendix D. Instructions for Interviewers

D.1 Prolific Recruitment Survey

Introduction

Answer 3 screener questions to qualify for a longer 1-2 minutes survey that includes HR-related questions. The longer survey awards a bonus.

Experience Screeners

What is your current job title, level or responsibility?

[Drop-down of choices ranging from CEO (highest) to intern (lowest)]

Do you have any professional experience conducting job interviews as part of a role as manager, supervisor, HR, or recruiter?

[Yes, No]

Would you be willing to conduct video job interviews, as part of a well-paid study, according to your availability over the coming days?

[Yes, No]

Not Selected

The participant is not selected to be recruited if they answered "No" to either of the two previous questions.

Thank you for your answers. Unfortunately you are not eligible to continue with this study. Your compensation for completing this screener will be processed shortly.

Introduction

Conditional on passing all previous screeners.
You are invited to take part in a research study on hiring practices and decision-making in job interviews. To participate, you must have experience conducting job interviews in a professional context. If you qualify to participate in the study, we will ask you a few more questions and pay a 20 cents bonus for having to extend this initial short survey by 1-2 minutes.

This study is conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, Carnegie Mellon University, and the Hertie School. This study was cleared by the ethics committee of the Hertie School.

If at any point during this study you experience a technical error or problem, please contact us on Prolific or via email at [study e-mail]. At any point, even after completing the study, you can contact us to withdraw your consent and to have your data erased.

What you'll do:
Attend a mandatory 45-minute training session held on Zoom. Work to conduct simulated job interviews during a 2-hour session.

Compensation:
You will receive a fixed hourly pay of $10/hour.
You will also receive performance-based bonus pay ($10–15/hour) and a fixed $8 bonus for having participated in the interview training.

Scheduling:
You'll receive a link to sign up for time slots for training and 2-hour work session.

Platform requirements:
Study communications before and after sessions will take place on Prolific chat and on the email you will provide for scheduling purposes.
During sessions, we will use Zoom. You do not need to register, but you will be prompted to provide an alias and must use the following display name format: "First name (Prolific ID)"
The main study must be run on a standard web browser on a laptop or desktop. You will be required to have a working camera and microphone. Mobile devices are not supported.

Data Use and Privacy:
Your assessments will be confidentially linked to your Prolific ID for tracking.
Data will be stored securely and published only in anonymized form. The videos of job interviews may undergo confidential review before being permanently erased, in accordance with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Code of Conduct

This job requires a degree of professionalism. In particular, we expect you to adhere to the following guidelines:

- **Dress appropriately**: Wear work-appropriate attire. Accessories like sunglasses or hats are generally out of place in that context.
- **Ensure quality audio and video**: Make sure you are clearly visible and audible throughout the interview.
- **Use a proper setup**: Join the session from a laptop or desktop computer, positioned on a desk, with a relatively plain background.
- **Punctuality**: Be on time for scheduled sessions, and let us know at least one hour in advance if you can't attend.

When conducting interviews, during the training and during the main session:

- **Stay on script**: Ask the questions as provided and in the order given. Avoid major digressions. This ensures consistency and comparability across all interviews.
- **Allow complete answers**: Do not cut responses short to save time. Manage the session so that you collect full answers to all three questions. For most interviews, this will mean using the entire 5-minute allocation.
- **Minimize distractions**: Do not bring pets or children into the interview space, and avoid multitasking during interviews.

Our research team will monitor compliance with these guidelines. Please take care to follow them, as significant deviations may lead to reduced compensation or termination from the project.

By continuing, you confirm that:

- You meet the eligibility criteria.
- You understand and agree to the expectations and conditions outlined above.
- You voluntarily consent to participate.
- You have read, understood, and are willing to adhere to the code of conduct.

Consent

Do you consent to participate in this study under the terms described above?

[Yes, No]

No Consent

Thank you for your answers. You did not consent to participate in this study. Your compensation for completing this screener will be processed shortly.

Attention Checks

When we ask you to select your favorite hobby out of the list below, we'd like you to choose the first option.

Based on the text you read above, which out of the list of favorite hobbies have you been asked to select?

*[**Swimming**, cycling, yoga, running, team sports, none of the above]*

Great, and now instead of selecting your favorite meal of the day, please just select the last option:

*[Breakfast, lunch, **dinner**]*

Finally, instead of selecting your favorite type of take-out food, please just select the first option:

*[**Tapas**, pizza, Indian, Thai, sushi]*

Failed Attention Checks

If answered incorrectly even one of the attention checks.

Unfortunately you failed at least one of the attention checks. You will not be able to continue the study, but will receive compensation for the first part of this survey.

Demographics

If passed all attention checks.

What is your age?

[Age (18 and up)]

What is your gender?

[Man, Woman, Non-binary]

How many years of experience do you have conducting job interviews?

[Less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, more than 5 years]

In your current or most recent role, approximately how many job interviews have you conducted?

[1-5, 6-10, 11-20, 21-40, 40+]

Do you have a working camera and microphone on your laptop that you can use during the training and main study?

[Yes, No]

Do you understand that missing a scheduled session without giving at least one hour's notice will disqualify you from bonus pay and continued participation?

[Yes, No]

Disqualified

Displayed if the participant answered no to either of the previous two questions.

Sorry, but you're not eligible for the larger study because your answers to one of the last two questions conflict with what you agreed to in the consent form. You will not be able to continue the study, but will receive compensation for the first part of this survey.

Scheduling

Please note that in order to schedule your sessions, we will send you calendar invites via e-mail. Are you available to attend a live 45-minute training session today at [time] on Zoom?

[Yes, No]

If available for training

Please select at least one main work session that you are available for. The main work sessions are 2 hours long.

At this stage, this question is mostly for us to gauge your availability. You will confirm your preferred work session later, after completing the training session.

[Drop-down of at least two possible choices for main session]

If available for training and main session

Please enter your e-mail address. We will use this only to send you calendar invites and reminders ahead of your scheduled sessions and will erase it after your participation in

this study is complete.

[E-Mail]

What display name will you use on Zoom? (Format: "First name (Prolific ID)")

[Display name, text field]

Thank you. Please sign up here to confirm your booking for the training session today. Upon completing this last step, you will be redirected to Prolific to complete your submission.

You will receive a link to enroll for the 2-hour work session shortly after the training.

[Calendly re-direct link]

If not available for training [work session]

You mentioned that you are not available for any of the listed training [work sessions]. Would you like to leave your e-mail and be informed if any other sessions open up?

[Yes, No]

If interested in future sessions

Please enter your e-mail address so we can send you calendar invites in case more sessions become available.

[E-Mail]

Thank you for your answers. We have recorded your email and we will reach out to you if any training or main sessions open up in the future. Please submit this survey and your compensation will be processed shortly.

If not interested in future sessions

Thank you for your answers. We will not contact you for future sessions. Please submit this survey. Your compensation of $0.20 will be processed shortly.

D.2 Main Session Instructions

Before First Interview

Welcome to your first session.

Prior to interviewing the first participant, we would like to ask you to go through some technical checks.

You will also have the opportunity to take a look at the task that applicants have to complete. This will give you an idea of the difficulty and process of answering the questions.

Should you run into difficulties at any point, please reach out to us.

You will only have to pass the tech check and the quiz once. After this, you will be redirected to your first interviewee.

Click "Next" to proceed to the tech checks.

Sound and Video Check

If you encounter any problems, please make use of the chat feature in the bottom right corner of your screen.

We will now check that your sound and camera are working correctly. This step avoids the risk that we cannot approve your submission if you do not complete the video chat interview.

During the video chat, you will need to be visible on your camera, audible on your microphone, and have working speakers to hear the interviewer.

Test your microphone

Click the button below to start recording the following sentence: “I am recording my voice for testing purposes.” Once the recording stops automatically, you will be able to play it back by pressing the play button.

[Test Recording]

If you can’t hear your voice, please consider refreshing the page or changing your microphone and speakers. You can test the recording function as many times as you need.

Test your camera

If you failed to allow access, then reload the page and the browser might ask you again to allow access. Otherwise, click on the red camera button in the video frame below to receive instructions on how to allow access in your browser manually.

[Video]

Do you confirm that your microphone and camera are working correctly, and that you can hear yourself?

[Yes, No]

Explanation

After each interview you will decide whether or not to hire an applicant. Your payment for this decision will depend on the applicant's performance in the task we will now show you.

In particular, you will receive a $3 bonus if and only if the applicant answered at least 3 out of 5 questions correctly in Task 2. If you decide not to hire them, then you will receive $1.50 for sure. If you decide to hire the applicant, then they will receive a $2 bonus regardless of their task performance.

In sum, the bonuses for you and the applicant as a result of the hiring decision look like this:

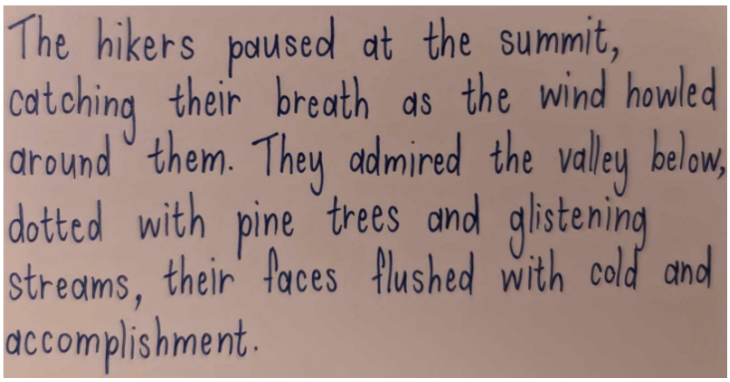
	Hired	**Not Hired**
The applicant	$2 bonus	Nothing
You	$3 bonus but ONLY if the applicant got 3 or more questions correct in Task 2	$1.50 bonus

Task 2 Answers

Here is how Task 2 went.

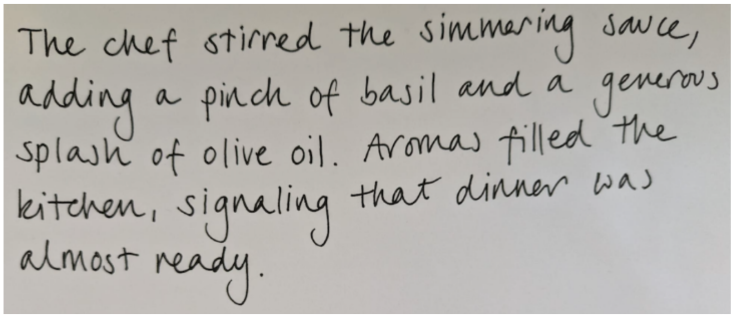
Applicants were shown five pairs of texts: a handwritten original and a typed transcription. For each pair, they were asked to report how many differences they could find between the two versions. Differences could include changes in word use, punctuation, or spelling.

Below are the five pairs of originals and transcriptions, each followed by an explanation of how many mistakes are present in the transcription. **Applicants did not have access to the correct answers while completing the questions.** Applicants had 3 minutes to solve this task. Roughly **half of the applicants got at least three out of five questions correct and would therefore make for profitable hires.**



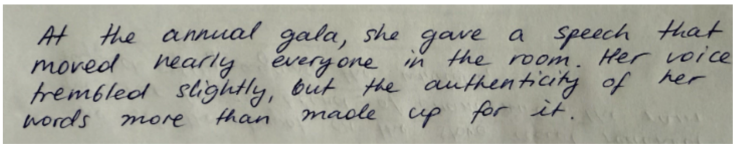
Transcribed Text: The hikers halted at the summit, catching their breath as the wind howled around them. They admired the valley below, dotted with pine trees and glistening streams, their faces flusht with cold and accomplishment.

*[0, **2**, 4, 6, 8]*



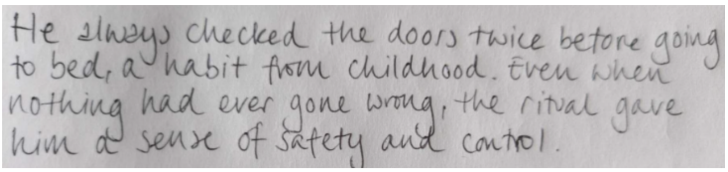
Transcribed Text: The chef stirred the bubbling sauce, adding a pinch of oregano and a generous splash of olive oil. Aromas filled the kitchen, signaling that diner was almost ready.

*[1, 2, **3**, 4, 5]*



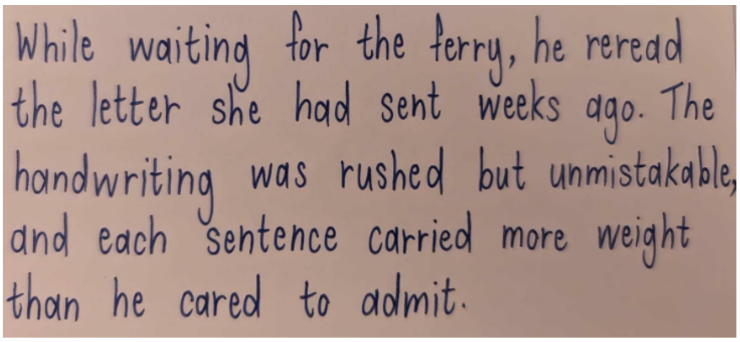
Transcribed Text: At the annual gala, she gave a speach that moved nearly everyone in the room. Her voice trembled faintly, but the sincerity of her word more than made up for it!

*[0, 1, 3, **5**, 7]*



Transcribed Text: He always checked the doors twice before going to bed, a habit from childhood. Even when nothing had ever gone wrong, the rituel gave him a sense of safety and routine.

*[0, 1, **2**, 3, 4]*



Transcribed Text: While waiting for the ferry, he reread the letter she had sent weeks ago. The handwritting was rushed but unmistakeable, and each phrase carried more meaning than he cared to admitt.

*[0, 1, 3, **5**, 7]*

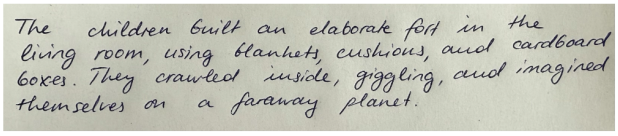
Start

You are through with the tech check and with the review of the task for which you will be hiring applicants.

After this first interview, you will not need to go through the technical checks again.

Please proceed to the first interview here.

Original:



Transcribed Text: The children constructed an elaborate fort in the livingroom, using blankets, cushions and cardboard boxes. They crawled inside, gigling, and imagined themselves on a faraway planet.

[Next]

Video Interview

Your interviewee's name is [name].

You can now see your conversation partner. If not, please grant permission to use your microphone and camera in your browser.

[Video call]

Interview script:

I was given three questions to help me assess your performance in the quiz. I will ask each question, listen to your response, and then move onto the next question. Let's get started. First, can you tell me a bit about yourself?

Thank you. Can you describe a situation in your life where you had to be very careful or conscientious in solving a task or where there was little margin for error? How did you do?

Thank you. Next, please consider the following question.

[Reveal]

I understand this is similar to the task you completed earlier. Talk me through how you would go about solving this particular question.

Correct number of differences: 4

Differences:

- "built" → "constructed" (different word)
- "living room" → "livingroom" (word merge)
- Missing comma after "cushions"
- "giggling" → "gigling" (spelling)

That's all for the interview. You can go ahead and continue with the rest of the survey. Thanks, and have a good day!

Notes
(Notes will not be shared with partner.)

[Notes]

Please press this in case you finish early, your partner is unresponsive, or if your partner dropped out:

[Finish early]

Confirm End of Interview

Did you have a chance to interview the applicant?

(Please only say no if the applicant didn't show up, had major tech issues, or dropped during the call.)

[Yes, No]

Post-Interview: Performance 1

How likely (0–100%) do you think it is that the applicant you just interviewed got at least 3 out of 5 questions correct in Task 2?

To help you think about this:
If you think that the applicant clearly underperformed, you might guess a low probability like 10–30%.

If you are unsure, but leaning negative, you might guess 30–50%.
If you think that the applicant performed relatively well, you might guess 50–70%.
If you are confident that the applicant did well, you might guess 70–90%.

You maximize your chance of winning an additional $0.20 bonus by stating your best guess of the actual likelihood. It is not important that you understand the exact details of the payment mechanisms, but if you are interested, you can read up on it HERE [explainer box].

[Slider 0-100]

Post-Interview: Performance 2

What is the number of questions out of five you think the applicant answered correctly in Task 2?

You maximize your chance of receiving the bonus by giving your best estimate. You will win an additional $0.20 bonus if your guess is correct.

[Slider 0–5]

Post-Interview: Confidence

Did the applicant seem confident about their performance? In particular, what do you think the applicant answered when we asked them how many questions they answered correctly in Task 2?

You maximize your chance of receiving the bonus by giving your best estimate. You will win an additional $0.20 bonus if your guess is correct.

[Slider 0–5]

Post-Interview: Likeability

Please rate how likable the applicant you just interviewed was on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much).

[Slider 1-10]

Post-Interview: Hiring Decision

We will now ask if you want to hire the applicant you just interviewed. If you do, then you will receive a $3 bonus if and only if the applicant answered at least 3 out of 5 questions correctly in Task 2. If you decide not to hire them, then you will receive $1.50 for sure. If you decide to hire the applicant, then they will receive a $2 bonus regardless of their task performance.

In sum, the bonuses for you and the applicant as a result of the hiring decision look like this:

	Hired	**Not Hired**
The applicant	$2 bonus	Nothing
You	$3 bonus but ONLY if the applicant got 3 or more questions correct in Task 2	$1.50 bonus

If you took notes during the interview, they will appear here:

[Notes]

Do you want to hire the person you just interviewed?

[Yes, No]

Hiring Decision Justification

What are the reasons that ultimately led you to [not] hire this applicant? Please list your reasoning in at least two to three sentences.

[Open text]

Next

Thank you. Please click the link below to interview the next participant.

[Start the next session]

E Appendix E. Instructions for Applicants (Main Survey)

Introduction

Welcome! This is a short survey that should take 10–15 minutes to complete. In this study, we are only interested in your own answers, so please do not use any external aid in answering this study.

Some participants may be asked to take part, for additional compensation, in an extension of the study. Should that be the case for you, all additional payments that accrue from this extension will be paid as a bonus on this task. The extension features a short video conversation with another participant, which will happen on the screen and with your computer's webcam and microphone on and will be recorded to allow for confidential review by the researchers and their support team.

In compliance with data protection regulation (GDPR), recordings are stored separately from the rest of your responses and will be permanently deleted following review from our team. The only information we will share between you and the person you meet is your respective first names (or aliases). The person you meet is another participant from Prolific. Note that there will be no deception in the instructions. Everything we tell you about the tasks you face will be implemented in the exact way we tell you. Any analysis and publication will only use data in anonymous form.

This study is conducted by researchers at the University of Chicago, Carnegie Mellon University and the Hertie School. This study was cleared by the ethics committee of the Hertie School. If you experience a technical error or problem, then do not try to restart or retake the study. Rather, contact us on Prolific or via email at [e-mail].

At any point, even after completing the study, you can contact us to withdraw your consent and to have your data erased.

Do you confirm that you have not already taken this study in the past few days?

[Yes, I confirm that this would be my first time taking this study, No, I have taken this study already and can not participate again.]

Do you consent to participate in this study?

[Yes, No]

Taken before

You stated that you have already taken this study on [platform]. Unfortunately, you are not able to take this study again. Thank you for your interest. Please return this study.

No consent

Since you did not provide consent, we need to ask you to return the survey.

Attention Checks

When we ask you to select your favorite hobby out of the list below, we'd like you to choose the first option.

Based on the text you read above, which out of the list of favorite hobbies have you been asked to select?

*[**Swimming**, cycling, yoga, running, team sports, none of the above]*

Great, and now instead of selecting your favorite meal of the day, please just select the last option:

*[Breakfast, lunch, **dinner**]*

Finally, instead of selecting your favorite type of take-out food, please just select the first option:

*[**Tapas**, pizza, Indian, Thai, sushi]*

Failed Attention 1

Unfortunately you failed at least one of the attention checks, and you will not be able to proceed with the survey. Thank you for your interest. Please return this study.

Demographics 1

What is your year of birth?

[Year]

What is your gender?

[Man, woman, other]

Are you of Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino origin?

[Yes, No]

What is your race? You may select one or more options. for this survey, Hispanic or Latino origin is considered an ethnicity, not a race.

[White, Black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander]

Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale

Read each situation below carefully and answer two questions about that situation. The first question asks how anxious or fearful you feel in the situation. The second question asks how often you avoid the situation. If you come across a situation that you ordinarily do not experience, we ask that you imagine "what if you were faced with that situation," and then rate the degree to which you would fear this hypothetical situation and how often you would tend to avoid it. Please base your ratings on the way that the situations have affected you in the last week.

Situation:

- Using a telephone in public
- Participating in a small group activity
- Eating in public
- Drinking with others
- Talking to someone in authority
- Acting, performing, or speaking in front of an audience
- Going to a party
- Working while being observed
- Writing while being observed
- Calling someone you don't know very well
- Talking face to face with someone you don't know very well
- Meeting strangers
- Urinating in a public bathroom
- Entering a room when others are already seated
- Being the center of attention
- Speaking up at a meeting
- Taking a test of your ability, skill, or knowledge
- Expressing disagreement or disapproval to someone you don't know very well
- Looking someone who you don't know very well straight in the eyes
- Giving a prepared oral talk to a group
- If you are still paying attention, then prove it by selecting first 'Mild' and then 'Usually' in this row **[attention check]**
- Trying to make someone's acquaintance for the purpose of a romantic/sexual relationship
- Returning goods to a store for a refund
- Giving a party
- Resisting a high-pressure salesperson

Fear of the situation:

[None, mild, moderate, severe]

Avoiding the situation:

[Never, occasionally, often, usually]

Failed Attention 2

Unfortunately you have not been paying attention, and we need to ask you to return this survey. Since you already answered a few questions, you will receive a bonus of $0.30. Thank you!

Social Anxiety

Social anxiety refers to persistent fear about or discomfort in social situations, such as meeting new people, being observed, or speaking in front of others. While many people feel nervous in social situations from time to time, social anxiety tends to be more intense and might interfere with daily life, relationships, or work.

To what extent do you consider yourself to have social anxiety?

[no social anxiety, mild social anxiety, moderate social anxiety, severe social anxiety]

Task 1 Introduction

Thank you for that!

You will now complete two short tasks: Task 1 and Task 2.

Each task includes 5 similar questions and is timed for exactly 3 minutes. The tasks are of similar difficulty, and you'll earn 10 cents for each correct answer.

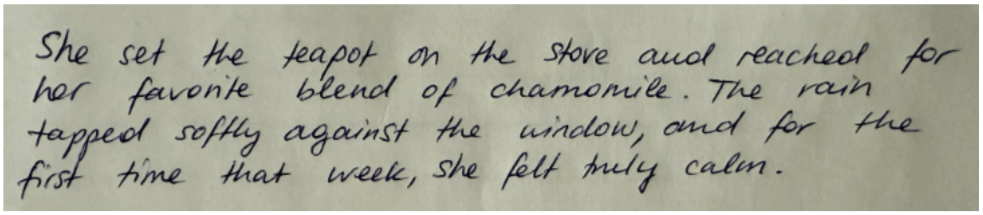
In each question, you'll see an image of handwritten text and a typed transcription. Your job is to work out how many differences there are between the original and the transcription. Look for differences in word choice, spelling, and punctuation.

Click "Next" to begin Task 1.

Task 1 (3 minutes)

How many differences are there between the original and the transcribed text? Look for word use, punctuation, and spelling mistakes.

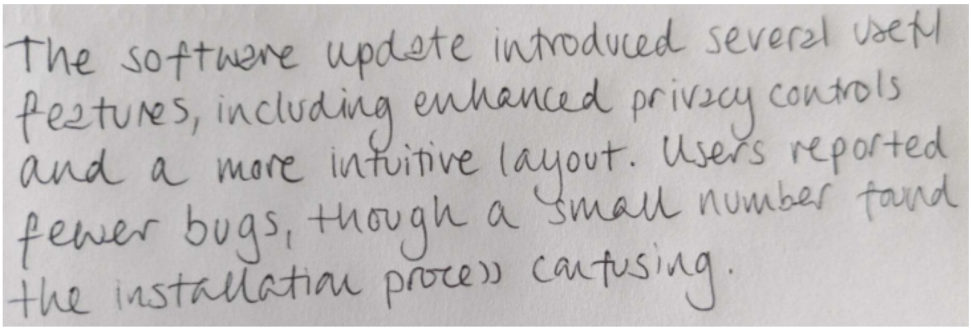
Original:



Transcribed Text: She set the teapot on the stove, and reached for her favorite blend of chamomile. The rain tapped softly against the window and for the first time that week she felt truly calm.

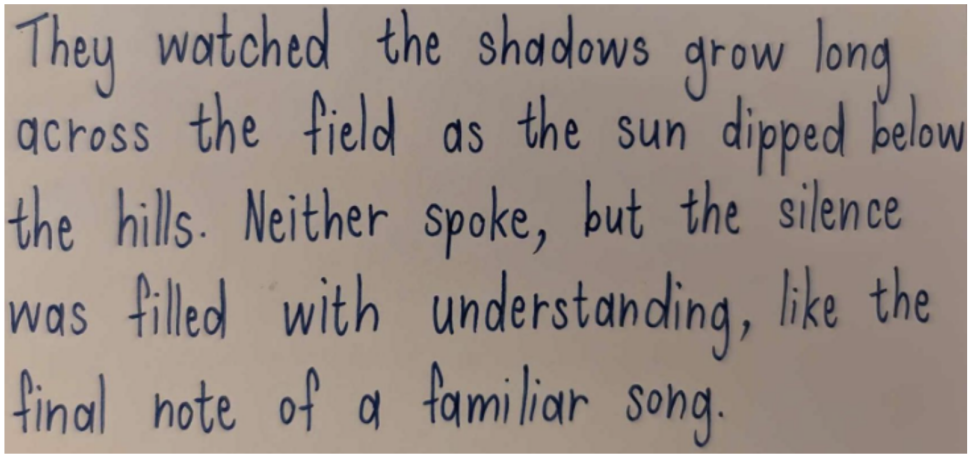
*[0, 1, **3**, 5, 7]*

Original:



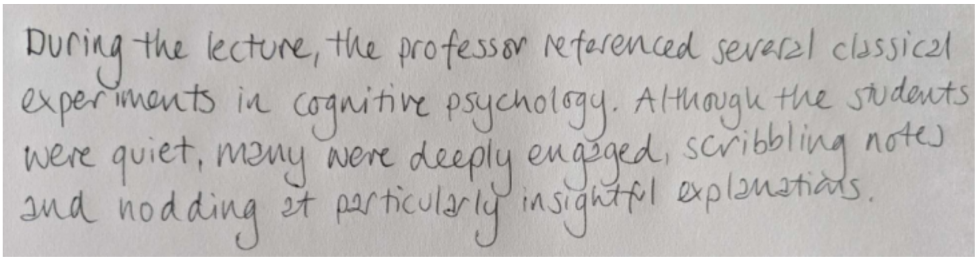
Transcribed Text: The software update introduced several useful features, including enhanced privacy controls and a more intuitive layout. Users noticed fewer bugs, though a small number found the installation process confusing.

*[**1**, 2, 3, 4, 5]*



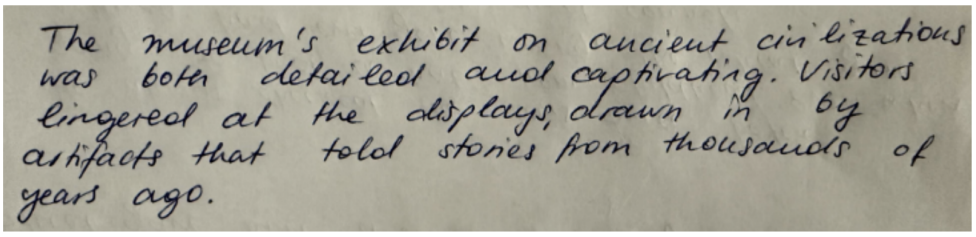
Transcribed Text: They watched the shadows grow long accross the meadow as the sun dipped below the hills. Neither talked, but the silence was filled with understanding—like the final note of a familiar song.

*[0, 2, **4**, 6, 8]*



Transcribed Text: During the lecture, the professor referenced several classical experiments in cognitive psycology. Although the students were quiet, many were deeply engaged, jotting notes and nodding at particularly insightful explanations.

*[0, 1, **2**, 3, 4]*



Transcribed Text: The museum's exibit on ancient civilisations was both detailed and captivating. Guests lingered at the displays, drawn in by artefacts that told stories from thousand of year ago.

*[0, 2, 4, **6**, 8]*

Task 2 Introduction

Great, thanks for that!

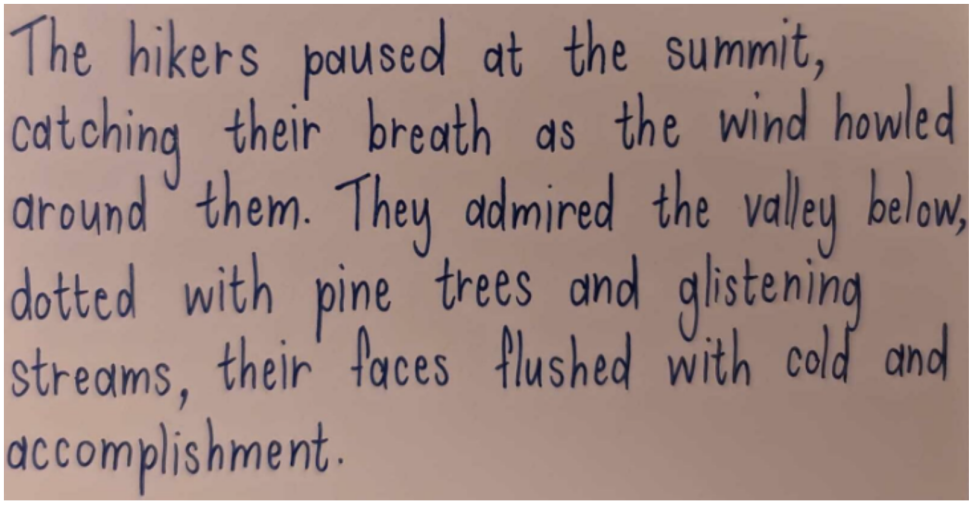
We'll now begin Task 2.

This task contains 5 questions and is similar in format and difficulty to the previous one. As before, you'll earn 10 cents for each correct answer.

Click "Next" when you're ready to begin.

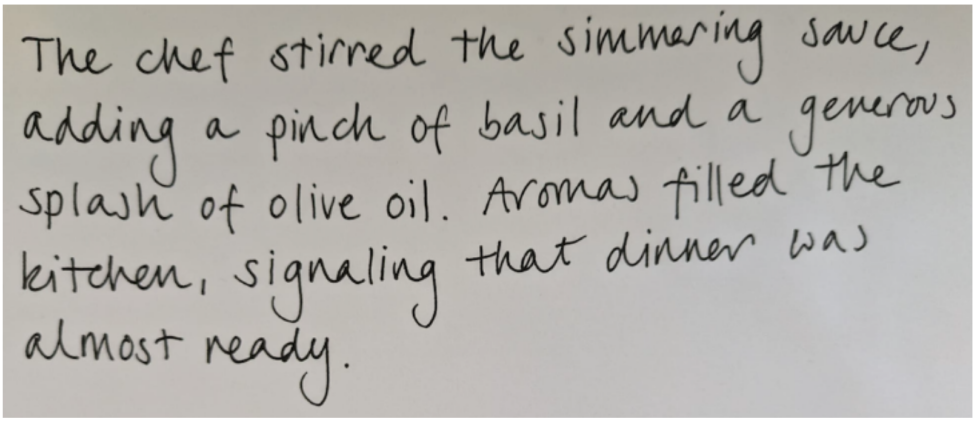
Task 2 (3 minutes)

How many differences are there between the original and the transcribed text? Look for word use, punctuation, and spelling mistakes.



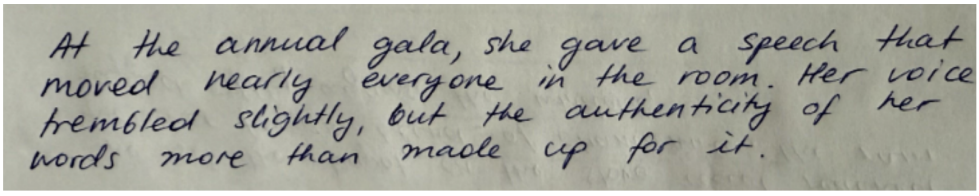
Transcribed Text: The hikers halted at the summit, catching their breath as the wind howled around them. They admired the valley below, dotted with pine trees and glistening streams, their faces flusht with cold and accomplishment.

*[0, **2**, 4, 6, 8]*



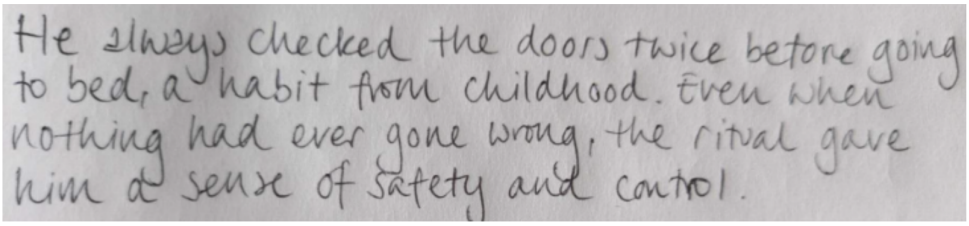
Transcribed Text: The chef stirred the bubbling sauce, adding a pinch of oregano and a generous splash of olive oil. Aromas filled the kitchen, signaling that diner was almost ready.

*[1, 2, **3**, 4, 5]*



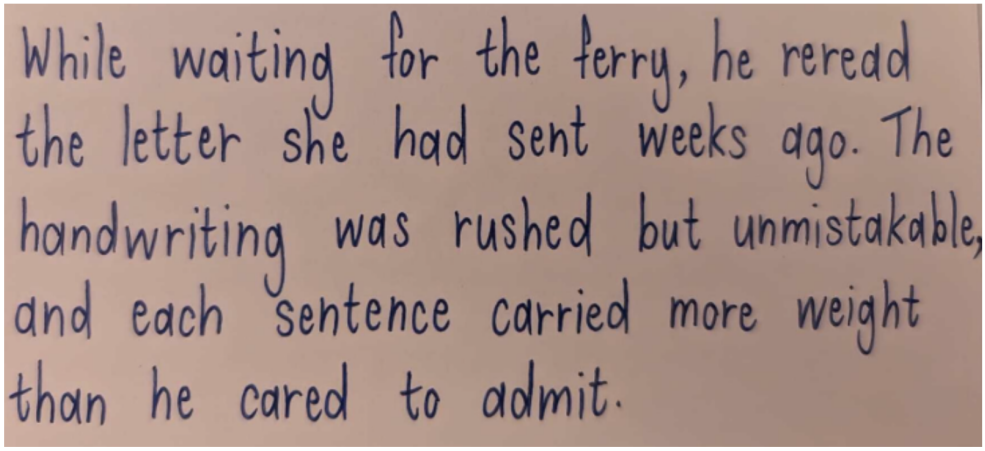
Transcribed Text: At the annual gala, she gave a speach that moved nearly everyone in the room. Her voice trembled faintly, but the sincerity of her word more than made up for it!

*[0, 1, 3, **5**, 7]*



Transcribed Text: He always checked the doors twice before going to bed, a habit from childhood. Even when nothing had ever gone wrong, the rituel gave him a sense of safety and routine.

*[0, 1, **2**, 3, 4]*



Transcribed Text: While waiting for the ferry, he reread the letter she had sent weeks ago. The handwritting was rushed but unmistakeable, and each phrase carried more meaning than he cared to admitt.

*[0, 1, 3, **5**, 7]*

Score Task 1 and Attention

You got [score] questions correct in Task 1.

Please confirm how many questions you got correct in Task 1 to continue.

[0–5]

Task 2 Performance Belief

As a reminder, you got [score] out of 5 questions correct in Task 1.

Now, we'd like to know your best guess about how many questions you got correct in Task 2 (also out of 5). You maximize your chance of receiving the bonus by giving your best estimate of your actual performance. You will win an additional $0.20 bonus if your guess is correct.

What is your best guess of how many questions you got correct in Task 2?

[0–5]

Interview Introduction

In a few screens, this study will feature a structured 5 minute one-on-one interview. Your interviewer has human resources experience.

The interviewer will ask you three questions about yourself as well as your approach to problem-solving. They will also observe you working through a question similar to the ones on the task you just completed, while you think out loud about likely solutions.

To ensure that the technology works smoothly during the interview, on the next screen we help you set up your sound and camera.

Sound and Video Check

If you encounter any problems, please make use of the chat feature in the bottom right corner of your screen.

We will now check that your sound and camera are working correctly. This step avoids the risk that we cannot approve your submission if you do not complete the video chat interview.

During the video chat, you will need to be visible on your camera, audible on your microphone, and have working speakers to hear the interviewer.

Test your microphone

Click the button below to start recording the following sentence: "I am recording my voice for testing purposes." Once the recording stops automatically, you will be able to play it back by pressing the play button.

[Test Recording]

If you can't hear your voice, please consider refreshing the page or changing your microphone and speakers. You can test the recording function as many times as you need.

Test your camera

If you failed to allow access, then reload the page and the browser might ask you again to allow access. Otherwise, click on the red camera button in the video frame below to receive instructions on how to allow access in your browser manually.

[Video]

Do you confirm that your microphone and camera are working correctly, and that you can hear yourself?

[Yes, No]

Interview Predictions

In the following we will ask you to make some predictions about the interview. With 50 percent chance your answers will affect whether or not you get an additional bonus. In particular, for each question, you will be rewarded for the accuracy of your prediction. So try to give us your best prediction. After you stated all of your predictions, we will flip a virtual coin and tell you the outcome. If it comes up heads your predictions affect your bonus.

Pay-Off Matrix

After the interview, the interviewer will rate how much they liked you and estimate the likelihood that you got at least 3 out of 5 questions correct in Task 2.

The interviewer will then decide whether to "hire" you. If you are hired, then you will receive a $2 bonus.

The interviewer's bonus also depends on their hiring decision. If they hire you, they will receive $3 if and only if you answered 3 or more questions correctly in Task 2. If they don't hire you, then they receive $1.5 for sure.

In sum, the bonuses for you and the interviewer as a result of the hiring decision look like this:

	Hired	**Not Hired**
You	$2 bonus	Nothing
The Interviewer	$3 bonus but ONLY if you got 3 or more questions correct in Task 2	$1.50 bonus

In the next few screens, we will ask you to make some predictions about how the interview will go.

Prior 1: Perceived Competence

Earlier, you told us you believe you got **[score belief] out of 5 questions correct** in Task 2.

As you know, the interviewer will be asked how likely they think it is that **you answered at least 3 out of 5 questions correctly** in Task 2.

Now, we'd like you to predict what the **interviewer** will believe after speaking with you. You can earn **a bonus of up to $0.20** for an accurate estimate. You maximize your chance of receiving the bonus by giving your **best guess** of what the interviewer will believe.

They will not be told how you performed and will not know your private estimate. Their judgment will be based purely on their impressions during the interview.

After the interview, what probability (0–100%) do you think the interviewer will say you have of getting at least 3 out of 5 questions correct in Task 2?

To help you think about this:
If you think the interviewer will see you as clearly underperforming, you might guess they'll give a low probability (e.g. 10–30%).

If you expect them to be unsure but leaning negative, maybe 30–50%.

If you think they'll see you as likely to have done reasonably well, you might estimate 50–70%.

If you believe they'll be confident you did well, you might choose 70–90% or higher.

You maximize your chance of winning an additional $0.20 bonus by stating your best guess of the actual likelihood. It is not important that you understand the exact details of the payment mechanisms, but if you are interested, you can read up on it HERE [explainer box].

[Slider 0-100]

Prior 2: Likeability

The interviewer will also be asked how likable they think you are, on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much).

What rating will they state? Give us your best guess.

You can earn an additional $0.20 bonus if your guess is correct.

[Slider 1-10]

Prior 3: Hiring Decision

The interviewer will ultimately decide whether to hire you. As a reminder, if you are hired, then you will receive a $2 bonus. The interviewer will receive $3 if and only if you answered at least 3 out of 5 questions correct in Task 2. If they don't hire you, then they receive $1.50 for sure.

How likely is it that you will get hired? Give us your best guess.

You maximize your chance of winning an additional $0.20 bonus by stating your best guess of the actual likelihood. It is not important that you understand the exact details of the payment mechanisms, but if you are interested, you can read up on it HERE [explainer box].

[Slider 0-100]

Prior 4: Enjoyment

After the interview we will ask you how much you enjoyed your experience in the interview on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much).

What rating are you most likely to give?

You can earn an additional $0.20 bonus if your guess is correct.

[Slider 1-10]

Coin Flip

The virtual coin flip we told you about has taken place. The predictions you just stated will [not] affect your bonus.

Interview Participation Preference

How much would you like to take part in this interview?

[Not at all, A little, Quite a lot, Very much]

Willingness to Pay

There is a 1 in 40 chance the computer will select you to be a "decider" and whether you will have the interview depends on your choices below. You will learn whether or not you were selected to be a decider on the next screen.

For each scenario below, choose whether you would prefer to: (1) complete a 5-minute interview, or (2) spend 5 minutes on a wait screen. In some scenarios, one option includes an additional bonus (not related to the $2 hiring bonus).

Note: You can only be considered for the $2 hiring bonus if you take part in the interview.

For each scenario, please choose the option you prefer. (If you are a decider, the computer will then select one of these scenarios at random and implement your choice.)

Please tell us in two to three sentences what considerations influenced your choices above—that is, what made you more or less eager to take part in the interview.

[Open text]

Scenario	Option 1	Option 2
1	Interview and $2	Wait screen
2	Interview and $1.50	Wait screen
3	Interview and $1	Wait screen
4	Interview and $0.50	Wait screen
5	Interview	Wait screen
6	Interview	Wait screen and $0.50
7	Interview	Wait screen and $1
8	Interview	Wait screen and $1.50
9	Interview	Wait screen and $2

Decider Reveal

[If not a decider]
You have not been randomly selected to be a decider. You will now take part in the interview.

[If decider]
You have been randomly selected to be a decider. The random scenario chosen by the computer was [scenario number]. You chose the [interview, waitscreen] and you will therefore [not] proceed to the interview. You get an additional [bonus from chosen senario].

Name

What is your first name? This will be shared with the other person during the video interaction. If you'd rather use an alias, you may do so.

[Name]

Redirect to Interview

Click next to proceed to the interview. You are being directed to a wait page where you will be assigned to the first available interviewer.

Video Interview

You can now see your conversation partner. If not, please grant permission to use your microphone and camera in your browser. Please use these 5 minutes to talk to your partner.

[Video call]

Rumination (Treatment)

If treatment = 1

On this screen we would like you to reflect on the interview.

You will be able to proceed to the next screen when the countdown ends.

Please spend a few minutes writing down your thoughts on how the interview went. Please write at least three sentences. It is important, and will be checked, that you write something here.

[Open text]

Posterior 1: Perceived Competence

Earlier, you told us you believe you got **[score belief] out of 5 questions correct** in Task 2.

As you know, the interviewer will now be asked how likely they think it is that **you answered at least 3 out of 5 questions correctly** in Task 2.

We'd like you to predict what the interviewer believes after speaking with you. You can earn **a bonus of up to $0.20** for an accurate estimate. You maximize your chance of receiving the bonus by giving your **best guess** of what the interviewer will believe.

They do not know how you performed and they do not know your private estimate. Their judgment will be based purely on their impressions during the interview.

What probability (0–100%) do you think the interviewer will say you have of getting at least 3 out of 5 questions correct in Task 2?

To help you think about this:
If you think the interviewer saw you as clearly underperforming, you might guess they'll give a low probability (e.g. 10–30%).
If you expect them to be unsure but leaning negative, maybe 30–50%.
If you think they saw you as likely to have done reasonably well, you might estimate 50–70%.
If you believe they're confident you did well, you might choose 70–90% or higher.

You maximize your chance of winning an additional $0.20 bonus by stating your best guess of the actual likelihood. It is not important that you understand the exact details of the payment mechanisms, but if you are interested, you can read up on it HERE [explainer box].

[Slider 0-100]

Posterior 2: Likeability

The interviewer will also be asked how likable they think you are, on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much).

What rating will they state? Give us your best guess.

You can earn an additional $0.20 bonus if your guess is correct.

[Slider 1-10]

Posterior 3: Hiring Decision

The interviewer will ultimately decide whether to hire you. As a reminder, if you are hired, then you will receive a $2 bonus. The interviewer will receive $3 if and only if you answered at least 3 out of 5 questions correct in Task 2. If they don't hire you, then they receive $1.50 for sure.

How likely is it that you will get hired? Give us your best guess.

You maximize your chance of winning an additional $0.20 bonus by stating your best guess of the actual likelihood. It is not important that you understand the exact details of the payment mechanisms, but if you are interested, you can read up on it HERE [explainer box].

[Slider 0-100]

Posterior 4: Enjoyment

How much did you enjoy your experience in the interview on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much)?

[Slider 1-10]

Rumination (Control)

If treatment = 0

On this screen we would like you to reflect on the interview.

You will be able to proceed to the next screen when the countdown ends.

Please spend a few minutes writing down your thoughts on how the interview went. Please write at least three sentences. It is important, and will be checked, that you write something here.

[Open text]

Hypotheticals

Depending on whether or not you are actually hired, we will use AI to compare your answer to the answer to this question provided by the interviewer. If your answer is closer to your interviewer's answer to this question than that of 50 percent of other participants, then you will receive an extra $0.20.

Suppose the interviewer does not hire you. In 2 to 3 sentences, tell us what reasons they stated for their decision.

[Open text]

Suppose the interviewer hires you. In 2 to 3 sentences, tell us what reasons they stated for their decision.

[Open text]

Disclosure 1

For each of the following statements, state whether you think the statement applies to you and whether you would share the information with an interviewer in a setting like the one you just experienced.

This applies to me	I would share this information with the interviewer
[Yes, No]	*[Yes, No]*
I have dyslexia	
I have a physical disability	
I experience social anxiety	
I have caring responsibilities (e.g. for children or others)	
I have ADHD	

Disclosure 2

If everyone with the following characteristics shared them with an interviewer in an interview like the one you just had, do you think it would generally make them more likely to be hired, less likely to be hired, or make no difference?

[Less likely to get hired, More likely to get hired, No difference]

[Items from Disclosure 1]

Interviewer Ratings

Please think back to the interview you just had.

How friendly or warm did the interviewer seem to you?

[Extremely cold/unfriendly – Extremely warm/friendly] [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

How judgmental did the interviewer seem to you?

[Not at all – Extremely judgmental] [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

How comfortable did the interviewer make you feel?

[Extremely uncomfortable – Extremely comfortable] [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7]

Wrap-Up

Before we wrap up, we'd like to ask you a few final questions about your background, experiences, and perspectives.

Job Interviews

Have you ever avoided applying for a job or withdrawn from an application because you did not want to do an interview?

[Yes, No]

Which framework is commonly used for structuring strong responses to situational interview questions?

*[**STAR (Situation, Task, Action, Result)**, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound), None of the above]*

Demographics 2

What was your total household income before taxes during the past 12 months?

[Less than 25,000, 25,000–49,999, 50,000–74,999, 75,000–99,999, 100,000–149,999, 150,000 or more]

How many adults live in the household?

[Number]

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

[Some high school or less, High school diploma or GED, Some college but no degree, Associate's or technical degree, Bachelor's degree, Graduate or professional degree (MA, MS, MBA, PhD, JD, MD, DDS, etc.), Prefer not to say]

What is your current employment status?

[Full time employee, Part-time employee, Self-employed or small business owner, Unemployed and looking for work, Student, Not in labor force (for example: retired or full-time parent), Other]

How many years of professional experience do you have?

[Less than 1, 1–5, 6–10, More than 10]

How would you describe your area of residence?

[Urban, Rural]

What is your state of residence?

[Drop-down state choices]

Industry

Please select the industry that most closely matches the one you work in.

[Drop-down industry choices]

Occupation

You selected [industry] as your industry.

Please select the occupation that most closely matches your own:

[Drop-down occupation choices]

Social Intelligence

Social Perceptiveness is defined as "Being aware of others' reactions and understanding why they react as they do."

How important is **SOCIAL PERCEPTIVENESS** to the performance of your current job?

[Not important, Somewhat important, Important, Very important, Extremely important]

Coordination is defined as "Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions."

How important is **COORDINATION** to the performance of your current job?

[Not important, Somewhat important, Important, Very important, Extremely important]

Persuasion is defined as "Persuading others to change their minds or behavior."

How important is **PERSUASION** to the performance of your current job?

[Not important, Somewhat important, Important, Very important, Extremely important]

Negotiation is defined as "Bringing others together and trying to reconcile differences."

How important is **NEGOTIATION** to the performance of your current job?

[Not important, Somewhat important, Important, Very important, Extremely important]

Instructing is defined as "Teaching others how to do something."

How important is **INSTRUCTING** to the performance of your current job?

[Not important, Somewhat important, Important, Very important, Extremely important]

Service orientation is defined as "Actively looking for ways to help people."

How important is **SERVICE ORIENTATION** to the performance of your current job?

[Not important, Somewhat important, Important, Very important, Extremely important]

PAGE Test

In the next screens, you will see 16 facial images. Under each image will be a list of 6 emotions. Your goal is to select the emotion which best describes the face.

There may be instances when the emotion is not immediately clear. In such cases, please choose just one word, the word which you consider to be most prominently expressed on the face.

Please choose and select which word best describes what the person in the picture is thinking or feeling.

[16 images with emotion choices]

Social Skills

Thinking about when you were 6 years old, would you describe yourself as:

[Extremely shy, Somewhat shy, Somewhat outgoing, Extremely outgoing]

Thinking about yourself as an adult, would you describe yourself as:

[Extremely shy, Somewhat shy, Somewhat outgoing, Extremely outgoing]

Which of these types of organizations did you belong to when you were in high school?

[Community youth organization such as scouts, School-sponsored hobby or subject matter clubs such as photography or history, Student council or government, Staff of yearbooks, school newspapers or magazines, Athletics including cheerleading and pep clubs, Performing arts including band, drama, and orchestra, National Honor Society or Scholastic Achievement Club, Other type of high school organization or club, None of the above]

PHQ-8

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

[Not at all, Several days, More than half the days, Nearly every day]

Little interest or pleasure in doing things

Feeling down, depressed, or hopeless

Trouble falling or staying asleep, or sleeping too much

Feeling tired or having little energy

Poor appetite or overeating

Feeling bad about yourself—or that you are a failure or have let yourself or your family down

Trouble concentrating on things, such as reading or watching television

Moving or speaking so slowly that other people notice, or being so fidgety/restless that you move around more than usual

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GAD-7

Over the last two weeks, how often have you been bothered by the following problems?

[Not at all, Several days, More than half the days, Nearly every day]

Feeling nervous, anxious, or on edge

Not being able to stop or control worrying

Worrying too much about different things

Trouble relaxing

Being so restless that it is hard to sit still

Becoming easily annoyed or irritable

Feeling afraid, as if something awful might happen

Neuroticism

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For each one, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that it describes you.

You should rate the extent to which the statement describes you, even if it is not a perfect fit.

I see myself as someone who…

[Disagree strongly, Disagree a little, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree a little, Agree strongly]

…is depressed, blue

…is relaxed, handles stress well

…can be tense

…worries a lot

…is emotionally stable, not easily upset

…can be moody

…remains calm in tense situations

RSES

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

[Strongly disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly agree]

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

At times I think I am no good at all.

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

I am able to do things as well as most other people.

I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

I certainly feel useless at times.

I feel that I'm a person of worth.

I wish I could have more respect for myself.

All in all, I am inclined to think that I am a failure.

I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Diagnosis

Have you ever been diagnosed with social anxiety disorder (also known as social phobia) by a mental health professional, or received treatment for it (e.g., therapy, medication)?

[No, Yes (diagnosed only), Yes (received treatment only), Yes (both diagnosed and treated), Prefer not to say]

Feedback and End

Thank you for participating in this experiment! Your payments are being calculated and will be processed within a week.

If you have any feedback on the survey or suggestions for improvement, please let us know here.

[Open text]

By pushing the next button below you complete your submission and get automatically redirected.