

ILLEGAL QUESTIONING: A STUDY OF MARKETING STUDENTS' RECENT INTERVIEW EXPERIENCES DURING THEIR CAREER SEARCHES

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ABSTRACT

This study presents marketing students' interviews, relevant marketing literature, and survey results collected from a group of undergraduate marketing students represented by four universities throughout the United States. Specifically, this study examined whether marketing students were asked illegal questions during their most recent face-to-face interviews and the students' reactions to these questions. The results suggested that, overall, the students from the four universities are being asked illegal questions during job interviews and, surprisingly, are not uncomfortable being asked inappropriate and often illegal questions. Discussed are reasons why students appeared to be unconcerned about answering questions with potential legal ramifications.

INTRODUCTION

A marketing student in a professional sales class recently revealed the following story during a campus mock interview with a representative from a nationally known organization. The interviewing manager commented on the marketing student's resume, asked several questions, and reported his impressions to the student. Questions asked by the interviewer included: what is your age and what is your religion. Further, the interviewer told the student that his skin color was "too white," suggesting that the student use a "sun-lamp" before future interviews to improve the student's skin color. The student left the interview with a negative feeling of not only the interviewer but also the company represented by the interviewer. Apparently, the recruiter was unaware or not properly trained in the interview process, thus a "bad experience" resulted for the marketing student. Unfortunately, these incidences are reportedly more common with the marketing students' interview experiences, and this story is not an isolated incident.

The interview process is a topic of discussion found in most college curriculums, not only in human resource classes but across other business classes as well (Taylor 2003). According to McCorkle, Alexander, Reardon, and Kling (2003), two of the main goals of marketing educators are to prepare students with knowledge in marketing and to provide the students with assistance and guidance in their career searches. If the second outcome is achieved, marketing students should leave school prepared for the interview process. Career fairs, internet, referrals, univer-

sity career services, internships, and mock interviews are common methods used by colleges to properly prepare students for a successful interview outcome.

Once the marketing students secure the interviews, several methods of assessment are often facilitated to acquire new hires (Garcia and Kleiner 2001). The entire process is devised to narrow down and ultimately find the best fit for both the candidate and the organization. Overall, personal interviews are the preferred method of new employee selection (Wells, Spinks, and Hargrave 1981; Scott, Pavlock, and Lathan 1985; McCorkle et al. 2003). Interestingly, while the interview process is the most widely relied on method of choosing employees, empirical research on the validity and reliability of the interview process is inconclusive (Jablin and Miller 1990; Anderson 1992; DeCenzo and Robbins 1999; Shepard 1995; McCorkle et al 2003; Hackett, Lapierre, and Gardiner 2004).

Ethical issues surrounding interviewing and hiring have been a hot topic in many marketing curricula, but the focus has centered on ethical issues *after* an individual has been hired (Roehling, Cavanaugh, Moyihan, and Boswell 2000). Duckett (2000) suggests that not only is the interviewee's perspective often overlooked in the interviewing process but there is a greater concern for refining the employment interview to benefit employers rather than prospective employees. Even with this concern interviewers not properly trained, may inadvertently ask questions during the interview that have legal consequences (Garcia and Kleiner 2001; McGinn 2005). For example, during an interview with a recent marketing graduate, the

recruiter casually asked the year the interviewee graduated from the university, as both interviewer and marketing graduate had attended the same school. This example could be construed as an age-related question.

Asking questions pertaining to age, religion, marital status, and disabilities are often done in ignorance of the laws and with no malice intended. Therefore, it would seem that training of human resource personnel would be of utmost importance to firms (Roselius and Kleiner 2000). Additionally, marketing educators are interested in how interviewers are conducting interviews so that this information may be passed on to marketing students. Marketing students and recruiters need to understand what questions are within legal parameters of the face-to-face interview. In order to examine these issues, the following two research questions are studied in this work: (1) Are the questions that recruiters use during face-to-face interviews illegal, and; (2) If the students are asked illegal questions, are they uncomfortable with this line of questioning.

This study is set up in the following manner. First, the relevant literature is reviewed and the hypotheses are introduced. The methodology follows. The results, conclusions, limitations, and further suggestions for research are discussed.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Interview Process

For purposes of this study, the employment interview is defined as “a social interaction between the interviewer and applicant in which the belief that individuals act and reside in a social context and that this context can influence their behavior and the processes and outcomes of an interview” (Posthuma, Morgeson, and Campion 2002, p. 257). According to Clarke (1999), employment interviews are conducted to determine whether a candidate is qualified to do the job being offered and nothing more. Unfortunately, applicant “fit” is often defined by measuring the match between an applicant’s characteristics and the organization and not necessarily, whether the candidate is the best qualified for the job (Posthuma et al. 2002; McCorkle et al. 2003).

Interviewing activities could include anything from telephone interviews to face-to-face conversations in the lobbies of the hiring companies. Often lasting impressions are made the moment the marketing student and recruiter sit down together at the initial interview. The interaction may not even be conducted at the potential hiring firm’s offices; still the student interviewee assesses the employees and company by the actions both verbal and non-verbal of the interviewer (Sartin 2004). Conversations heard by candidates in the reception area or hallways before the interview begins may speak volumes about how the firm is perceived by potential hires. Adam-

sky (2004) suggests that the reputation of a firm may be on the line because, although the interview may last for only an afternoon, the impression of a badly conducted interview may last a lifetime.

Libby Sartin (2004) head of human resources for Yahoo stated that her decision to work for Yahoo was made even before the interview began. Her decision was based on what she saw while sitting in the lobby waiting to be interviewed. The upbeat attitude of the employees told her more than the interviewing process ever would. As stated above, impressions may last long after the interview experience is over. In fact, research suggests that most candidates discuss their experiences at an interview with at least ten people (Clarke 1999). Negative interview experiences lead to negative perceptions of a company’s ethical behavior, which may affect a wide range of other outcomes, including organizational commitment, turnover intentions, job satisfaction reactions to supervision, theft, and extra-role behavior (Pawlowski and Hollwitz 2000).

The importance of a well-structured interview is paramount to improving the outcome of an interview (Garcia and Kleiner 2001). While there are many reasons for marketing students’ interviews to go unsatisfactorily, discrimination issues may be the most unpleasant. For purposes of this study, to discriminate is “to make a difference in treatment or favor on a basis other than individual merit” (Webster 2003). Discrimination issues are at best a murky set of legislative laws and regulations. These laws cover employment agencies, labor organizations, and joint labor management with apprenticeships and training. Created by Congress in 1964 as an independent agency, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces all of the *Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964* (www.eeoc.com). The EEOC provides oversight and coordination of all federal equal employment opportunity regulations, practices, and policies (Carroll and Miller 2001).

The EEOC does not have a clear-cut federal, state, local agency, or court that defines for all cases which interview questions are legal or illegal. Often confusing and frequently changing lists of what can and cannot be asked of a job applicant are given through large numbers of court rulings, legislative decisions, agency regulations, and constitutional laws (Bell 2000). Small companies are especially at risk when it comes to understanding and complying with the various employment-related laws. The costs of legal action against firms who may be charged by even one illegal interview question are expensive (Scheoff 2006). A summary of the laws regulating discrimination are given in Table 1.

The Interviewer

Recruiters, in charge of interviewing potential marketing candidates, may or may not be properly trained

TABLE 1
VARIOUS LAWS REGARDING EMPLOYMENT DISCRIMINATION

Law or Regulation	Description
Civil Rights Act of 1866	Extended to give all ethnic groups equal rights.
Equal Pay Act of 1963	Prohibits pay differences based on sex for equal work.
Civil Rights Act Title VII of 1964	Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.
Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967	Prohibits age discrimination against employees between 40 and 65 years of age in the area of hiring, pay, benefits, training, promotion and job retention.
Sections 501 and 503 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Prohibits discrimination on the basis of physical or mental disabilities in the federal government.
Mandatory Retirement Act of 1978	Prohibits the forced retirement of most employees before the age of 70.
Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 (CSRA)	Designed to promote overall fairness in federal personnel actions. Prohibits any employee who has authority to take certain personnel actions from discriminating for or against employees or applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status, or disability.
Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990	Prohibits employers from discrimination against individuals with physical or mental disabilities chronically ill; also requires organizations to reasonably accommodate these individuals in the state and local government as well as the private sector.
Civil Rights Act of 1991	Reaffirms and tightens prohibition of discrimination; permits individuals to sue for punitive damages in cases of intentional discrimination.

and, therefore, come unprepared to the interviews (Golen, Grasso, and Moeckel 1995). In fact, student candidates are often more prepared for the interview than the recruiters are. Mock interviews, dining etiquette, dress for success programs, and resume workshops are all part of the career training offered by most universities to increase marketing students' abilities to interview effectively (McCorkle et al. 2003). Interviewers, on the other hand, may have received only minimal human resource training, limited to last minute training (Duckett 2000; Graham 2005).

While many interviewers are required to choose new hires, many lack the skills required to be effectively successful in this role (Graham 2005). Chapman and Zweig (2005) found in their study of interviewers that only 34 percent were actually trained to interview candidates. Additionally, untrained interviewers are often gen-

erally trying to be friendly and questioning may lead into personal issues not within the realm of legal questioning (McCorkle et al. 2003). The interviewer may be completely unaware that a question is illegal. Interviewers who educate themselves on the issues that fall within the legal and illegal realms of the pre-employment screening process are less apt to find themselves with legal problems (Herman 1994; Arthur 1997). According to Wolf (2001), training is one of the best investments and defenses a firm will have in avoiding turnovers and extensive legal problems.

Besides a lack of training, interviewers may face additional pressures from their full-time responsibilities within the company (Chapman and Zweig 2005). If the focus of recruiters' responsibilities is not with interviewing, they may have inadequate knowledge of exactly what information may be legally obtained when securing a

position (Shepard 1995; Graham 2005). In some instances, companies have not updated job descriptions and do not have clear job profiles making it difficult for inexperienced interviewers to get a clearer picture of what position is to be filled. An untrained recruiter may feel pressure to make the right choice when narrowing down potential candidates to find the perfect fit for the job and their firm. Additional pressures may develop when trying to figure out between fact and fiction during the interview (Camp, Vielhaber, and Simoneti 2001). A study by the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) found that 70 percent of the college students interviewed would lie on a resume to get a job (Presley 2006). Finally, many employers may not even like the interviewing process at all.

Unfortunately, this lack of focus on interviewing within the corporate structure comes with a cost (Sanford 2005). The costs of searching, screening, hiring, and training a candidate is expensive and time consuming and inadequately trained interviewers can add to the expense (Wolf 2001; Garcia and Kleiner 2001). According to Phillip (1990) the cost of new hire averages 1.5 times the annual salary of the position being filled, therefore, the new hire must stay over one year as the costs will not be recouped in that first year (Garcia and Kleiner 2001).

A study to determine the type and classification of questions asked by campus recruiters found that college business seniors, who were interviewed by insurance, banking, retail, and food chain industries, reported that 41.7 percent were of a personal nature (Ward and Archer 1999). Further, in 8 percent of the interviews, the interviewer did all the talking, thus opening up the opportunity to engage in issues not within the legal range of conversation (Ward and Archer 1999). Personal questions may or may not be directly illegal but may inadvertently lend prejudice to the interviewer and give opportunity for legal ramifications (Ward and Archer 1999).

Huffcutt and Woehr (1999) concluded that: "(1) training should be provided to interviewers regardless of whether the interview itself (i.e., the questions and rating scales) is structured; (2) the same interviewer should be used across all applicants, especially when the interview itself is not highly structured; and (3) using a panel of interviewers does not contribute to validity, and may actually have a detrimental effect" (p. 557). Buckley, Norris, and Wiese (1994) suggested that while the face-to-face interview lacks validity and reliability, extensive training, and group interviewing increases the validity but only modestly.

Research by Scott, Pavlock, and Latham (1985), of 312 accounting students, found that approximately 10 percent of the students reported remembering being asked at least one illegal question. More recently and disconcerting, in a survey of employers at 100 small businesses (less than 500 employees), 100 percent of respondents said they would or had asked at least one illegal question

during an interview (McShulskis 1997). According to Thomas (1999), in a survey of over 4,000 job seekers, he suggested that more than one-third of job applicants remembered having been asked illegal interview questions. Additionally, Clarke (1999) found that one-third of job applicants have been asked an inappropriate/illegal interview question during an interview. Of these, the most commonly asked questions were of marital status, religion, age, and disabilities.

Interview Questions

Research suggests that possible legal problems are more apt to be averted with structured interview questions because of their ability to hold up against potential litigation (Williamson, Campion, Malos, Roehling, and Campion 1997). DeCenzo and Robbins (1999) suggest that the entire questioning process must be consistent from candidate to candidate. Empirical studies suggest that structured interviews are a more valid and reliable selection process to use than unstructured interviews (Campion, Palmer, and Campion 1997). Training of hiring staff, preparation, and structuring will hold all interviewers to the same questions and processes. This does not mean that the interviews need to be completely inflexible; the direction of questioning must have some latitude for following the flow of the interview direction (Pawlowski and Hollwitz 2000).

Questions that are not within the realm of the position are a problem for the interviewee. This line of questioning may be difficult for potential inexperienced interviewees to navigate away from in conversation. Further, the marketing student interviewee may also be ill prepared for questions of an improper or illegal nature. The student may feel uncomfortable in such a position faced with a possible confrontation with the interviewer on whether to answer or refuse to answer a question the marketing student knows is inappropriate (Caldwell and Burger 1998).

To give more comfort to the student for these unforeseen situations, marketing students should prepare ahead of time by determining questions that might be offensive in advance of the actual interview and practice responding to various inappropriate but possible questions (McShulskis 1997). Duckett's (2000) research suggests that interviewee's experiences contained feelings of anxiety and manipulation when unethical issues were brought into the conversation. Further, Duckett (2000) concluded the need for ethical training rather than technical concerns when conducting interviews.

Studies have indicated uncomfortable impressions were left in the mind of the candidate in interviews during which the interviewers ask applicants inappropriate and unlawful questions. For example, studies by Saks and McCarthy (2006) suggested inappropriate questions resulted in negative reactions and applicants less likely to

give positive feedback to others interviewing at the same firm.

Questions Pertaining to Age

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967 makes it illegal for employers to discriminate against individuals age 40 or over in the areas of hiring, pay, benefits, training, promotion, and job retention (Peng and Kleiner 1999). This act was further amended in 1978 and 1986 (see Table 1). The ADEA's broad ban against age discrimination also specifically prohibits statements or specifications in job notices or advertisements of age preference and limitations. An age limit may only be specified in the rare circumstance in which age has been proven a bona fide occupational qualification (BFOQ); discrimination based on age by apprenticeship programs, including joint labor-management apprenticeship programs, and denial of benefits to older employees (Wolf 2001).

The personal biases of organizations and their interviewers make age discrimination relevant. Age-related questions are the most common illegal questions being filed in the courts (Wolf 2001). According to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the number of age discrimination charges filed rose 13 percent in 2000 after a steady decline since 1997, and it is predicted that the number of complaints will continue to rise. Wolf (2001) suggests that this increase may be partially due to the downturn in the economy, which has resulted in massive layoffs.

Under Federal Law, reverse age discrimination (those under 40) is not addressed and claims until recently have not been brought forth. The original intention of these laws was to prevent discrimination against older workers. With many of the baby boomers continuing to work, it seems that some of the under 40 groups are bringing issues to surface of discrimination against them. Many states have laws in place covering issues pertaining specifically to age discrimination for those under and over 40 (Masinter and Mulkey 2005).

Even though a majority of undergraduate marketing students who attend job interviews for career selections are generally under forty, questions similar to: how old are you; in what year were you born; or when did you graduate from high school, are not considered acceptable during the interview process (Thomas 1999). Further, the interviewer cannot discuss the average age of the company's workforce in relation to the candidate. Questions pertaining to a comparison of the candidate to the staff such as "Our staff is about the same age as you," or "Do you have problems working with people who are over ten years older than you?" are prohibited (Thomas 1999). These questions may seem innocent and inconsequential but still are considered illegal and may have severe legal ramifications (Schuster and Miller 1984). Questions that are

clearly illegal, and more appropriate questions that can be asked, are shown in Table 2.

A marketing student unprepared for questions regarding his or her age may have negative feelings and be uncomfortable in answering those questions. They might perceive that the interviewer is questioning the ability of the candidate. Preparation is necessary to defray the feelings of inadequacy on the part of the interviewee. It is believed by the authors that students are asked questions pertaining to age and will be uncomfortable with questions pertaining to age. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1a: Marketing students are asked questions pertaining to age during the employment interview, and;

Hypothesis 1b: Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their age during the employment interview.

Questions Pertaining to Marital Status

Marital status discrimination is defined as treating someone differently because of his or her relationship status whether married or not (Bell 2000). Discrimination may not be made based upon whether the person is married, widowed, divorced, single, or unmarried with a same-sex or opposite-sex partner. This also includes parental status, pregnancy, or sex discrimination (Roehling et al. 2000). While marital status discrimination is not covered directly by federal laws, marital status issues are covered by the *Civil Service Reform Act of 1978* for government employees. Further, many states and cities have statutes prohibiting marital status discrimination. Courts have ruled that it is none of the employer's business how many children an applicant has; whether he or she is married, single, divorced, or engaged; whether the applicant plans to become pregnant at any time in the future; how the applicant's spouse or partner feels about overnight travel; or what plans the applicant has made for childcare during the work day (Bell 2000). Studies on the impact of inappropriate marital questions about applicants, have found that questions pertaining to whether a candidate has children were positively related to the perceptions of fairness in questioning by women and were negatively related to perceptions of fairness by men (Saks and McCarthy 2006)

Students may not realize that questions asked regarding their marital status are illegal. For example, Anderson (2005) study posited that one student being interviewed for a medical facility was asked whether she was single and further probed about her sexual activities. The student was stunned and considered the question unacceptable but did not know how to reply. Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 2a: Marketing students are asked questions regarding their marital status during the employment interview and;

TABLE 2
SAMPLE LEGAL AND ILLEGAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Inappropriate	Appropriate
<p>Age</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ How old are you? ◆ What year were you born? ◆ When did you graduate from high school? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Before hiring, asking if you are over the minimum age for the hours or working conditions. ◆ After hiring, verifying same with a birth certificate or other ID, and asking age on insurance forms.
<p>Marital Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Questions concerning spouse, or spouse's employment, salary, arrangements, or dependents. ◆ What kind of child care arrangements have you made? ◆ How will your spouse feel about the amount of time you will be traveling if you get this job? ◆ Are you married, divorced, separated, engaged, widowed, etc.? ◆ Is this your maiden or married name? ◆ What is the name of your relative/spouse/children? ◆ Do you live with your parents? ◆ How many kids do you have? ◆ Do you plan to have children? ◆ How old are your children? ◆ Are you pregnant? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can you work overtime? ◆ Is there any reason you can't start at 7:30am? ◆ Whether an applicant can meet specified work schedules or has activities or commitments that may prevent him or her from meeting attendance requirements. ◆ After hiring, marital status on tax and insurance forms. ◆ After hiring, asking for dependent information on tax and insurance forms.
<p>Disability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Do you have any disabilities? ◆ What's your medical history? ◆ How does your condition affect your abilities? ◆ Have you ever filed a workers' compensation claim? ◆ Do you have any physical problems or injuries? ◆ How many days were you sick last year? ◆ Are you currently taking any medications? ◆ Have you ever been treated for drug abuse? (Table 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can you perform the specific duties of the job. ◆ After hiring, ask about medical history on insurance forms.
<p>Religion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ What is your religious affiliation? ◆ Which religious holidays will you be taking off from work? ◆ Do you attend church regularly? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Can you work on Saturdays?

Hypothesis 2b: Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their marital status during the employment interview.

Questions Pertaining to Disabilities

The *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) prohibits discrimination based on disability in all employment

practices (Arvey and Campion 1982). The ADA directly addresses the asking of questions about disabilities prior to receiving a job offer. It is necessary for interviewers to understand the definition and know who is protected by the law and what constitutes illegal discrimination (Brecher, Bragger, and Kutcher 2006). This has in some cases, caused unavoidable problems in management positions, and is forcing companies and legal entities to look closer at health issues. For example, McDonald's CEO, Cantalupo, died of a heart attack at age 60. His successor, Bell, died a few months later at age 44, causing havoc in the firm. Firms have expressed an interest in the ability to offer employment based upon satisfactory physicals, something already done in the world of professional athletics. Unfortunately, at this time, only pre-employment drug testing is available to organizations and physical examinations may only be required after employment has been offered (McGinn 2005).

Studies regarding physical and/or mental disabilities and how they influence outcomes found inconsistent results (Arvey and Campion 1982). According to the ADA, questions pertaining to any mental or physical disabilities are forbidden during employment interviews (Lissy 1995) and students should be aware of it. In his study "Handling the fatal five hiring questions," Bell (2000) posits that prerequisite for hiring must be based upon necessity and safety, rather than based on physical and mental position of the interviewee. Since asking of such questions may make the interviewee uncomfortable and sway the selection result. Therefore, marketing students with or without disabilities may get negative or uncomfortable feelings regarding the questioning of possible disabilities. The following hypotheses are proposed:

Hypothesis 3a: Marketing students are asked questions regarding disabilities during the employment interview and;

Hypothesis 3b: Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their disabilities during the employment interview.

Questions Pertaining to Religion

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits employers from discriminating against individuals because of their religion in hiring, firing, and other terms and conditions of employment (Alder and Gilbert 2006). This Act covers employers with 15 or more employees, including state and local governments. Further, the act applies to employment agencies, labor organizations, and the federal government. Once again, state and local governments have laws regarding religion written in their books (Roehling et al. 2000).

In fiscal year 2005, the EEOC received 2,340 charges of religious discrimination. The agency resolved 2,352 religious discrimination charges and recovered \$6.1 mil-

lion in monetary benefits for charging parties and other aggrieved individuals (not including monetary benefits obtained through litigation) (www.eeoc.com). Religious discrimination is one of the fastest growing areas of rights violations, alleged especially by Muslims, and accommodation is an especially difficult area for employers who are trying to hire within the parameters of the EEOC.

Past studies (USA Today 1990) have indicated that "women interviewing for the jobs in the U.S. are frequently subjected to illegal questions (e.g., questions related to religion)" (p. 4) and they find it uncomfortable in dealing with such illegal questions. However, a survey administered by Bernard Haldane Associates – a career management firm – to 1000 job seekers indicated that approximately one third of them indicated that they were being asked an illegal question pertaining to age, marital status, or religion during interview process (HR Briefing 1999) and job seekers were uncomfortable in answering those questions. Thus, one can say, recruiters are asking marketing students during job interviews illegal questions (e.g., questions related to their religious belief) and the students are uncomfortable in answering those illegal questions. Thus, the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4a: Marketing students are asked questions regarding their religious beliefs during the interview for employment and;

Hypothesis 4b: Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their religion during the employment interview.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection and Characteristics of Subjects

A survey administered to 435 junior and senior marketing students in classes at four (northern, eastern, southern, and midwestern) universities were conducted. Students were asked questions regarding their experiences during a recent job interview. Students were given a one-page, self-administered questionnaire as a measure of their perceptions of recent job interviews. The questionnaire was given in multiple marketing class sections of three public universities and one private college.

From the 435 completed questionnaires, 410 valid responses were obtained. Based upon the response to a screening question, 11 were removed because they were not marketing majors, and 14 were removed due to never experiencing an interview. The sample is a good representation of upper-level marketing students and is described as 50.7 percent juniors 47.1 percent seniors with an average age of 22.3 years.

The survey instrument included screening, demographic, and interview questions. Further, the students were given the opportunity to provide further details about their interview experiences and assured they would

be given anonymity. The survey was pretested for accuracy and understanding, suggestions for clarification were made, and the survey was revised.

Objectives and Design of Canonical Correlation Analysis

The objective of this study was to identify if marketing students were asked questions pertaining to their age, marital status, religious beliefs, and disabilities during a recent interview process and if they were uncomfortable answering those questions. In this analysis the independent variables were “Did the company with which they interviewed: (1) ask their age; (2) ask their marital status; (3) ask about their religious beliefs and/or; (4) discuss any disabilities they might have.” The dependent variables were whether questions asked were legal and whether students were uncomfortable with illegal questions.

The ratio of variables to observation was found to exceed the recommended guidelines as suggested by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998). Since the set of multiple dependent and multiple independent variables were non-metric in nature, hence canonical correlation was used for analysis (Hair et al. 1998; Johnson and Wichern 1998; Stevens 2002).

Deriving the Canonical Function and Assessing Overall Fit

Since the canonical correlation contained two dependent variables (e.g., those questions that subjects consid-

ered illegal and those questions with which they were uncomfortable), two canonical functions from the analysis were extracted (Green, Halbert, and Robinson 1966; Johnson and Wichern 1998; Stevens 2002). To determine the number of canonical functions to include in the interpretation stage, guidelines as given by Hair et al. (1998) were followed. As suggested by Hair et al. (1998) three measures were taken into consideration to interpret the canonical functions derived for analysis. Those three measures were (1) the level of statistical significance; significance of the F value given by Wilk’s Lambda, Pillai’s criteria, Hottelling’s trace, and Roy’s; (2) the measures of overall model fit given by the size of canonical correlation; and (3) the redundancy index for each variate. The multivariate test of significance and measure of overall model fit is shown in Tables 3 and 4.

From the multivariate test of significance (Table 3) and the overall model fit table (Table 4); two canonical functions are extracted in this study that are statistically significant ($p < 0.01$). From Table 4 (refer to the canonical R^2 value column) it can be said that, in the first canonical function, the independent variable explains 76.6 percent of the variance in the dependent variable, whereas the second function explains 6.6 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Such a finding is consistent with the findings of the previous studies that have indicated that the first canonical function always explains more variance than the second function (Johnson and Wichern 1998; Campbell and Taylor 1996).

Even though both the first and the second canonical functions are deemed to be significant according to the

TABLE 3 MULTIVARIATE TESTS OF SIGNIFICANCE					
Test Name	Value	Approx. F Hypoth.	DF	Error DF	Sig. of F
Pillais	0.83226	72.162	8.00	810.00	0.000
Hotellings	3.34897	168.704	8.00	806.00	0.000
Wilks	0.21813	115.164	8.00	808.00	0.000
Roys	0.76626				

TABLE 4 MEASURES OF OVERALL MODEL FIT				
Canonical Function	Canonical Function	Canonical R^2	F. Statistics	Probability
1	0.875	0.766	115.164	0.000
2	0.257	0.066	9.539	0.000

multivariate tests of significance (Pillai, Hotelling, Wilks, and Roy's test) and overall model fit, Steward and Love (1968) have recommended the use of redundancy analysis to determine which functions should be used for interpretation. According to Hair et al. (1998), redundancy is defined as the "amount of variance in a canonical variate explained by the other canonical variate in the canonical function. It can be computed for both the dependent and the independent canonical variates in each canonical function. For example, "a redundancy index of the dependent variate represents the amount of variance in the dependent variables explained by the independent variate" (p. 444).

The canonical redundancy index table (Table 5) summarizes the redundancy index for the dependent and independent variate for the two canonical functions that were extracted in this study. From the result of the canonical redundancy index table, it can be said that the first canonical function accounts for 92.94 percent of the total redundancy for both dependent and independent variables. The second canonical function accounts for 7.04 percent of the total redundancy. Even though the second canonical function is significant, it does not have a practical significance since it does not explain a large proportion of the dependent variables' variance. Hence, only the first canonical function is considered for interpretation.

Results of the Canonical Variates

Since the first canonical function is significant and explains large proportion of total redundancy, the first canonical function is used for interpretation only. According to Hair et al. (1998) the selected canonical functions can be interpreted in three ways: (1) canonical weights; (2) canonical loadings; and (3) canonical cross-loadings.

The summary of each value for both dependent and independent variables are shown in Table 6. The magnitude of the canonical weights represents their relative contribution to the variate. On the basis of the size of the canonical weights, the order of the contribution of the independent variables to the first variate is age (0.840),

disabilities (0.210), marital status (0.188), and religious beliefs (0.066). According to Green, Halbert, and Robinson (1966), a canonical loading, linear correlation between the independent variables and their respective canonical variate is significant if the loadings are 0.30 or above. From Table 6, it can be said that all the canonical loadings are significant (e.g., loadings are greater than 0.30) for both dependent and independent variable, with the exception of uncomfortable and religious beliefs. The rank order of importance for the independent variables is age (0.945), marital status (0.525), and disabilities (0.450). Since both canonical weights and canonical loadings are subject to certain variability from one sample to another. Hence, canonical cross-loadings are chosen for interpretation. The canonical cross-loadings show similar patterns for the order of importance of variables when compared with the canonical loadings (refer Table 6). Three of the independent variables (e.g., age, marital status, and disabilities) have a high correlation with the dependent variate. Respectively, 68 percent [$0.827 * 0.827$]; 21 percent [$0.46 * 0.46$]; and 16 percent [$0.394 * 0.394$] of the variance in these three independent variables are explained by the dependent variate. The order of the percent of variance explained by Function 1 of the independent variables is given by age, marital status, and disabilities, the same order given by the canonical loadings. From Table 6, it can also be said that, in first canonical function, the first dependent variable, illegal, exhibits high correlation (value of 0.875) with independent canonical variate (Function 1) whereas the second dependent variable, uncomfortable, exhibits low correlation (value of 0.106) with Function 1. On squaring these terms, the percentage for each variable explained by Function 1 is obtained.

By examining the sign of the cross-loadings of independent variables, the variables have positive relationships in the first function with the dependent variable. Thus, this study concludes that the following three independent variables – age, marital status, and disabilities – predict the dependent variables whereas the independent variable religious belief is not needed to predict the dependent variable.

Canonical Function	Variable	Share Variance	Canonical R ²	Redundancy Index	Proportion of Total Redundancy
1.	Dependent	0.507	0.766	0.389	54.86%
	Independent	0.353	0.766	0.270	38.08%
2.	Dependent	0.493	0.066	0.033	4.65%
	Independent	0.261	0.066	0.017	2.39%

**DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS,
IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS
AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The results of the hypotheses are shown in Table 7. Four of the eight hypotheses were supported. The result of this study indicated that marketing students are asked illegal questions during their employment interviews regarding age, marital status, religion, and disabilities. This

supports hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d; however, the result also indicated that marketing students were not uncomfortable when asked questions related to age, marital status, religion, and disabilities during the job interview process. Thus, suggesting that hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1d are not supported, indicating that marketing students were not uncomfortable when exposed to illegal questions such as questions related to age, marital status, religion, and disabilities during the job interview. This

**TABLE 6
STANDARDIZED CANONICAL COEFFICIENTS AND CANONICAL LOADINGS**

	Variable	Canonical Weights	Canonical Loadings	Canonical Cross-Loadings
Dependent	Illegal	-1.00	-1.00	-.875
	Uncomfortable	0.002	-.121	-.106
Independent	Age	-.840	-.945	-.827
	Marital status	-.188	-.525	-.460
	Religious belief	-.066	-.199	-.174
	Disabilities	-.210	-.450	-.394

**TABLE 7
HYPOTHESES**

Hypotheses	Supported/ Unsupported
1a Marketing students are asked illegal questions during the interview for employment regarding age.	Supported
1b Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their age during the employment interview.	Unsupported
2a Marketing students are asked illegal questions during the interview for employment regarding marital status.	Supported
2b Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their marital status during the employment interview.	Unsupported
3a Marketing students are asked illegal questions during the interview for employment regarding disabilities.	Supported
3b Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their disabilities during the employment interview.	Unsupported
4a Marketing students are asked illegal questions during the interview for employment regarding religion.	Supported
4b Marketing students are uncomfortable when asked questions regarding their religion during the employment interview.	Unsupported

could be because marketing students are unaware of any problems with this line of questioning during the interviewing.

This study has certain limitations, which create opportunities for future research. First, the subjects for this study were business students whose major was marketing. Hence, in the future data must be collected from non-marketing business or non-business students to see if they are being asked illegal question during interview process and if they are uncomfortable with those questions. Future research should also be carried out to see how students coming from different cultures react when asked questions with possible legal consequences during the job interview process. For example, students from foreign countries coming from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds might react in a different way when asked illegal questions during an interview than the U.S. students. This could be because the U.S. is an open society, hence, questions that are perceived as legal and/or illegal to international students might be perceived differently by the U.S. students (Choon-Hwa, Winter, and Chan 2006). Although not within the realm of this research, data showed possible regional differences between the students. Data from this study also suggested that students were uncomfortable with questions that were legal but outside of their realm of experiences. Looking at what makes students uncomfortable during interviews would be of interest to marketing practitioners, managers, and researchers.

Future research should also be carried out to see if illegal questions asked by the interviewer are done in ignorance, or carelessness. Asking about the training of

both the interviewer and interviewee in regards to the interview process would be beneficial to marketing educators as well as practitioners. Understanding of such problems will enable the firm to provide proper training to interviewers before conducting interviews.

In summary, organizations will benefit from this study by realizing that interviewers are asking questions that may have legal ramifications. These questions may also give marketing students a view of the firm that is not desired. Firms can avoid legal issues in the interview process by looking at the following suggestions. First of all, advance preparation done to ensure consistency in the questioning is important to managers already overworked in other areas. Second, it is essential managers become familiar and proficient in interviewing techniques and learning to use available interviewing tools. Finally, structured interviews will give each candidate an equal opportunity to be evaluated. A study by Pawlowski and Hollwitz (2000) posited that initial ethical judgments by potential new hires are often assessed during the interview process with representatives of the organization.

Marketing educators will benefit from this research by teaching students the pitfalls of unprepared interviewing. If firms hiring marketing students are to continue using face-to-face interviews, it is important that marketing educators address the initial interactions and issues involved in the interview process. Untrained recruiters using inappropriate and/or illegal questioning in the interview process may jeopardize the face-to-face interview process and perceptions of the firm to the student. Students need to be trained to overcome possible awkward and inappropriate questioning before they are interviewed for marketing positions (Mesmer 2005).

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