Beyond validity: Shedding light on the social situation in employment interviews

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Beyond validity: Shedding light on the social situation in employment interviews

For a long time, interview research mainly focused on ways to improve the psychometric properties of employment interviews. Thus, a large body of research has been accumulated concerning ways to improve the reliability and validity of interviews (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997; Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, & Campion, in press; Macan, 2009). However, even structured interviews are not verbally administered selection tests but represent a very specific social interaction for both the interviewee and the interviewer (Anderson, 1992). Accordingly, recent definitions of employment interviews do not only capture the issue of determining "the qualifications of a given individual for a particular open position" (Huffcutt & Youngcourt, 2007, p. 182) but also see the "interpersonal interaction and communication between the interviewer and interviewee" (Levashina et al., in press, p. 6) as a cornerstone of the interview. In line with this, over recent years research has given more weight to aspects related to the social situation, variables that influence the perception of this situation, and ways how the two parties involved try to handle it.

A better understanding of the social situation in employment interviews and of effects related to it is important because this situation influences the behavior of both interviewers and interviewees. For example, the way interviewers present themselves and their organization may influence applicants' intentions towards the company, such as their willingness to accept a job offer or to recommend the company to others. Similarly, the way how interviewees try to present themselves in a favorable way may affect evaluations of their interview performance and, as a consequence, also the prediction of future job performance on the basis of these evaluations. The potential effect on the criterion-related validity of interview ratings is also a reason for attempts to detect and reduce self-presentation behavior in the interview. However, to date only limited evidence is available on whether it is possible

to detect the different kinds of self-presentation behavior that can be used in interviews and whether this behavior is in fact harmful for interview validity.

The aim of the present chapter is to give an overview of research that sheds light on this specific situation that has a social interaction at its core (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012; Barrick, Swider, & Stewart, 2010). First, we will focus on the relevant theoretical background. We will then consider the interviewees' perspective and will review research that deals with the question what interviewees do to influence the interview situation. Thus, we will discuss the role of interviewees' perception of the situation that they face during an interview and the self-presentation behavior that they use. Then, we will deal with the interviewers' perspective and will consider what interviewers do to create a specific impression and the potential effects of their impression management behavior. Finally, we will also look at technology-mediated interviews (e.g., telephone- or videoconference-interviews) and will discuss to which degree technology might influence the social situation and the interaction between interviewers and interviewees, as well as interviewee reactions to the interview.

Theoretical Background

Signaling Processes in the Employment Interview

As noted above, it has been more and more emphasized in the recent interview literature that employment interviews constitute a highly complex and competitive social endeavor (Dipboye, Macan, & Shahani-Denning, 2012). The interview involves selection decisions that are crucial for both interviewees and interviewers: a selection decision about interviewees (i.e., whether they get a job offer), and a selection decision about organizations (i.e., whether the interviewee decides to accept a potential job offer). Therefore, scholars have recognized that both interviewees and interviewers adapt their behaviors in a way that helps them reach their respective objectives (Macan, 2009).

As suggested by Bangerter et al. (2012), signaling theory (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011; Spence, 1973) is of great value to improve our understanding of why interviewees and interviewers try to adapt their behaviors to influence each other. Bangerter et al. have recently applied the principles of signaling theory to personnel selection while considering not only interviewees' but also the interviewers' perspective. Their framework implies several important issues of how interviewees and interviewers interact and will therefore serve as a general theoretical underpinning for this chapter.

Signaling theory is helpful for describing and explaining behavior when two parties have access to dissimilar information, such as interviewers and interviewees (Spence, 1973). In more abstract words, signaling theory suggests that each social situation involves signaling systems consisting of a sender, a receiver, and a signal that is associated to a characteristic of the sender that is unobservable in that situation (Connelly et al., 2011). In the interview context, interviewees have information that is not directly available to interviewers, such as information about their skills and abilities, past failures, or personal goals (Bangerter et al., 2012). Similarly, interviewers are likely to have knowledge that is not available to interviewees, such as information about the job, the organization, and future colleagues. Consequently, both interviewees and interviewers are faced with incomplete information and thus use any information that is available in the interview process. For example, interviewees may interpret interviewers' behavior as signaling whether the company as a whole is a good place to work, and interviewers may interpret interviewees' behavior as signaling whether the interviewee provides a good fit to the job (Connelly et al., 2011).

In addition, to reduce information asymmetry, interviewees and interviewers are likely to communicate positive qualities to the other party when this other party lacks information (Bangerter et al., 2012). Whereas interviewees send signals to interviewers to increase their chances of being hired, interviewers are likely to send signals to interviewees to enhance the chances that interviewees accept a potential job offer. These signaling behaviors have mainly

been studied in terms of self-presentation such as impression management (IM), which

Schlenker (1980) defined as attempts to control information during a social interaction in

order to favorably influence the impressions formed by others.

Furthermore, the employment interview can be seen as a network of dynamic, adaptive

relationships between interviewees and interviewers (Bangerter et al., 2012); both

interviewees and interviewers try to detect what their interaction partner is interested in and

then to adapt their behaviors in order to send the right signals. In turn, the other party may

counteradapt to these adaptations by changing the way signals are interpreted and used for

making decisions. For example, interviewees may place less value on interviewers' signals of

innovativeness if they find out that the reason why interviewers present their organizations as

being innovative is their belief that most interviewees like innovativeness (Bangerter et al.,

2012). Over time, these cycles of adaptation and counteradaptation between interviewees and

interviewers determine which signals are sent and the stability of these signals (i.e., whether a

certain signal is regularly used in employment interviews).

Models on interviewee performance

While signaling theory integrates both interviewees' and interviewers' perspectives,

some recent models have focused on factors that influence interviewees' behavior and

performance in interviews (Huffcutt, Van Iddekinge, & Roth, 2011; Levashina & Campion,

2006; Marcus, 2009). Among them, Huffcutt et al.'s (2011) model of interviewee

performance supplements signaling theory as it also adopts the perspective of the interview as

an interaction of the interviewer and the interviewee. Furthermore, this model also elaborates

on the nomological network of interviewees' performance and stresses the importance of

social effectiveness (e.g., self-presentation) and the influence of the situation (e.g., the level of

structure or the interview medium).

In this recent model of interviewee performance, Huffcutt et al. (2011) define

interviewee performance as what interviewees say and do, hence including the content of their

answers, how they deliver these answers (e.g., pitch), and their nonverbal behavior (e.g., smiling). Furthermore, they highlight that individual differences between interviewees as well as interview design factors can influence interviewees' performance and hence, interviewer ratings. According to this model, there are several factors that may affect interviewee performance: Interviewer-interviewee dynamics, state variables like interviewee anxiety or motivation, supplemental preparation, interview design consideration, and interviewees' general attributes and core qualifications (Huffcutt et al., 2011).

With regard to the interpersonal nature of the interview, interviewer-interviewee dynamics are particularly important. These dynamics relate directly to the capability to deal with the interpersonal nature of the interview and to self-presentation in the interview. As such, interviewer-interviewee dynamics encompass interviewer's personality on the one hand and interviewees' social effectiveness including impression management and other forms such as self-monitoring on the other hand.

Interview design considerations relate to factors that determine the interview format, that means, the structure and the medium through which it is delivered (e.g., telephone, video-conference, or face-to-face). The underlying notion is that these two factors can influence interviewee performance. For instance, when participating in a highly structured interview, interviewees' amount of impression management might be limited, or when participating in a telephone interview, for example, they have fewer cues about the interviewers' reactions at hand than in a face-to-face interview.

What Do Interviewees Do?

In the employment interview, applicants face a social situation that is ambiguous in many ways but in which they are motivated to make a good impression to increase their chances to get a job offer. Accordingly, the following sections deal with aspects like interviewees' perception of the situational requirements that they face in an interview, with

the strategies they use to make a good impression, factors that influence their IM attempts, consequences of IM, and finally with the issue of faking in employment interviews.

Interviewees' Perception of Situational Requirements in Employment Interviews

A first step for successful self-presentation in an interview lies in perceiving and understanding the social situation faced in this interview. This perception will then influence interviewees' behavior and the way in which they answer the different questions (Kleinmann et al., 2011; Melchers et al., 2009): Imagine, for example, a question that is asked during an interview that is intended to measure cooperation. An interviewee who identifies cooperation as the targeted dimension will respond differently than an interviewee who incorrectly assumes that the question is to assess leadership or assertiveness. This is because the former interviewee will be more likely to present himself or herself in a cooperative manner than the other interviewee.

Furthermore, as a consequence of showing more relevant behavior and providing answers related to the targeted performance criteria (i.e., the targeted interview dimensions), it becomes more likely that interviewees who are better at identifying relevant performance criteria also receive more positive evaluations in an interview. In line with this, previous research found differences between interviewees concerning their ability to identify the criteria (ATIC) that were targeted in employment interviews (Melchers et al., 2009). This means that some interviewees were generally better than others in discerning and correctly understanding which criteria were targeted by the different questions in structured interviews. Furthermore, previous evidence also confirmed that interviewees who were better at identifying the targeted interview dimensions also received better performance evaluations by the interviewers (Ingold, Kleinmann, König, & Melchers, 2012; Melchers et al., 2009; Oostrom, Melchers, Ingold, & Kleinmann, 2013).

An important question related to these findings is whether tailoring one's answers to the discerned interview dimensions reflects a kind of misrepresentation on the side of the

interviewee. The fear concerning this question is that potential misrepresentation might impair the quality of employment decisions based on the interview and thus the criterion-related validity of the interview. However, in contrast to such a fear, it has been argued that the ability to identify criteria does not reflect a factor that impairs criterion-related validity but that this ability represents an important aspect of social effectiveness that even contributes to the interview's good criterion-related validity (Kleinmann et al., 2011; Melchers et al., 2009).

The reason why applicants' ability to identify criteria in interviews (as well as in other selection procedures like assessment centers, e.g., Jansen et al., 2013) is relevant for predicting job performance is that the ability to understand social situations and to adapt one's behavior to better deal with the discerned performance criteria is important not only during selection situations but also later on the job (Kleinmann et al., 2011): Both during selection situations and during many situations encountered on the job, the actual requirements and the necessary steps of action that are required to successfully handle the respective situations are not entirely obvious. Thus, individuals who are better at reading social situations have an advantage in both kinds of situations. In line with this, there is evidence that the ability to identify criteria in an interview also predicts performance in other situations. Specifically, König et al. (2007) and Oostrom et al. (2013) found that scores for this ability from an interview significantly predicted performance in an assessment center and a job simulation, respectively.

In further support of the argument that a better understanding of the requirements faced in an interview represents a relevant social skill, there are also several findings with regard to other ability and social skill measures. First, the ability to identify criteria has consistently been found to correlate with cognitive ability (e.g., Melchers et al., 2009). Second, there is evidence that this ability mediates the relationship between cognitive ability and interview performance (Kleinmann et al., 2011). This finding supports earlier suggestions by Huffcutt, Roth, and McDaniel (1996) who suggested that the reason why cognitive ability

and interview performance are correlated is that interviewees with higher cognitive ability are better at thinking through questions and therefore give more appropriate answers. And third, there is evidence that the ability to identify evaluation criteria is correlated to scores from a video-based social judgment test (Kleinmann, 1997) as well as with self-ratings of participants' political skill (Jansen, Melchers, & Kleinmann, 2011).

Interviewees' Self-presentation Behavior in Employment Interviews

Besides perceiving and understanding the social situation faced in the interview, interviewees can employ self-presentation behaviors to create a positive impression. Our focus in the present chapter is on verbal impression management tactics (e.g., flattering the interviewer or self-promoting one's accomplishments) to obtain higher ratings. However, we would like to mention that interviewees also use other behaviors like dressing up for the interview (e.g., by wearing suits) and nonverbal IM tactics (e.g., eye contact or smiling) to send out positive signals to interviewers. Furthermore, former research has found that especially professional appearance has a strong and positive relationship with interview scores (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009)

As noted above, impression management refers to attempts to influence the image interviewees convey in social interactions (Schlenker, 1980). Traditionally, selection research on verbal impression management distinguishes assertive tactics that aim at actively conveying a positive image and defensive tactics that aim at protecting or repairing threatened images by apologizing for, excusing, or justifying one's actions or attributes. Assertive tactics can further be differentiated into self-focused tactics and other-focused tactics (Kacmar, Delery, & Ferris, 1992). Self-focused tactics (alternatively termed self-promotion) are employed to convey a positive image of oneself and other-focused tactics (alternatively termed ingratiation) aim at arousing sympathy in others or to make others feel better by flattering them (see for example Stevens & Kristof, 1995; or Van Iddekinge, McFarland, & Raymark, 2007, for details on further subcategories).

In addition, a category of deceptive IM tactics has also been introduced more recently (Levashina & Campion, 2007) that refers to IM that deviates from the truth (e.g., by telling about invented achievements). This category supplements the established IM tactics and has been contrasted with honest IM tactics (e.g., telling about real achievements). Deceptive IM includes slight image creation (embellishing prior experiences or skills) and extensive image creation (intentionally inventing experiences or skills) as self-focused tactics, deceptive ingratiation (dishonest praise of others) as other-focused tactics, and image protection (intentionally disguising relevant information) as a defensive tactic (Levashina & Campion, 2007; Roulin, Bangerter, & Levashina, in press).

Concerning the frequency of honest IM tactics, previous research has revealed that nearly all interviewees employ IM tactics in interviews and that this is true for structured as well as for unstructured interviews (Levashina et al., in press). For instance, in a field study including behavioral description interviews and also less structured interviews, all interviewees used self-focused tactics, about half of the interviewees used other-focused tactics and one fifth used defensive tactics (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Similarly, dishonest IM tactics were found to be frequently used by undergraduates with more than 90% reported using this form of IM in mock interviews as well as in recent employment interviews when they applied for jobs or internships (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Additionally, 44% of the applicants surveyed by Roulin et al. (in press) reported employing slight image creation and 21% reported employing extensive image creation.

What effects does interviewees' IM have on their interview performance?

Given that interviewees aim to maximize their chances of receiving a job offer by using IM in the interview, one of the key questions is to which degree IM tactics influence interviewers' performance ratings. Furthermore, another question is whether the degree of interview structure also affects the relation of IM and interview performance. This might be

the case because structure might affect interviewees' opportunity to influence ratings such that interview structure lowers the impact of IM (e.g., as argued by Barrick et al., 2009).

Meta-analytic results help to answer these two questions. Across different interview types, IM is indeed moderately related to interview performance. This relationship is stronger for unstructured interviews than for highly structured interviews (Barrick et al., 2009). Furthermore, concerning the effects of the different IM tactics, meta-analytic results from Barrick et al. (2009) and Levashina et al. (in press) indicate that self-focused tactics have the largest impact on interviewer ratings, followed by other-focused tactics and defensive IM.

Which factors influence interviewees' impression management?

Through the lens of Huffcutt et al.'s model (2011), interviewees' dispositions and situational characteristics are supposed to influence IM. Furthermore, research on antecedents of IM has provided first insights and hints at an interaction of dispositional and situational influences.

Concerning individual differences, Machiavellianism was positively related to all four deceptive IM categories reported by interviewees who participated in mock interviews in an applicant condition (i.e., when imagining applying for a job), whereas self-monitoring related positively to all deceptive IM categories, except for extensive image creation (Levashina & Campion, 2007).

With regard to situational influences, a few studies (e.g., Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007) investigated how the format of structured interviews, or more specifically, the use of situational vs. past-behavior interviews, influences interviewees' use of IM tactics. Recently, Levashina et al. (in press) meta-analyzed these results and found that self-promotion and defensive tactics were used more often in past-behavior interviews, whereas other-focused IM tactics were used more often in situational interviews. A possible reason for this is that the respective interview format provides cues that influence the prevalence of different IM tactics (e.g., Peeters & Lievens, 2006). Hence, when interview

questions request interviewees to focus on the past, it is more probable to defend personal actions and results and to self-promote to appear competent for the job. Questions that focus on hypothetical situations, in turn, provide different cues and may request interviewees to show their fit to the organization and the interviewers as representatives of the organization, so that other-focused tactics may occur more often. Concerning the generalizability of the results, however, one should note that only the results on self-focused IM had a confidence interval that did not contain zero.

Further insights on the interplay of dispositions and situations are provided by two studies that compared interviews conducted under applicant and honest conditions (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007) and that found that situational characteristics affect the relation of interviewees' dispositions and IM. In the study by Van Iddekinge et al. (2007), vulnerability predicted other-focused IM tactics and altruism predicted defensive tactics only in the honest condition that did not elicit impression motivation, but not in the applicant condition. Similarly, results from Peeters and Lievens (2006) showed that self-esteem was only related to self-focused IM in the honest condition but not in the applicant condition. In contrast to this, emotional stability or its facet vulnerability were only related to defensive tactics in the applicant condition in both studies.

Taken together, the findings reviewed here indicate that interviewees' individual differences can influence interviewees' self-presentation and that the format of structured interviews affects the use of self-promotion, but that it is also necessary to consider the joint influence of individual differences and situational influences on these relationships. Thus, future research needs to dig deeper into the interaction of dispositions and situational influences on IM to increase our understanding why some dispositions relate to IM in honest conditions, whereas others relate to IM in applicant conditions.

Faking in Employment Interviews

Faking has mainly been investigated in the domain of personality testing (for reviews see, e.g., Goffin & Boyd, 2009; or Tett et al., 2006), but applicants might also try to fake in other selection procedures. Thus, an obvious question concerns the issue whether interviewees can fake in employment interviews – and if so, to which degree they do so. However, the answer to this question is difficult because different people consider very different things as faking.

On the one hand some researchers would consider anything as faking that goes beyond applicants' typical behavior (i.e., behavior that is representative of how they act in their everyday life, e.g., Levin & Zickar, 2002). Thus, they would even consider the honest IM tactics mentioned above as faking. On the other hand, it has been suggested to only consider those behaviors as faking that are deceptive or that represent conscious distortions of the truth (Levashina & Campion, 2006). Accordingly, the latter view would only consider behaviors that correspond to Levashina and Campion's (2007) category of deceptive IM as faking because, as noted above, only this category refers to IM that deviates from the truth.

Independent of a specific definition of faking, we want to briefly review evidence related to three questions that are relevant in the present context: First, to which degree can interviewees present themselves more positively in comparison to when they answer in a way that describes their typical behavior? Second, to which degree do these attempts to create a positive image include deviations from the truth and how serious are those deviations? And third, are interviewers able to detect faking in employment interviews?

Concerning the first question, the limited available evidence suggests that it is more difficult to intentionally create a positive impression in an interview than in a personality test. For example, in a study with mock interviews and student participants, Van Iddekinge, Raymark, and Roth (2005) found that mean differences between an honest condition and an applicant condition were much smaller in comparison to a personality test that targeted the same dimensions (on average, effect sizes were less than a third in the interview compared to

the personality test). Furthermore, in a similar study other researchers even failed to find significant differences between honest and applicant conditions (Allen, Facteau, & Facteau, 2004).

Concerning the second question, to which degree interviewees' answers deviate from the truth, several studies investigated the prevalence of things that interviewees do that might be considered as faking (e.g., Donovan, Dwight, & Hurtz, 2003; Jansen, König, Stadelmann, & Kleinmann, 2012). These studies found that many or even most applicants stress or overemphasize their positive attributes and deemphasize potential negative attributes. However, only few applicants claimed to have knowledge or experiences that they actually did not have or outright fabricated information about themselves. Thus, telling real lies does not seem to be as common as attempts to stretch the truth. Furthermore, the available evidence also suggests that the kind of self-presentation behavior that most applicants show is considered less severe by interviewers or is even explicitly expected by them in application contexts (Donovan et al., 2003; Jansen et al., 2012).

Finally, concerning the question whether interviewers are able to detect interviewees' attempts of honest or dishonest IM, the available evidence suggests that this only seems possible to a rather limited degree. In a recent study, for example, Roulin et al. (in press) found little convergence between interviewer perceptions of several different types of IM and interviewees' self-reports of those behaviors. Specifically, although interviewers' perceptions of interviewees' use of several IM tactics were related to their evaluations of interviewees' performance, these perceptions were not related significantly to interviewees' reports of their actual IM. And even though more evidence is needed with regard to interviewers' ability to detect actual lies in employment interview, these first results from Roulin et al. do not justify too much optimism in this regard. Finally, this skeptical view is also supported by meta-analytic evidence from studies that compared differences in people's actual behavior when they are lying vs. when they are telling the truth (DePaulo et al., 2003). This evidence shows

that most of the potential "cues to deception" did not differ between liars and truth tellers and that effect sizes were rather small for those cues for which systematic differences were found.

After having reviewed evidence concerning these three questions, another obvious question concerns the issue of whether faking affects the psychometric properties of employment interviews. However, we are not aware of any published research that has investigated actual consequences for the interview's criterion-related validity. Thus, even though faking in interviews is a topic that has attracted considerable recent attention, it is unclear to date to which degree it impairs the psychometric properties of these interviews.

What Do Interviewers Do?

As noted above, the interview is characterized by social interaction and communication in which the interviewer also plays an important role (Dipboye et al., 2012). Below, we will review research on interviewers' aims in the interview to gain insights into the diverse intentions they may have. Furthermore, we will illustrate findings on what interviewers aim to signal during the interview, and what they actually do to create their intended impressions. Finally, we will review past research on the impact of interviewer IM on organizations' recruitment success and on psychometric properties of the interview.

Traditionally, the interviewer has mainly been seen as someone who is collecting and integrating information, and making decisions. However, to remain viable in today's highly competitive business environments, it is crucial for organizations to attract, select, and retain top talent applicants (Berkson, Ferris, & Harris, 2002; Dipboye & Johnson, 2013). Hence, interviewers usually have to balance their goal of selection (i.e., assessing applicants' job qualifications) with their goal of recruitment (i.e., attracting the most qualified applicants). This recruitment goal usually involves considering the interviewees' perspective, particularly the impressions interviewees form during the interview process, and how these impressions can be influenced (Dipboye et al., 2012).

As a consequence, recent theoretical models that focus on what interviewees say and do (Huffcutt et al., 2011) also consider the role of interviewer-interviewee dynamics such as positive reinforcements interviewers may provide to interviewees. While we still know surprisingly little about how interviewers intentionally send signals to interviewees in terms of IM (Koslowsky & Pindek, 2011), it is widely recognized that the way interviewers are perceived exerts a strong influence on the impressions interviewees form during the interview (Huffcutt & Culbertson, 2011). For example, meta-analytic findings show that applicants' impressions of organizational representatives such as interviewers strongly influence their subsequent steps in the selection process (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005).

What Interviewers Intend to Signal in Employment Interviews

More recently, studies have provided some insights into what impressions interviewers want to create when they interact with interviewees. Specifically, it has been found that interviewers usually intend to establish rapport with interviewees through friendly conversation and by making them feel comfortable (Chapman et al., 2005). In addition, interviewers often have the goal of creating an impression of objectivity and fairness (Derous, 2007; Lewis & Sherman, 2003). Furthermore, a qualitative field study (Wilhelmy, Kleinmann, Melchers, & König, 2012) revealed a wide range of different kinds of impressions that interviewers want to create that go beyond rapport building and objectivity. For instance, interviewers may also aim to signal authenticity, professionalism, and dominance.

Additionally, different aims or foci of interviewer IM should be taken into consideration. For example, Wilhelmy et al. (2012) found that interviewers try to influence applicant impressions not only regarding impressions of themselves (e.g., signaling their competence as an interviewer), but also regarding impressions of the organization as a whole (e.g., signaling their organization's staff-supportive organizational culture). Moreover,

interviewers were found to apply IM not only to increase their organization's recruitment success, but also to increase their own career opportunities (e.g., by enhancing their reputation).

Interviewers' Impression Management Behaviors in Employment Interviews

In addition to recent findings on what interviewers intend to signal, there have been some insights into what behaviors interviewers actually use to create favorable impressions on interviewees. For example, interviewers may make interviewees wait longer to signal their higher status (Greenberg, 1989) or may harshly evaluate interviewees to demonstrate their competence (Amabile, 1983). Moreover, qualitative results (Wilhelmy et al., 2012) revealed that interviewers apply a broad range of additional signaling behaviors. Similar to interviewee IM, interviewers may use the content of what they say to influence interviewee impressions, such as self-promotion (e.g., talking about own accomplishments), and ingratiation (e.g., paying compliments to interviewees). Furthermore, interviewers were found to modulate their voice to enhance interviewee impressions, such as speaking in an empathetic way.

In addition, nonverbal IM was found to be regularly applied by interviewers, such as smiling and nodding. Interestingly, in contrast to interviewee IM, also a lack of nonverbal signals was found to be intentionally used by interviewers, such as putting on a poker face (Wilhelmy et al., 2012). Additionally, these qualitative findings revealed that interviewers use status and aesthetic cues to create favorable impressions, for example by adapting one's clothing or choosing a certain room for the interview. Another kind of interviewer IM refers to organizing the interview, such as timeliness of the interview start, or providing personal feedback to interviewees (Wilhelmy et al., 2012). Taken together, this evidence indicates that while some interviewer IM behaviors seem quite similar to strategies applied by interviewees, there is also a broad range of differences because interviewers tend to have multiple aims and thus may have diverse IM intentions.

What Effects Does Interviewers' IM have on Recruiting Outcomes and Interview

Validity?

In the interview literature, it has been stressed repeatedly that interviewer IM behaviors are a key factor for attracting applicants and thus for ensuring an organization's success (e.g., Macan, 2009; Rosenfeld, 1997). To examine interviewer IM effectiveness, Stevens, Mitchell, and Tripp (1990) conducted a laboratory study using videos of three different interviewers. Each of the interviewers applied a different IM strategy to present the same hypothetical study program. The authors found that interviewers using other-enhancement (i.e., statements flattering the interviewee) and opinion conformity (i.e., statements that were in line with attitudes of a hypothetical interviewee) were well-liked and perceived as being convincing, while interviewers using self-promotion (i.e., statements highlighting the program's prestige) were perceived as being less likeable and less convincing. However, only interviewer opinion-conformity was found to have strong effects on participants' decision on which study program they would choose.

Furthermore, regarding the relative effectiveness of different IM strategies, Stevens et al. (1990) found an influence of the order in which these were used. Self-promotion was most persuasive when seen first, while opinion conformity was most persuasive when seen second or last. Other-enhancement was equally persuasive in all presentation orders. A potential reason for these order effects may be based on interviewees' attributions. For example, interviewees may interpret interviewer self-promotion as arrogant behavior especially in contrast to other-enhancement, which is usually seen as "buttering the ego" (Stevens et al., 1990, p. 1087). Taken together, these findings suggest that interviewer IM can influence applicant attraction, but that the context in which interviewer IM is used may play a major role.

Despite these positive effects on organizations' recruiting success, interviewer IM may negatively influence psychometric properties of the employment interview, such as interview

reliability and validity. The main idea underlying this fear is that similar to interviewee IM, interviewer IM may be considered as a potential source of measurement bias (e.g., Anderson, 1992). For example, interviewers' behaviors and judgments may vary from interview to interview depending on perceived applicant fit and sympathy. In addition, interviewers' effort to create favorable impressions might require part of the interviewers' cognitive resources and thus prevent them from accurately assessing interviewees' performance (Dipboye et al., 2012).

A recent study by Marr and Cable (2013) provided initial evidence for these propositions. In a laboratory study, interviewers' selling orientation, which refers to their motivational inclination to attract an interviewee during the employment interview, was found to decrease accuracy of their judgments about interviewees' core self-evaluations. Furthermore, in a second study from a field context, Marr and Cable found that interviewers' selling orientation reduced the interviews' predictive validity. When selling orientation was low, interviewers' judgments more accurately predicted which interviewees would be highest regarding performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and fit when they started their job. In contrast, when selling orientation was high, interviewers' judgments no longer predicted these outcomes. Together, these results indicate that despite positive effects on recruiting success, interviewer IM may hinder the accuracy and predictive validity of employment interviews if performance evaluations happen at the same time when interviewers strongly try to sell the job and the organization.

Does it Matter Whether Interviews are Conducted Face-to-Face?

If one considers Huffcutt et al.'s (2011) interview performance model, then using technology-mediated interviews is important in the present context because how an interview is administered is a design factor that can change the social situation and how the two parties involved in it interpret it and try to influence it. Traditionally, employment interviews

represented a face-to-face interaction between an interviewee and an interviewer. However, with the advancement of telecommunication technology, interviews are no longer restricted to a face-to-face setting but might also be conducted via telephone or videoconference systems (e.g., Chapman, Uggerslev, & Webster, 2003). Furthermore, it is even possible to conduct an interview without an actual interviewer by using interactive voice responding technology, in which interviewees self-administer a screening interview via the phone and answer the questions either verbally or by pressing the indicated button on the phone (e.g., Bauer, Truxillo, Paronto, Weekley, & Campion, 2004).

Two important theories have been developed to account for preferences and suitability of different media that can be used to communicate with others: Social presence theory (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976) and media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984). Regarding the former of these theories, social presence refers to the degree to which a communication medium conveys the actual presence of a communication partner. The perception of others as being present depends not only on the words that are exchanged between communication partners but also on various paraverbal and nonverbal cues. Similar to social presence theory, media richness theory assumes that media differ in the way to which they convey certain types of information so that they provide cues that help to make information less ambiguous and to establish a common frame of reference between the communication partners.

Both theories consider face-to-face interactions as preferable to technology-mediated interactions in situations in which it is important to support social presence and to transmit rich information. The reason for this is that some of the cues that are available in face-to-face interactions (e.g., non-verbal cues like gestures or paraverbal cues like intonation) are no longer available in technology-mediated interactions or that their transmission and perception are impaired by the technology that is used.

In line with these theories, interviewees have a clear preference for face-to-face interviews in comparison to technology-mediated interviews and, in addition, face-to-face interviews are perceived as more fair (Chapman et al., 2003; Sears, Zhang, Wiesner, Hackett, & Yuan, 2013). Furthermore, there is also evidence that interviewees in technology-mediated interviews achieve lower performance ratings than in face-to-face interviews (Melchers, Petrig, & Sauer, 2013; Sears et al., 2013).

Concerning interviewee perceptions of technology-mediated interviews, evidence suggests that these interviews are perceived as offering less opportunity to show one's qualifications or even as impairing interpersonal treatment of the interviewee and two-way communication (Bauer et al., 2004; Sears et al., 2013). Nonetheless, the reasons why interviewees often receive lower performance evaluations in technology-mediated interviews are still relatively unclear.

However, given the lower media richness of these interviews, it seems likely that conducting interviews via telephone or videoconference systems can impair interviewees' interpretation of the social situation. Furthermore, the technological "barrier" (Short et al., 1976) between interviewers and interviewees also restricts or even prevents the use of certain IM strategies. Professional appearance, for example, is not relevant in telephone interviews and physical closeness is not relevant in technology-mediated interviews.

Concluding Remarks and Lines for Future Research

Taken together, the research reviewed confirms that interviewees' perception of the interview situation matter so that interviewees who are better at discerning the targeted evaluation criteria also perform better in the interview. Similarly, there is clear evidence that interviewees' use of IM tactics (particularly of self-focused tactics like self-promotion) is related to their performance, and that this is especially true for unstructured interviews. In addition, there is some initial evidence that interviewers also use various IM tactics.

Furthermore, several studies found that interviewees can deliberately try to present an overly positive or even untrue image of themselves and lie. However, the extent of faking seems to be considerably smaller than in personality tests – and usually, interviewers are hardly able to detect faking. Finally, technology changes the interview situation so that interviewees experience some impairments of the interview situation and often perform worse in comparison to face-to-face interviews. However, it is unclear to which degree technological constraints that impede interviewees' self-presentation behavior contribute to this.

As noted in the introduction, much of the reviewed research was motivated by fears that attempts to present oneself in a favorable way might impair the psychometric properties of employment interviews. However, hardly any research directly speaks to these concerns – and in contrast to these concerns the limited available evidence suggests that interviewees' correct understanding of the interview situation is not only paralleled by better interview ratings but also by better performance in work-related situations. Nevertheless, more research is needed that also considers questions such as how interviewees' IM is related to job performance or whether faking endangers the criterion-related validity of employment interviews.

Finally, in contrast to interviewee IM, research on interviewer IM still is in its infancy. Even though it is well-known that impressions of organizational representatives play an important role for interviewees' perceptions of the selection process and the organization as well as for their subsequent behavior, little is known about the effects of specific IM tactics of the interviewers on interviewees as well as on the psychometric properties of the interview.

Given that the reviewed research has illustrated many fruitful insights on how interviewees and interviewers try do deal with the social situation that they face in interviews, we believe that further insights can be gained from following this line of research. Therefore, we advocate further research that continues examining the interactive nature of employment interviews to foster our understanding of the factors that are important in these interviews.

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