The Advantage of Being Oneself:

The Role of Applicant Self-Verification in Organizational Hiring Decisions

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Abstract

In this paper, we explore whether individuals who strive to self-verify flourish or flounder on the job market. Using placement data from two very different field samples, we found that individuals rated by the organization as being in the top 10% of candidates were significantly more likely to receive a job offer if they have a stronger drive to self-verify. A third study, using a quasi-experimental design, explored the mechanism behind this effect, and tested whether individuals who are high and low on this trait communicate differently in a structured mock job interview. Text analysis (LIWC) of interview transcripts revealed systematic differences in candidates' language use as a function of their self-verification drives. These differences led an expert rater to perceive candidates with a strong drive to self-verify as less inauthentic and less misrepresentative than their low self-verifying peers, making her more likely to recommend these candidates for a job. Taken together, our results suggest that authentic self-presentation is an unidentified route to success on the job market, amplifying the chances that high-quality candidates can convert organizations' positive evaluations into tangible job offers. We discuss implications for job applicants, organizations, and the labor market.

Words: 194

Keywords: job search, job offers, self-verification striving, authenticity, LIWC, text analysis

At the beginning of the movie *The Devil Wears Prada*, a character named Andy Sachs has survived all the pre-screenings for an assistant position at an elite fashion magazine. She enters the office of the Editor-in-Chief, the person ultimately deciding if she will receive the job offer. Andy is highly qualified for the position: She was the editor of her own college newspaper and won national awards for her journalism. However, during the interview with the Editor-in-Chief, Andy is not stylishly dressed, admits that she is neither skinny nor glamorous like the other employees of the magazine, and declares that she has little interest in fashion. Andy's authentic descriptions of herself and her interests do not make her an obvious choice for the position. Yet her accurate self-assessment and refusal to misrepresent her interests in order to appear more "ideal" for the role piques the interest of the demanding head of the magazine, and she lands the job.

Presenting oneself accurately and authentically, as Andy Sachs did, is not the most intuitive strategy for many candidates on the job market (Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Dipboye, 1992; Fletcher, 1989). There are high stakes involved, and most job candidates have little incentive to present themselves accurately unless they perceive it will make them seem like a better fit for the position (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012). However, we propose that Andy's strong drive to self-verify—to present herself accurately so that others understand her as she understands herself (Swann, 1983; Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992)—allowed her to differentiate herself from her other highly-qualified competitors. We argue that the extent to which job candidates strive to self-verify is a critical factor in final job offer decisions, making top candidates like Andy more likely to convert interviews into job offers.

Understanding how self-verification influences organizational hiring decisions is important for two reasons. First, although a large literature has examined the role of the

interview in hiring decisions (Guion, 2011), little research has focused on what applicant

characteristics differentiates those who are considered well-qualified for the position. As

Highhouse and Johnson noted (1996), we know relatively little about which attributes help a

candidate stand out and receive a job offer once interviewers have winnowed down the

competition to a smaller set of highly-qualified candidates. When making decisions about

candidates who are considered highly qualified for the roles, recruiters have already used

objective criteria to remove unqualified applicants from consideration (Dipboye, 1992). As a

result, remaining candidates may be seen as "generally comparable in [their] attractiveness for

the position" (Guion, 1998, p. 360). This leaves the ultimate decision about who receives a job

offer open to more subjective influences (Highhouse, 1997; Ryan & Sackett, 1989). We propose

that among highly-qualified candidates, interviewers are instinctively attracted to individuals

whom they perceive as authentic. This means that in the interviewing context—a setting known

to motivate inauthentic and fake behavior (Levashina & Campion, 2007)—candidates who are

already considered highly qualified for the position will positively differentiate themselves from

their competition if they also strive to self-verify.

Second, by focusing on how candidates' self-verification striving can affect

organizational hiring decisions, we provide insight into different ways of "putting one's best foot

forward" during job interviews—behavior broadly characterized as impression management. On

one hand, a large body of research supports the general value of impression management tactics

in the job search process (Barrick et al., 2009; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Kacmar & Carlson, 1999;

Stevens & Kristof, 1995). However, impression management tactics do not lead to universally

positive outcomes for job candidates (Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Swider, Barrick, Harris, &

Stoverink, 2011). Here we examine self-verification striving as one key factor that may explain

why certain impression management tactics sometimes backfire. In the high stakes context of job interviews, the drive to present oneself in the best possible light can cross the line from putting one's best foot forward to behaving inauthentically—misrepresenting who one is in order to appear more attractive to interviewers (Levashina & Campion, 2007; Weiss & Feldman, 2006). While self-verification striving may not interfere with putting one's best foot forward in candid ways (promoting one's legitimate strengths, for example), we argue that it should make candidates less likely to misrepresent who they are, which can ultimately help candidates succeed (Swider et al., 2011).

Studying the role of self-verification in organizational hiring decisions represents a marked departure in a field long-dominated by self-enhancement perspectives (Barrick et al., 2009; Jones & Pittman, 1982). By focusing on how authentic self-expression positively affects the likelihood that a highly qualified candidate will receive a job offer, we open up new research questions about how authenticity plays out in the job market. We also shed light on self-verification striving as an important applicant trait that affects hiring decisions—a crucial point in organizational entry that affects all later outcomes for employees (Boudreau, Boswell, & Judge, 2001; Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003) as well as for employers (Becker, Connolly, & Slaughter, 2010; Phillips, 1998). Finally, our research has important practical implications. Specifically, we offer an alternate strategy that may allow highly-qualified job seekers to differentiate themselves from their competition more effectively, while meeting their basic human need for authentic self-expression.

The Benefits of Self-Verification

Drawing on Lecky's work on self-consistency (1945), Swann introduced the concept of self-verification to describe humans' inherent motive "to create a social reality that verifies and

confirms their self-conceptions" (Swann, 1983, p. 33), regardless of whether those self-conceptions are positive or negative. The fundamental idea behind self-verification is that people desire to promote accurate reflections of themselves, both to substantiate their own psychological coherence and to support stable social interactions (Swann, Rentfrow, & Guinn, 2003). While self-verification theory proposes that the desire to self-verify is a human universal (Swann, 1983, 1987), it also acknowledges that the drive to self-verify depends on context (e.g., Swann & Ely, 1984; Swann, Johnson, & Bosson, 2009), and varies across individuals (Cable & Kay, 2012). Thus, while everyone has a fundamental need to self-verify in at least some circumstances, individuals vary in the extent to which they engage in self-verifying behavior as a function of their immediate context as well as the strength of their individual drives.

Self-verification offers benefits to individuals including reduced anxiety and improved health outcomes (see Ayduk, Gyurak, Akinola, & Mendes, 2013; North & Swann, 2009). Self-verification also can lead to favorable interpersonal outcomes. People like to associate with high self-verifying individuals, in part because self-verification facilitates harmonious, committed, and stable relationships (Burke & Stets, 1999; Katz & Beach, 2000; Swann & Read, 1981). Studies on self-verification in organizational contexts have shown that it leads to greater identification with work groups, fewer emotional conflicts, and higher levels of job satisfaction and performance (Burke & Stets, 1999; Cable & Kay, 2012; Swann, Kwan, Polzer, & Milton, 2003; Swann, Milton, & Polzer, 2000). Together, these findings indicate that presenting oneself accurately to others improves long-term personal and group functioning (North & Swann, 2009).

To date, there has only been one study (Cable & Kay, 2012) that has touched on the role of self-verification striving in the job search context. However, Cable and Kay (2012) focused on how self-verification striving affected the process of new employees settling into a new

organization during the first years of their tenure. The authors showed that interviewers'

evaluations of candidates who strove to self-verify were more accurate in predicting newcomer's

later job performance because interviewers would evaluate candidates based on more accurate

self-presentations. They also predicted that individuals who strove to self-verify would be more

committed to their employers, because their self-verifying tendencies would help them locate

organizations with a better fit for them. Indeed, results showed that individuals who strove to

self-verify were more committed to their employers, more satisfied, and performing at higher

levels nine months into their new roles.

Conceptually, however, all these known benefits of self-verification, including those

observed in Cable and Kay (2012), accrue through *ongoing* interactions that unfold over the long

term. In other words, "self-verification strivings are more salient in relatively enduring

relationships" (North & Swann, 2009, p. 139). Past research has not examined how self-

verification might lead to benefits in short-term brief interactions such as job interviews—which

last less than 90 minutes on average (Ryan & Sackett, 1989). In fact, Cable and Kay (2012)

reported a non-significant correlation between self-verification striving and job offers. Though

this relationship was tangential to their investigation (i.e., the number of job offers was collected

as a control variable to account for labor market alternatives), the authors concluded that "in the

short run, [self-verification striving] does not appear to interfere with job offers" (2012, p. 368).

This paper explores the possibility that the null finding reported in Cable and Kay (2012)

obscures a more complex but important relationship between the extent to which individuals

strive to self-verify and organizational hiring decisions. In the present research, we aim to

develop logic and provide evidence about the conditions under which self-verification striving

may help some job applicants, even during the short-term interactions that characterize those

leading up to job offers. Specifically, we hypothesize that self-verification striving helps

candidates like Andy Sachs—a clearly highly-qualified candidate for the job—while hurting

those who are not regarded as serious contenders.

Our research thus builds on Cable and Kay (2012) in three specific ways. First, we focus

on the benefits of self-verification striving during short-term interpersonal interactions (that is, in

the hiring process) rather than on benefits that reveal themselves over longer time periods and

more sustained interactions. Second, we explore a potential risk of self-verification striving in

the context of job search: while it may amplify the chances of highly-qualified candidates

landing a position, it may further disadvantage those seen as less viable. Third, we focus on a

nonlinear relationship between self-verification striving and hiring decisions. Though researchers

have called for increased study of non-linear relationships in organizational research (Ames &

Flynn, 2007; Groysberg, Polzer, & Elfenbein, 2011; Moore & Tenbrunsel, 2014), most studies

fail to develop theory about nuanced relationships that may be hidden by null effects.

Self-Verification Striving as a Differentiator on the Job Market

Many organizations have many more highly-qualified candidates than job openings. One

recent U.S. survey estimated that 118 people apply for every open position (Smith, 2013) with

wide variance in terms of the quality and relevance of the applicants for the position. However,

once an organization has assessed a pool of candidates and decided which are the most attractive

for a position, they still have to decide whom from within this group should receive the offer,

even though there are few formal selection tools available to help differentiate this group

(Coverdill & Finlay, 1998, p. 197). Interestingly, however, we could find no research on which

applicant characteristics become particularly important when a job offer needs to be made to

single candidate among the group of strong contenders who are similarly highly qualified

(Highhouse & Johnson, 1996, p. 232).

We argue that self-verification striving should help candidates who are considered highly

qualified to land job offers but simultaneously disadvantage candidates who are perceived as

low-quality candidates for the same position, because self-verification striving will help

candidates differentiate themselves from their competition. Many job candidates "answer

interview questions having in mind the image of an ideal candidate for the job" (Levashina &

Campion, 2007, p. 1639), which is inherently homogenizing. Alternatively, a candidate with a

strong internal drive to self-verify will answer questions with their true self in mind, leading to a

more fluid self-presentation as well as accurate and coherent assessments of one's strengths and

weaknesses (Swann, Kwan, et al., 2003; Swann & Pelham, 2002). For strong contenders, self-

verifying should give recruiters confidence that the candidate is self-aware, knows her strengths

and limitations, and will bring more of herself to work (Roberts, Cha, Hewlin, & Settles, 2009).

This should help confirm their positive impressions about high-qualified candidates, whereas

they may feel less confident about their impressions of candidates who have been more

circumspect about revealing themselves.

Self-verification in the job search context can be considered through the lens of signaling

theory (Bangerter et al., 2012). This theory stresses the importance of applicants sending good

signals to interviewers in the job search process. Good signals are those that are either more

costly for less qualified individuals (such as education) or difficult to manipulate (such as

developing a genuine emotional connection with the interviewer). Self-verifying during the job

interview may function as a "hard to fake" signal since it involves self-insight and revealing

one's unique qualities in an honest way. Individuals in the final running for a job offer signal

their candidacy as *rare* and *attractive* to recruiters if they strive to self-verify: *rare* because recruiters are accustomed to candidates who try to act according to an ideal standard rather than as themselves (Levashina & Campion, 2007), and *attractive* because recruiters will perceive their interactions with such candidates as more authentic, allowing them to be more confident about their evaluations of them (Cable & Kay, 2012).

Of course, this kind of differentiation will only boost the chances of receiving a job offer for applicants who are already strong contenders for a position. A positive assessment by interviewers will be pre-requisite for serious consideration for any competitive position. Thus, applicants who are not considered highly qualified will not suddenly become more attractive candidates if they strive to self-verify. In fact, for candidates who are long shots for a position, self-verification striving may simply bolster interviewers' misgivings and strengthen their case for rejection, because interviewers often seek to confirm their first impressions of candidates, both positive and negative (Dougherty, Turban, & Callender, 1994). If a candidate self-verifies when he is viewed as low-quality, interviewers will possess more idiosyncratic information about that candidate with which to confirm their negative conception.

Based on these arguments, we suggest that the relationship between self-verification striving and the likelihood of receiving a job offer will depend on whether the candidate has been evaluated as among one of the strongest contenders, or is considered a long shot. Specifically, we predict that top candidates who strive to self-verify will amplify their chances of receiving a job offer compared to top candidates who do not self-verify. However, high self-verifying candidates who are evaluated poorly will further undermine their chances of receiving an offer.

Hypothesis 1. Candidate self-verification striving increases the likelihood of receiving a

job offer for high-quality candidates but decreases the likelihood of receiving a job offer

for low-quality candidates.

Studies 1 and 2: Empirical Overview

Study 1 explored, in a sample of international teachers applying for job placements in the

U.S., whether the null relationship between self-verification striving and job offers reported by

Cable and Kay (2012) masked a moderated relationship in which the effect of self-verification

striving on job offers depended on whether applicants were already considered strong candidates

by the organization. Study 2 focused on replicating Hypothesis 1 in a sample of lawyers applying

for positions in a branch of the U.S. military. Thus, in Study 2, we examined Hypothesis 1 in a

sample that is qualitatively different from the teacher sample on a number of important

dimensions. Legal Corps (the name is changed for anonymity) is a branch of the U.S. military

with a highly competitive selection process, offering positions to only 11% of applicants. By

comparison, the teacher placement clearinghouse made offers to 41% of applicants. In addition,

the Legal Corps sample was exclusively U.S.-based, compared to the teacher sample, which was

comprised entirely by individuals living outside the U.S. Finally, military legal work is very

different from teaching. Replicating our results in such a different sample would substantiate our

findings in a robust and meaningful way. We also used Studies 1 and 2 to further explore the

nomological net of the recently-developed scale to measure self-verificaiton striving (Cable &

Kay, 2012). The methodology, analyses, results, and discussion associated with our construct

validation effortsin these studies can be found in the Online Appendix.

Study 1

Method

Sample and procedure. We obtained Cable and Kay's (2012) data for re-analysis. The sample was comprised of international teachers who applied to a clearinghouse that matches teachers from around the globe to school districts in the United States (Cable & Kay, 2012). Data were collected at three points in time. Of the 5,221 individuals who applied for placements, 2,194 were evaluated by interviewers. Of the applicants who were interviewed, 1240 voluntarily reported their levels of self-verification striving along with self-monitoring, self-disclosure, and core self-evaluations (57% of those the clearinghouse interviewed). Lastly, the authors obtained final job offer decisions for the interviewed candidates. Our analyses include the 1,240 job candidates (M_{age}=40, SD_{age}=8.98, range: 25-71; 67% women; 30% white) for whom both self-verification striving scores and interview evaluations were available, of whom 508 (41%) were offered teaching positions.[1]

Measures

Job placement. Job placement was coded as 1 if the candidate received a placement offer (otherwise 0).

Interviewer evaluations. Following Cable and Kay (2012), we used the composite measure drawn from interviewer scores on multiple dimensions. An interviewer rated each

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[1] We note that the sample we analyze here includes all 1,240 candidates for whom data on self-verification striving, interview evaluations, and job offer were available. Due to their different focus (job performance post-organizational entry), Cable and Kay's (2012) sample is limited to the 208 of the 508 teachers who received offers, and for whom job performance data nine months later were also available. In addition, we followed steps recommended by Rogelberg and Stanton (2007) to assess potential response bias. For Study 1, we compared two participant groups on our independent variable (i.e., interview evaluations). Among those for whom interview evaluations were available (n=2,194), Group 1 was the final sample who completed our survey (n=1,240), and Group 2 was those who did not respond to the survey (n=954). An independent sample t-test showed that these two groups were not significantly different in terms of interview evaluations, $t(2,143)$=-0.74, p=.458 (M_{group1}=2.09, M_{group2}=2.08); no other variables were available for the sample of applicants who did not complete the survey.

candidate on six dimensions related to her qualifications and capabilities as a teacher (e.g., class management, classroom delivery, instruction planning) on a 3-point scale (1=*poor* to 3=*good*). We averaged these ratings to form a composite rating of interviewer evaluations of the candidate's competence (α=.88).

   Self-verification striving. Prior to their interviews, job candidates responded to an 8-item measure of self-verification striving developed by Cable and Kay (2012). This measure (see Appendix A) taps the strength of an individual's personal drive to self-verify; that is, it measures variance in the *importance* individuals attach to self-verification, as well as variance in individuals' *preferences* for engaging in self-verifying behaviors (α=.75). Cable and Kay (2012) reported a test-retest reliability for this measure of .59 over 18 months, which compares favourably to the 12 month test-retest reliability a meta-analysis of .55 Roberts and DelVecchio's (2000) meta-analysis found for enduring, cross-situational variables.

   Control variables. Previous research shows that interview evaluations and hiring decisions are related to certain candidate demographic characteristics, such as gender (Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Gilmore, Beehr, & Love, 1986), age (Haefner, 1977; Singer & Sewell, 1989), race (Hitt & Barr, 1989; King, Mendoza, Madera, Hebl, & Knight, 2006), as well as human capital such as work experience and skills (Raza & Carpenter, 1987; Singer & Bruhns, 1991). Thus, to provide better estimates of the hypothesized relationship in the current study, we controlled for *gender* (1 for men and 0 for women), *age* (in years), *race* (1 for white and 0 otherwise). We also controlled for *international exchange experience* (1 for a history of international exchange experience in teaching positions and 0 otherwise) as a measure of human capital in the current research setting.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among the variables. Hypothesis 1 predicted that self-verification striving would increase the likelihood that candidates would receive a job offer if they were considered strong candidates for the position and decrease the likelihood for weak candidates. To test this hypothesis, we conducted hierarchical logistic regression analyses (see Table 2). In Step 1, we entered the control variables. We entered our focal variables: interviewer evaluations and self-verification striving (both mean-centered) (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003) in Step 2 and their interaction term in Step 3. Step 2 produced a significant chi-square model improvement, $\Delta\chi^2(2)=107.68$, $p<.001$, with a significant main effect of interviewer evaluations ($b=1.58$, $SE=0.17$, $p<.001$). Step 3 also produced a significant model improvement, $\Delta\chi^2(1)=11.25$, $p=.001$, with a significant interviewer evaluations × self-verification striving interaction ($b=0.91$, $SE=0.29$, $p=.004$) on the likelihood that they received a placement. We note this effect holds excluding all of the control variables from Step 1.

------Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here------

To examine the conditional effect of candidates' self-verification striving at different levels of interviewer evaluations, we used a SPSS macro (MODPROBE) that probes interactions in logistic regression (Hayes & Matthes, 2009). The effect of self-verification striving on the likelihood of receiving a job offer was significant ($b=0.56$, $SE=0.18$, $p=.002$) for candidates assessed as high-quality by the organization (those at the 90th percentile of interviewer evaluations). There was no effect of self-verification striving on the likelihood of receiving a job offer for those from the 75th percentile of interviewer evaluations ($b=0.16$, $SE=0.10$, $p=.104$), to the 25th percentile of interviewer evaluations ($b=-0.07$, $SE=0.10$, $p=.451$). However, at the

lowest (10th percentile) end of interviewer evaluations, we found that increasing self-verification

striving decreased the likelihood of a placement (b=-0.49, SE=0.19, p=.009). Figure 1 graphs the

predicted probability of receiving a placement as a function of candidate self-verification striving

for candidates at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles of interviewer evaluations.

------Insert Figure 1 about here------

These results support Hypothesis 1: Those considered strong candidates for positions are

more likely to receive a job offer if they have high levels of self-verification striving. As Figure 1

shows, self-verification striving made a meaningful difference in whether highly-evaluated

candidates received a job placement. Among candidates evaluated by interviewers to be in the

90th percentile of quality, moving from 25th to the 75th percentile of self-verification striving

increased their likelihood of receiving a placement by 11%. However, for candidates evaluated

by interviewers to be in the 10th percentile of quality, moving from 25th to the 75th percentile of

self-verification striving decreased their likelihood of receiving a placement by 6%.

Study 2

Method

Sample and procedure. We gathered data over one full year from the entire pool of

applicants competing for positions in Legal Corps, a professional body that provides independent

counsel and legal services to the U.S. Military. All applicants were either law school students

(e.g., second or third year) or employed by the U.S. Government. Our goal in terms of data

collection was to follow the natural cycles in the environment we were studying (George &

Jones, 2000). Accordingly, we gathered data from three sources at four points in time. First, to

begin the hiring process, 2,519 applicants submitted their applications, resumes, college and law

school transcripts, and LSAT scores. Second, the 1,632 candidates who cleared the initial

screenings were then invited to complete a voluntary survey that assessed the extent to which

they strive to self-verify. Candidates were also asked to report their Big Five personality traits

and proactive personality. Individuals were informed that their responses to the survey would not

be used in job offer decisions (in fact, their responses were not shared with the organization).

Next, as part of the regular hiring process, each candidate under consideration was evaluated in

person by two interviewers, whose evaluations we obtained. Finally, we tracked the job offers

extended by the organization after the final interviews (N=35).

Analyses were limited to the 333 job candidates for Legal Corps (M_{age}=27, SD_{age}=3.37,

range: 20-41; 31% women; 80% white) who completed our survey (a 20% response rate) and

were evaluated in face-to-face interviews. This response rate is similar to other field surveys with

similar characteristics; that is, completely voluntary and non-remunerated surveys administered

as part of a broader selection process (e.g., Judge & Cable, 1997; Stevens, 1997; Turban, Lee,

Veiga, Haggard, & Wu, 2013).[2]

Measures

   Job offer. Job offer was coded as 1 if the candidate received a job offer (otherwise 0).

   Interviewer evaluations. As a global measure of the interviewers' evaluation of the

candidate, we used the ratings provided by the two interviewers, both of whom assessed each

candidate on a 5-point scale (1=*unacceptable* to 5=*exceptional*) on six competencies (e.g.,

teamwork, leadership). We aggregated each interviewer's ratings across the six competencies

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[2] To assess potential response bias in Study 2, we compared two participant groups on key population parameters
(i.e., gender, age, and race: White dummy) and on the other control variables used in our analyses (i.e.,
undergraduate college status, law school rank, college GPA, law school GPA, LSAT percentile, law experience).
Among those who were interviewed for job decisions (n=1,632), Group 1 comprised the final sample who
completed our survey (n=333), and Group 2 comprised those who did not respond to the survey (n=1,299). A set of
independent sample t-tests showed that the only difference between these two groups was in terms of age,
t(1,579)=5.79, p<.001 (M_{group1}=26, M_{group2}=28), a control variable that was correlated with neither our predictor
(interview evaluations) nor outcome variable (job offer likelihood).

(α=.82 for both interviewers). Then, after ensuring acceptable agreement between interviewers (ICC (2)=.93), we averaged the two aggregated ratings to reflect the interviewers' evaluations of how strong the candidate was.

Self-verification striving. Prior to their interviews, job candidates reported their self-verification striving using the same measure as Study 1 (α=.76).

Control variables. Consistent with Study 1, we controlled for candidate demographic characteristics, specifically *gender* (1 for men and 0 for women), *race* (1 for white and 0 otherwise), and *age* (in years). In addition, work experience (Campion, 1978; Singer & Bruhns, 1991), educational achievement, as well as the prestige of one's educational credentials (Allison & Long, 1987; Moore, Newman, Raisian, & Thomas, 1983) are all strongly predictive of job offers. Thus, we controlled for candidate *legal experience* (the number of years the candidate had worked in a legal occupation), as well as *undergraduate college GPA* (Grade Point Average), *law school GPA*, and *LSAT percentile*. Both college GPA and law school GPA were obtained from candidates' official transcripts (all transformed to a 4-point scale), and LSAT percentile was the percentile rank of the candidate's LSAT score, reflecting relative test performance. Finally, we controlled for *candidate undergraduate college status* and *law school rank* as indicators of the prestige of the candidates' academic credentials. Following previous research on job search (Cable & Murray, 1999), candidate undergraduate college status was coded using Gourman's (2008) undergraduate college ratings. This publication assigns continuous numeric ratings (from 1.0 to 5.0, where higher numbers indicate higher quality) to most degree-granting universities in the United States. Similarly, we controlled for law school prestige using the ranking of 195 law schools published annually by U.S. News and World Report.

Results and Discussion

Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics and zero-order correlations among the variables. We conducted a similar set of hierarchical logistic regression analyses to Study 1 (see Table 4). In Step 1, we entered the control variables. We added interviewer evaluations and self-verification striving (both mean-centered) in Step 2, and their interaction term in Step 3. Step 2 produced a significant chi-square model improvement over Model 1, $\Delta\chi^2(2)=25.88$, $p<.001$, with a significant main effect of interview evaluations ($b=2.19$, $SE=0.12$, $p<.001$). Consistent with Cable and Kay's (2012) findings, there was no main effect of self-verification striving on the likelihood of receiving a job offer. Step 3 also produced a significant improvement in the model, $\Delta\chi^2(1)=11.70$, $p=.001$, and a significant interviewer evaluations × self-verification striving interaction on the likelihood that a candidate received a job offer ($b=2.74$, $SE=0.85$, $p=.001$). We note this effect holds excluding all of the control variables from Step 1.

------Insert Tables 3 and 4 about here------

Again using MODPROBE to examine conditional effects, we replicated the findings of Study 1: The effect of self-verification striving on the likelihood of receiving a job offer was significant ($b=1.14$, $SE=0.57$, $p=.044$) for highly evaluated candidates (those at the 90th percentile of interviewer evaluations) but not for those at the 75th percentile of interviewer evaluations ($b=0.00$, $SE=0.40$, $p=.998$). The conditional effect of candidate self-verification on the likelihood of receiving a job offer reversed at the median (50th percentile) level of interviewer evaluations, becoming significant and negative ($b=-1.15$, $SE=0.50$, $p=.022$). This trend continued at the 25th ($b=-2.52$, $SE=0.83$, $p=.002$) and 10th ($b=-3.54$, $SE=1.11$, $p=.002$) percentiles of interviewer evaluations. These results provide evidence that the effect of candidate self-verification on job offers is contingent on whether the candidate has been assessed as high

quality by the organization. Figure 2 graphs the predicted probability of receiving a job offer as a function of candidate self-verification amongst candidates at the 10th, 25th, 50th, 75th, and 90th percentiles of the interviewer evaluations.

------Insert Figure 2 about here------

Study 2 replicated the effect of candidate self-verification striving on the likelihood of receiving a job offer, contingent on how high-quality they have been evaluated, using a substantially different sample from Study 1 sample. Specifically, among candidates interviewers had evaluated at the 90th percentile of quality, moving from the 25th to the 75th percentile of self-verification striving nearly *tripled* their likelihood of receiving a job offer—from 5% to 13%. Replicating our results in sample so different from that used in Study 1 in terms of selectivity, geography, and job content substantiates our findings in a meaningful way.

Study 3: Theory and Hypotheses

Studies 1 and 2 established that high-quality applicants amplify their odds of receiving a job offer when they are high in the drive to self-verify. These findings shed light on one way in which high-quality candidates may differentiate themselves from their competition in order to be more successful in the job market. However, Studies 1 and 2 do not speak to the mechanism behind this effect. Specifically, they do not reveal how candidiates' self-verification striving manifests during the interview process, nor how raters perceive candidates differently as a function of candidates' self-verification strivings. This is our focus in Study 3.

Self-Verification Striving and Language Use in Job Interviews

Conceptually, a drive to self-verify will manifest in the way individuals present themselves to others (Swann, 1983). For self-verification striving to influence job market outcomes, it must affect how individuals behave in the job search process. Our final set of

hypotheses focus on exploring objective differences in candidate behavior during job interviews as a function of the strength of their drive to self-verify, and how recruiters perceive these behavioral differences.

A job interview is a structured conversation, in which the candidate's objective is to secure a positive assessment and ultimately a job offer, and the interviewer's objective is to elicit the information necessary to make an informed choice. Job interviews typically cover similar territory, such as candidates' career histories, professional skills and abilities, and major achievements. However, in the midst of these similar conversations, we predict that candidates will differ in reliable ways in terms of *how* they communicate. Indeed, a growing body of work supports the idea that there are meaningful individual differences in the way individuals speak that reflect their underlying traits (Pennebaker & King, 1999; Pennebaker, Mehl, & Niederhoffer, 2003; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). For example, neurotic individuals use more negative emotion words and fewer positive emotion words, and agreeable individuals use more positive emotion words and fewer negative ones (Pennebaker & King, 1999).

To date, no studies have explored differences in language use as a function of self-verification striving . However, as we show in Studies 1 and 2, self-verification striving predicts job market success for high-quality candidates. This effect can likely be explained by differences in how individuals who strive to self-verify communicate (that is, how they use language) during job interviews. Moreover, the growing body of work about how individual differences manifest in communication permits some theorizing about how self-verification striving might be reflected in candidates' language use. One of the most common methods to examine how individuals use language assesses the proportion of words individuals use from different categories of words (Pennebaker, Booth, & Francis, 2007; Pennebaker & King, 1999). We

focused on differentiating high and low self-verifying participants in terms of words that reflect their overall linguistic style and in their use of words that might signal a greater willingness to share self-knowledge in conversation.

Overall linguistic style. All words are coded as either a function word or a content word. Content words (nouns, adjectives, and lexical verbs) define the topics of conversation. Function words (prepositions, pronouns, articles, auxiliary verbs) are the "glue that holds content words together" (Pennebaker et al., 2003, p. 570). Though they make up a tiny (0.04%) proportion of total words, they comprise half of the words we actually use (Chung & Pennebaker, 2007). From a psychological perspective, function words "reflect *how* people are communicating, whereas content words convey *what* they are saying" (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010, p. 29). Their use affects the listener, and reflects the speaker's cognitive and social sophistication (Grice, 1975). In this way, function words reflect how fluidly an individual speaks. In the context of a job interview, where the content of the conversation is focused on the candidate, function words reflect how fluidly an individual communicates about him- or herself. We predict that candidates high in self-verification striving will communicate about themselves in a more sophisticated way, which will be reflected in a greater use of function words.

Self-knowlege. Fundamentally, self-verifying involves behaving in ways that bring others to see you as you see yourself. We therefore predict that individuals who strive to self-verify communicate in ways that signal insight about their self-knowledge—that they know who they are, and can communicate about it in an articulate, clear, and coherent way.

Several categories of words have been associated with greater self-knowledge. The use of words associated with *insight* (describing how one "thinks", "knows" or "considers") is associated with self-reflection and efforts to cognitively process the world and make sense of

events (Pennebaker & King, 1999). Past research has shown that greater use of these types of words predicts supervisor ratings of professional behavior, motivation to learn, rapport with colleagues and clients, and work performance generally (Abe, 2009). Individuals who self-verify may also use more *causal* words. These words explain reasons why, and thus tap active thinking (Pennebaker & King, 1999). *Insight* and *causal* words are often linked together, and are associated with raters' perceptions that individuals shared personal thoughts and feelings (Human, Biesanz, Finseth, Pierce, & Le, 2014).

In addition, individuals who strive to self-verify may also use more *conjunction* words. These words connect thoughts together, and include exclusive words ("but"), as well as inclusive words ("and"). Individuals who use more conjunctions exhibit more narrative coherence (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse, & Cai, 2004), which one would expect from an individual who is reflecting their true nature. Finally, *seeing* words (e.g., "look", "see", "view") describe how people perceive things. To the extent that candidates high in self-verification striving discuss how they view the world, this should be picked up in their use of "seeing" words.

> *Hypothesis 2. In a job interview context, candidates high in self-verification striving use language differently than candidates low in self-verification striving. Specifically, they will: (a) have a more fluid linguistic style, indicated by a greater use of function words, and (b) use more words that communicate self-knowledge, indicated by a greater use of insight, causal, conjunction, and seeing words.*

Rater Perceptions of Candidates' Language Use

Logically, for self-verification to influence the likelihood that a job candidate will receive a job offer, their language use in job interviews must affect how recruiters perceive them. Past research clearly shows that language use does influence how people are perceived (Berry,

Pennebaker, Mueller, & Hiller, 1997; Gifford & Hine, 1994; Leary, Rogers, Canfield, & Coe, 1986; Wish, D'Andrade, & Goodnow, 1980). For example, when speakers make greater use of the present tense, they are perceived as more warm and more competent, and when speakers use more negative emotion words, they are perceived as less warm and less competent (Berry et al., 1997). Likewise, research shows linkages between verbal cues and perceptions of a speaker as gregarious, aloof, boring, or interesting (Gifford & Hine, 1994; Leary et al., 1986). Taken together, these results suggest that if self-verifying manifests in terms of language use during job interviews, these differences will influence interviewers' perceptions of the candidates.

Inauthenticity. A pronounced feature of the job search context is that it strongly motivates people to present themselves in the best possible way (Cable & Kay, 2011), even to the extent that candidates pretend to have better traits, experiences, and abilities than they actually possess (Levashina & Campion, 2007). This implies that interviewers are accustomed to observing inauthenticity among applicants, and are likely attuned to whether candidates are communicating about themselves in an authentic way (Bangerter et al., 2012). Authenticity is defined as a state in which "one acts in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter, 2002, p. 382). Since the drive to self-verify requires leading others to see you as you see yourself, the language use of candidates high in self-verification striving should cause interviewers to perceive them as less inauthentic.

Misrepresentativeness. One of the things that recruiters try to assess in job interviews is the extent to which candidates might be exaggerating their abilities, obscuring their weaknesses, or otherwise misrepresenting their true skills, abilities, or interest in the position. Yet candidates often do misrepresent themselves, in various ways, during job interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2006; Levashina & Campion, 2007).

Misrepresentation can take several forms. Some applicants actively present a fictionalized version of themselves, by inventing skills or positive traits they do not possess (e.g., Furnham, 1986), or past employment experiences or accomplishments they never had (Armour, 2002), in order to appear better than they are. This type of misrepresentation requires candidates to construct and present information that is verifiably false (Levin & Zickar, 2002). Levashina and Campion (2007) found that between 65% and 92% of candidates engaged in this type of *active misrepresentation* during job interviews. A second type of misrepresentation involves omitting certain undesirable pieces of information, or concealing aspects of oneself or one's background in order to create a more positive impression (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Levashina and Campion (2007) found this type of *omissive misrepresentation* to be even more common, with 87% to 96% of candidates employing it in their job interviews.

Conceptually, since self-verifying involves presenting an accurate portrayal of oneself to others, self-verification striving should be associated with less of all forms of misrepresentation (Levashina & Campion, 2006; Levashina & Campion, 2007). Specifically, because self-verification involves people promoting "the survival of their self-conceptions, regardless of whether the self-conception happens to be positive or negative" (Swann, 1987, p. 1039), will likely engage in less active and omissive misrepresentation, even during job interviews.

We propose that raters will perceive the way that high self-verifiers communicate about themselves in interviews as less misrepresentative than the way that low self-verifiers communicate about themselves. Although at first it may seem unusual to predict that a rater will notice what a candidate isn't doing, given the subtle forms of human communication, there are many ways in which the absence of behaviors and statements are as observable – and can be as meaningful – as as the presence of behaviors. For example, at the end of a concert, the behavior

of an individual who is sitting and not applauding is as observable and meaningful as the

behavior of individuals who are standing and applauding, perhaps even more so, given it is a less

common reaction to a concert's end. Likewise, interviewers look for honest and reliable signals

from candidates in the job market (Bangerter et al., 2012) and yet regularly receive fake signals

from them (Levashina & Campion, 2006; Levashina & Campion, 2007). A qualified applicant

who does not overstate her abilities and does not hide aspects of herself in an interview is likely

to stand out – in part because it is a context where so many others do. While "not

misrepresenting" oneself may sound like an absence of behavior, it is actually something

candidates communicate actively in interview contexts (e.g., displaying self-insight and self-

knowledge, answering questions directly and completely, not omitting aspects of their work

histories). Thus, the language use of candidates high in self-verification striving will likely be

perceived by raters as being less inauthentic and less misrepresentative.

> *Hypothesis 3. The aspects of language use that are associated with a stronger drive to*
>
> *self-verify will be associated with raters' perceptions of candidates as (a) less inauthentic*
>
> *and (b) less misrepresentative.*

A major focus in the selection literature involves detecting whether candidates are

misrepresenting themselves or otherwise not presenting their true selves, so that they can be

excluded from consideration (Bangerter et al., 2012; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Morgeson et

al., 2007). Even though signals of inauthenticity and misrepresentativeness may be subtle, they

will still likely lead to negative assessments about the ultimate suitability of candidates for

positions. For example, in one recent study participants watched 30-second clips of simulated job

interviews (Krumhuber, Manstead, Cosker, Marshall, & Rosin, 2009). The clips showed the

interviewee smiling authentically (presenting real emotions), smiling inauthentically (faking), or

with a neutral expression. Those with authentic expressions were more likely to be judged as suitable for the job and selected for the position compared to those who smiled inauthentically or had a neutral expression. We propose that raters' perceptions of candidates as less inauthentic and less misrepresentative will ultimately improve their success in landing job offers.

In sum, our predictions reflect a dual-mediator causal model. Individuals high in self-verification striving will use language differently in job interviews than individuals low in self-verification striving, which will be associated with perceptions of the candidate as less inauthentic and less misrepresentative, ultimately explaining why they are more likely to receive job offers.

Hypothesis 4. Self-verification striving affects how individuals use language in the interview process, which affects rater's perceptions of candidates (as less inauthentic and less misrepresentative), ultimately increasing their chances of receiving a job offer.

Study 3

We designed Study 3 to explore how individuals' language use during job interviews objectively differs for individuals who are high (vs. low) in the drive to self-verify (using textual analysis of transcribed interviews), and how these objective differences affect raters' perceptions and job offer decisions. We used an experimental design, pre-selecting participants who were either high (top 15%) or low (bottom 15%) in their self-verification striving and had them complete a standardized mock interview in a hiring simulation. We videotaped the interviews for later assessment by an external rater and transcribed them in order to analyze the participants' different patterns of language use as a function of their self-verification strivings.

Method

Sample and procedure. We informed a business school's participant pool about a two-part study. First, we pre-screened potential participants' levels of self-verification striving online (Part 1), offering them a 1 in 10 chance of winning a £10 Amazon gift certificate for responding: 422 did (M_{age}=26, SD_{age}=7.08, range: 18-52; 66% women; 40% white). We asked the 137 participants who scored in either the bottom 15% (range 1.00-4.00, N=66) and the top 15% (range 6.13 to 7.00, N=71) of the range of self-verification striving if they would like to paticipate in the main interview study (Part 2). Sixty-four of the 137 invited participants (47%) did. We paid them a base rate of £10, and, to incentivize their earnest involvement, informed them that those who who were rated in the top 10% (as rated by an external career services professional) would receive a hypothetical job offer and a £10 bonus.[3]

Participants interviewed for a restaurant manager position, following a method used by Marr and Cable (2014). We chose this type of position to maximize the chances that participants would have relevant work experience; 74% of participants had experience in customer service, and 61% had experience managing others. An experimenter (blind to the study hypotheses) used an identical script for each interview (see Appendix B). Interviews were videotaped. In one case, the video camera did not record properly, and one participant declined to be videotaped, leaving 62 participants (M_{age}=27, SD_{age}=6.91, range 18-49; 66% women, 39% white) in the final sample.

An expert rater (a career services professional with over 25 years of experience in employee recruitment and development) watched each interview and provided her perceptions of candidates' *inauthenticity* and *misrepresentative behavior* as well as the likelihood that she

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[3] To assess potential response bias in Study 3, we compared those from the total sample we solicited to participate in the mock interview study but did not participate (n=73), with the final sample who was evaluated by the rater (n=62). A set of independent sample t-tests showed that there is no difference between these two groups in terms of gender, age, or race (details available upon request).

would offer the candidate the job. She was blind to the study hypotheses as well as the level of

candidates' self-verification striving. After she completed her ratings, candidates with the highest

interview evaluations (the 8 of 62 candidates who scored 5 on the 5-point hiring likelihood

measure) received the £10 bonus. We transcribed each interview to analyze using the LIWC

(Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count) text analysis program (Pennebaker et al., 2007), which

produced a set of variables to measure candidates' *objective language use*.

Measures

Unless otherwise indicated, response scales ranged from 1=*strongly disagree* to

7=*strongly agree.*

Self-verification striving. One week prior to the mock interview, candidates reported

their self-verification striving using the same measure as Studies 1-2 (α=.95). The final sample

included 35 low self-verifiers (*M*=3.22, *SD*=0.80) and 27 high self-verifiers (*M*=6.42, *SD*=0.23).

Perceived inauthenticity. Rater perceptions of candidates' inauthenticity were reported

using a seven-item measure developed by Leroy and Mor (2015) to tap others' perceptions of a

target's inauthenticity, adapting the items to refer to "candidates". Sample items include: "This

candidate plays a role rather than show his/her true self"; and "This candidate does not seem to

say what he or she really thinks" (α=.99).

Perceived misrepresentation. Consistent with the idea that misrepresentation can be both

active (presenting falsehoods) or omissive (concealing truth), we measured two forms of

potential misrepresentation using subscales of Levashina & Campion's (2007) Interview Faking

Behavior Scale. We used 5 items to measure *active misrepresentation*, the rater's perception that

the candidate was inventing skills or experiences during the interview (α=.98, sample items:

"The candidate claimed that he/she has skills that he/she does not have"; "The candidate told

some 'little white lies' in the interview"). We used 7 items to measure *omissive representation*,

the rater's perception that the candidate was omitting pieces of information or masking her true

nature during the interview (α=.94, sample items: "The candidate tried to avoid discussing

his/her lack of skills or experiences"; "The candidate tried not to show his/her true personality").

    Job offer likelihood. The rater indicated how likely it was that she would hire the

candidate for the job (1=*very unlikely* to 5=*very likely*).

    Objective language use. The LIWC 2007 program (Pennebaker et al., 2007) processes

the content of text files, and matches the content of the file to a set of 4,500 words and word

stems representing 76 word categories. These categories include linguistic dimensions

(pronouns, auxiliary verbs), paralinguistic dimensions (assents, filler words), punctuation

(commas) or psychological constructs (affect, cognition). After accounting for all words in a

given text, LIWC computes *the percentage of words in the text that belong to each category*.

Categories are also subdivided, so that the word "happy" is included in the dictionary category

for "affective processes" as well as in the subcategory of those words that tap "positive

emotion". For example, if a participant's interview script has a total word count of 1,000 and

included 20 words that tap affective processes, 15 of which are positive, the participant would

have a rating of 2.00(%) for affective processes and 1.50(%) for positive emotion. Thus, our

language use variables reflect the percentage of each candidate's interview text that represents a

given category from the LIWC 2007 Dictionary.

    Function words. We use the percentage of a candidate's spoken words that are function

words to measure a speaker's overall linguistic style. Function words reflect *how* people are

communicating, rather than *what* they are saying (Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). For example,

when asked if they would be a good fit for the position, a candidate can answer in several ways.

She might say, as Participant 59 did in this study, "I think working with people is definitely one

of the biggest parts that I'm attracted to, being a manager and being able to not only work with

customers of a restaurant but also working with the teams and being able to create a really great

dynamic of a restaurant." Alternatively, she could say, as Participant 30 did, "Yes, I do. I've got

high interest in the restaurant industry. I think that my high organizational ability will bring a lot

to this restaurant." The first response is more fluid, involves greater detail, and sounds more

engaged. The second response seems more terse, less fluent, and less sophisticated. These styles

reflect differences in function words: 61% of the words in the first response are function words,

compared to 48% in the second. Function words represent about half the words we actually use,

so the percentage of candidates' language use comprised of function words during their job

interviews is corresponsingly high (in this sample, M=61.55%, SD=2.40%, Min=55.35%,

Max=66.42%).

    Self-knowledge. We examined whether individuals who strive to self-verify use more

insight and *causal* words, as well as more *conjunction* words that connect thoughts together, and

a greater use of words that tap *seeing* or perception (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse, & Cai,

2004; Human, Biesanz, Finseth, Pierce, & Le, 2014; Pennebaker & King, 1999). One would

expect individuals to use more words from these categories if, during a conversation such as a

job interview, they are communicating their true nature. Sample insight words include "think",

"feel", and "sense" (M=3.17%, SD=1.15%, Min=1.20%, Max=5.87%); sample causal words

include "depend", "imply", and "lead" (M=1.71%, SD=0.93%, Min=0.00%, Max=5.10%);

sample conjunction words include "because", "so", and "nevertheless" (M=9.07%, SD=1.67%,

Min=5.72%, Max=13.49%); sample seeing words include "see", "view", and "look" (M=0.24%,

SD=0.30%, Min=0.00%, Max=1.53%).

Results and Discussion

The first aim of this study (Hypothesis 2) was to explore whether candidates' language use varied as a function of the extent to which they were a "high" versus a "low" self-verifier. Given the exploratory nature of this study and the relatively small sample, we used a cutoff of $p<.10$ to identify differences worthy of further investigation. Offering preliminary support to several aspects of Hypothesis 2, t-test results revealed that, even using a small sample of candidates, high self-verifiers used more *function* words, $t(60)=1.73$, $p=.089$, more *conjunctions*, $t(60)=2.12$, $p=.038$, and more *seeing* words, $t(60)=2.01$, $p=.049$, than low self-verifiers. High self-verifiers did not use significantly more *insight* words or *causal* words than low self-verifiers, though the mean differences did trend in the hypothesized direction (see Table 5).

Exploring how self-verification striving relates to so many aspects of candidates' language use runs the risk of capitalizing on chance. This issue is less problematic if the aspects of candidates' language use that correlate with self-verification striving also correlate significantly with rater perceptions. Thus, the second aim of this study (Hypothesis 3) was to determine whether the aspects of candidates' language use that differ as a function of self-verification striving also correlate significantly with rater perceptions of the candidate. Hypothesis 3 predicted that the aspects of candidates' language use that differ as a function of self-verification striving (*function* words, *conjunctions*, and *seeing* words) would correlate with rater perceptions of the candidate as less inauthentic and less misrepresentative. Table 6 presents these zero-order correlations. In line with our theorizing and supporting several aspects of Hypothesis 3, the rater perceived candidates who used more *function* words as less *inauthentic* ($r=-.31$, $p=.013$) and as engaging in less *active misrepresentation* ($r=-.22$, $p=.081$). In addition, the rater also perceived candidates who used more *seeing* words as less *inauthentic* ($r=-.24$,

p=.064) as well as engaging in less *omissive misrepresentation* (*r*=-.27, *p*=.035). There were no

significant relationships between *conjunction* words and rater perceptions.

------Insert Tables 5 and 6 about here------

These two sets of results provide initial evidence that two aspects of job candidates'

language use (*function* words and *seeing* words) represent potential behavioral pathways from

self-verification striving to rater perceptions (perceived *inauthenticity*, *active misrepresentation*,

and *omissive misrepresentation*), and ultimately, to higher chances of receiving job offers.

Hypothesis 4 predicts this dual-mediator causal model in broad form, and the results from our

Hypotheses 2 and 3 tests lead to four possible dual-mediator models to test. We report on the

results of each of these tests in turn.

The first model suggested by the Hypotheses 2 and 3 tests is that candidates high in self-

verification striving (X), through their use of function words (M1), would be perceived as less

inauthentic (M2), ultimately leading to increased job offers (Y). We first ran a model to

determine whether there was a significant indirect effect from X→M1→M2. Using MODEL 4 of

the macro PROCESS (Hayes, 2013), with 5,000 bootstrap samples, we found that high (vs. low)

self-verification strivers were perceived as less inauthentic by the external rater through the

candidate's use of function words: ("X→M1→M2*"* = -0.26, 95% CI = -0.845 to -0.002, see

Table 7). Preacher and Kelley (2011) recommend using Kappa-squared as an effect size measure

for indirect effects. It represents the proportion of the maximum possible indirect effect that

could have occurred, and follows Cohen's (1988) guidelines that define .01, .09 and .25

respectively as small, medium and large effect sizes. The κ^2 for this indirect effect is .069. Then,

using MODEL 6 (with 5,000 bootstrap samples), we tested the complete dual-mediator model

predicted by Hypothesis 4. We found a significant indirect effect linking self-verification striving

to the likelihood of a job offer through candidates' greater use of function words, which lessened

the rater's perceptions of their inauthenticity ("X→M1→M2→Y" = 0.12, 95% CI=0.001 to

0.413).

------Insert Table 7 about here------

We repeated these steps for the other three models suggested by the results of Hypotheses

2 and 3. The second model predicts that candidates high in self-verification striving (X), through

their use of function words (M1), would be perceived as less actively misrepresentative (M2),

ultimately leading to increased job offers (Y). In this case, we found no support for either the

indirect effect of self-verification striving on active misrepresentation through the use of function

words: ("X→M1→M2" = -0.20, 95% CI = -0.791 to 0.007, κ^2 = .052), or for the complete dual-

mediator ("X→M1→M2→Y" = .06, 95% CI = -0.001 to 0.278).

The third model predicts that candidates high in self-verification striving (X), through

their use of seeing words (M1), would be perceived as less inauthentic (M2), ultimately leading

to increased job offers (Y). We found evidence for both the simple indirect effect

("X→M1→M2" = -0.22, 95% CI = -0.662 to -0.021, κ^2 = .058), as well as the complete dual-

mediator model ("X→M1→M2→Y" = 0.10, 95% CI=0.008 to 0.286). Finally, the fourth model

predicts that candidates high in self-verification striving (X), through their use of seeing words

(M1), would be perceived as less omissively misrepresentative (M2), ultimately leading to

increased job offers (Y). Again, we found evidence for the simple indirect effect

("X→M1→M2" = -0.24, 95% CI = -0.687 to -0.013, κ^2 =.063), as well as for the complete dual-

mediator model ("X→M1→M2→Y" = 0.09, 95% CI=0.006 to 0.264).[4] As a quasi-experimental

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[4] We tested whether increasing the number of bootstrap samples normalized the width of the confidence intervals for these indirect effects. The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of self-verification striving

study, these models all use the categorical variable indicating high (vs. low) self-verifiers as the independent variable, but we note that all the models replicate using the continuous (bimodally distributed) variable for self-verification striving.

General Discussion

Individuals on the job market often are confronted with a dilemma about how much of their true selves to reveal. Presenting an authentic version of oneself supports the human drive to self-verify (Swann, 1983; Swann et al., 1992) but has the potential to expose idiosyncrasies or shortcomings that trigger negative reactions from interviewers. In other words, presenting oneself authentically can be a liability, especially because the interview context motivates many candidates to present idealized versions of who they are (Barrick et al., 2009). These self-presentations can range from truthfully putting one's best foot forward to misrepresenting one's interests and experiences (Levashina & Campion, 2006; Macan, 2009; Weiss & Feldman, 2006).

We proposed that self-verification striving may help differentiate candidates who have been evaluated as high-quality, thus improving their chances of landing job offers. In two very different field studies, we confirmed that applicants who had been rated as high quality by the organization were significantly more likely to receive job offers if they were also high in self-verification striving. Study 1 tested this relationship in an organization that recruits teachers from around the world into U.S. schools. Study 2 confirmed the result in a more competitive selection process of a legal job with the U.S. military. Across these different organizational contexts,

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on inauthenticity via function words, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples, was -0.857 to -0.002; the 95% CI, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples, for the model that extended this indirect effect to predict job offers was 0.003 to 0.401. The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of self-verification striving on inauthenticity via seeing words, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples, was -0.645 to -0.014; the 95% CI, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples, for the model that extended this indirect effect to predict job offers was 0.008 to 0.276. The bias-corrected 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect of self-verification striving on omissive misrepresentation via seeing words, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples was -0.670 to -0.012; the 95% CI, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples, for the model that extended this indirect effect to predict job offers was 0.006 to 0.274.

results suggest that the desire to self-verify affects whether strong candidates receive the offer—

even though it plays no official part in the selection process of either organization.

Moreover, results revealed that the practical effects of self-verification striving were

substantial—for those evaluated by the organization as being in the top decile of candidates. In

Study 1, moving from the 25th to the 75th percentile in terms of self-verification striving

increased the likelihood of receiving a job offer by 11% for candidates in the 90th percentile of

quality. In Study 2, which used data from a more selective organization, moving from the 25th to

the 75th percentile in terms of self-verification striving *tripled* the chances that a top decile

candidate received an offer. However, as valuable as self-verification is for high-quality

candidates, it can be dangerous for low-quality ones. In the sample of international teachers, the

lowest decile of candidates in terms of quality *decreased* their likelihood that they could receive

a placement by 6% when moving from the 25th to the 75th percentile in self-verification striving.

We then developed theory regarding how candidates' self-verification striving causes this

effect, and conducted a third, quasi-experimental study in which we pre-selected participants

with high (top 15%) and low (bottom 15%) levels of self-verification striving and had them

complete a mock interview in a hiring simulation. Results supported hypotheses predicting that

self-verification striving was associated with several aspects of candidates' language use, which

in turn led to rater's perceptions of highly self-verifying candidates as less inauthentic and less

misrepresentative, ultimately influencing the likelihood that they would offer these candidates a

job. Specifically, high self-verifiers used more function words and more "seeing" words than

their low self-verifying counterparts, which decreased the rater's perceptions of the candidate's

inauthenticity. High self-verifiers' use of "seeing" words also lessened the rater's perceptions of

the extent to which they perceived the candidate to be engaging in omissive misrepresentation.

Each of these indirect effects also predicted the likelihood that the rater would offer the candidate a job. Overall, these results suggest that self-verification striving manifests in candidates' language use during job interviews in ways that have a meaningful effect on raters' perceptions of candidates and ultimately their chances of landing jobs.

Theoretical Contributions

Our primary contribution is to the literature on self-verification in organizational contexts, specifically in the job search process. Our findings suggest that high-quality candidates can use self-verification to differentiate themselves and secure job offers, particularly for the highest-quality candidates with the strongest drives to self-verify. Our theory and results regarding individuals' drive to self-verify provide a useful balance to the overriding messages from the employment interview literature, which has been dominated by self-enhancement as the prevalent theoretical lens (e.g., Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Higgins & Judge, 2004). Thus, one important contribution of our research is demonstrating that self-verification theory provides a new conceptual perspective about effective job search.

Our research also contributes to our understanding of *how* self-verification works on the job market. The lone previous study that explored on self-verification during organizational entry (Cable & Kay, 2012) focused on how it unfolds over one to two years following organizational entry and used job offers only as a control variable. We demonstrate that self-verification striving is beneficial for the subset of individuals who are considered the highest-quaity applicants for a position. In this way, we extend our understanding of self-verification in organizational contexts by showing how it can have benefits even in extremely short-term interactions (i.e., less than 90 minutes; Ryan & Sackett, 1989), with important implications for both individuals and organizations over a much longer term. We note that the indirect pathways

that we found linking self-verification striving to job offer likelihoods functioned via the effect

of high self-verifiers' language use on the rater's perception of the candidate as less inauthentic

and less misrepresentative.

Importantly, these indirect links only functioned via prrceptions of inauthenticity and

omissive misrepresentation, not *active* misrepresentation. Given ommissive misrepresentation

taps the extent to which candidates hid or obscured their true natures rather than invented facts to

secure more positive impressions from raters, these findings are consistent with the idea that

what high self-verifiers will communicate about themselves in a way that does not obscure who

they are. Theoretically, active misrepresentation is a more distal manifestation of self-

verification striving, which could explain why we did not find support for indirect links through

this pathway.

Our findings also may shed some light on extant findings about the positive effects of

self-verification in on-going relationships. Researchers have emphasized the self-disclosure and

predictability of self-verifying team members as key mechanisms to explain the effects of self-

verification on trust among team members, as well as on group identification, relationship

quality, cohesion, and performance (Burke & Stets, 1999; North & Swann, 2009; Swann, Kwan,

et al., 2003; Swann et al., 2000). Our research suggests that others' perceptions of a candidate as

authentic – also known to predict the formation of trust and liking (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa,

Luthans, & May, 2004; Kovács, Carroll, & Lehman, 2013; Luthans, Norman, & Hughes, 2006) –

may also help explain the positive relationship between self-verification and the quality of group

and individual interactions. Together, these results help build theoretical linkages between self-

verification striving and important organizational processes and outcomes.

Our second contribution is to the literature on authenticity. Our results showed that the language use of candidates with a strong drive to self-verify led an independent judge to to perceive them as less inauthentic. Although self-verification has been sometimes discussed in terms of authenticity (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994; Swann & Pelham, 2002) and is understood as the desire to present one's authentic self to others (Chen, English, & Peng, 2006), our research, is the first to provide direct evidence linking self-verification striving and perceived authenticity. The finding that this relationship is mediated by how individuals communicate about themselves to others opens new avenues for theorizing about behavioral differences in self-verification striving and could spark new research on authenticity displays.

Our results suggest that self-verification striving is not perceived directly by raters. Rather, it is perceived via its behavioral manifestations – in this case, through language use in the interview context. It can be difficult to perceive an underlying drive directly. As trait-visibility theory notes (John & Robins, 1993), whether individual differences are perceived by others depends on how observable they are. Our results clearly indicate that self-verification striving is difficult to observe directly; nevertheless, it does affect raters (and ultimately job offers), through the way it manifests behaviorally in the interview context. This finding is consistent with research documenting that raters can perceive targets' authentic self-*expression* (behaving in a consistent manner), but not their authentic self-*awareness* (knowing and understanding oneself) (Knoll, Meyer, Kroemer, & Schröder-Abé, 2015; Leroy, Gill, Nguyen, & Atkins, 2014). Our results support this emerging evidence that authenticity is difficult to perceive directly, but is nevertheless important to outcomes. It is also consistent with advances in theory about meditational processes, which stress that focusing on direct effects as a prerequisite to indirect

effects "is unjustified and can impair theory development and testing" (Rucker, Preacher, Tormala, & Petty, 2011, p. 359).

The third contribution of this paper is to add understanding about how misrepresentative impression management practices can backfire in the effort to succeed on the job market (Kristof-Brown, Barrick, & Franke, 2002; Macan, 2009). Certainly, candidates endeavour to manage their impressions on the job market, and it is in their best interest to do so (Barrick et al., 2009; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989). However, the studies that demonstrate positive effects of impression management have measured its sincere forms (e.g., putting your best foot forward) rather than deceitful forms (e.g., Barrick et al., 2009). While some researchers have questioned the ultimate benefit of impression management tactics during the job search process (Bangerter et al., 2012), little empirical evidence has demonstrated that more authentic ways of interacting might be effective – even in the job search context.

Practical Implications

The primary implication of our paper is that, for top applicants, authentic self-presentation increases the chances of getting a job. This is good news for those who prefer to operate in an authentic way and present themselves accurately to others, *so long as* they are viewed as strong candidates by the organization. This evidence suggests that recruiters may have a taste for authenticity – at least as it manifests in self-verifying behaviors – when it comes to deciding amongst a set of strong contenders. Given that self-verification striving appears to make both employers and employees more successful in the long run (Cable & Kay, 2012), increasing self-verification in the job market could drive important changes in how we find work and hire employees. This issue may become increasingly important, as new generations may feel a greater desire to find meaningful work where they can be themselves (Twenge, 2006).

However, our results also suggest that while strong applicants may use self-verification striving as a positive differentiator on the job market, lower-quality candidates will disadvantage themselves if they strive to self-verify. If securing a specific job offer is one's highest priority, lower-quality candidates may be able to protect themselves by being more cautious about revealing their true selves. Yet over the longer term, a poor-fitting applicant who presents himself inauthentically in order to acquire a job will likely perform poorly, be less satisfied, and more likely to leave (Cable & Kay, 2012; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). Thus, if the ultimate goal is to not only land a job but find a situation where one fits, it might be better for both higher- *and* lower-quality applicants to self-verify during the job search process.

The job search process is a complex social situation that mimics many elements of a prisoner's dilemma. There are significant short-term incentives for both sides to deceive. Thus, recruiters often exaggerate the positive qualities of the job or organization in order to attract higher-quality applicants, even though in the long run recruiters make better hires if they provide realistic previews (Premack & Wanous, 1985). Similarly, the short-term gains of landing a job create a powerful incentive for job applicants to be dishonest and fake (Midjord, 2012), even though newcomers perform best in the long run when they have been clear about their values and idiosyncrasies (Cable & Kay, 2012; Kristof, 1996). However, both recruiters and applicants are better off in the long run if they are candid and forthcoming—recruiters about the characteristics of the job, and applicants about their interests and abilities. Thus, self-verification in the job search process may ultimately improve long-term labor market efficiency (Salop & Salop, 1976), because it helps sort people into the best places for them.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Although we offered a first look at how the level of candidate self-verification striving reveals itself in terms of how candidates communicate and behave in the interview, it would be useful for future research to identify more subtle behavioral manifestations of self-verification striving, such as how it might affect body language, facial expressions, or interpersonal rapport. In addition, though we are able to show that self-verification striving does influence how candidates communicate in job interviews, we were not able to determine whether candidates reveal more or less "good" or "bad" information about themselves as a function of self-verification striving, nor whether the information actually *is* a reflection of their true selves. This is a worthwhile endeavor for future research.

Another limitation is that we used one scale to measure self-verification striving across our studies. Although this paper offers several additional pieces of construct validation, it remains a relatively new measure for which validity evidence is still accruing. In addition, some of the items in the self-verification striving measure are double-barreled, and involve more complexity than best practice in scale development recommends (Hinkin, 1998). To the extent that the measure we use in this paper is not ideal, it should mean our tests are conservative, because a weak measure should attenuate the strength of the results. However, it also means it is worth considering whether there may be more direct or simple ways to tap an individual's drive to self-verify in future research.

Future research also may reveal that interviewers have other positive perceptions of candidates who strive to self-verify. For example, research has shown that high self-verification striving reduces anxiety and fosters self-stability (Ayduk et al., 2013; North & Swann, 2009; Swann et al., 2009), and that behaving contrary to one's true self leads to burnout and depression

through emotional labor (Morris & Feldman, 1996). Logically, then, highly self-verifying candidates should be perceived as less anxious and more confident and comfortable with themselves, which may also lead to interviewers' positive evaluations and job outcomes.

Lastly, our theory would be enriched by exploring other potential moderators of the effect of self-verification striving on job outcomes. Our results suggest that the benefits of self-verification may have a "tipping point" which may differ depending on the environment. The best outcomes accrue for individuals who are both highly self-verifying and in the top decile of candidates as evaluated by the recruiting organization. However, our results also suggest that self-verification may be more helpful to high-quality applicants in more selective organizational environments. In Legal Corps, where applicants had a 10% chance of receiving an offer, high-quality applicants got a larger boost in their predicted probability of landing a job offer as a function of their self-verification striving compared to the sample of teachers, where one in three applicants received a placement. Accordingly, the absolute effect sizes were smaller in Study 1 than Study 2, pointing to selectivity as a potential moderator of our self-verification effects.

Another possible moderator may be the extent to which the organization itself values self-verifying behavior. According to research on identity negotiation (Swann, 1987; Swann, 2005; Swann et al., 2009), and person-environment fit (Cable & Judge, 1997; Kristof, 1996), organizations and job candidates try to match their values and identities. Conceptually, self-verifying behaviors should help top job candidates who locate an organization that shares their values. Moreover, the importance of finding candidates with congruent identities and values may also be heightened in organizations with idiosyncratic identities. As a result, self-verifying might offer a larger advantage to candidates who have applied for jobs at organizations whose cultures and values are both very idiosyncratic, and a good match to their own.

Conclusion

When there are many high-quality applicants for the same job, candidates need to stand out from their competition, and recruiters need to find ways to differentiate amongst them. Our research suggests that top candidates who strive to self-verify significantly increase the likelihood that they will receive a job offer. These results emerge, in part, due to different behaviors and linguistic signatures that high (vs. low) self-verifying candidates exhibit during the interview process, which are picked up and rewarded by interviewers. For high-quality candidates, the best way of landing the offer may be to be oneself.

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Tables

Table 1.

Study 1: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Relevant Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender (men=1)	0.33	0.47	–						
2. Race (white=1)	0.30	0.46	-.09**	–					
3. Age	39.51	8.98	.09**	.00	–				
4. International exchange experience (presence=1)	0.06	0.23	.04	.06*	.11**	–			
5. Job placement (offer=1)	0.41	0.49	-.05	.01	-.11**	.10**	–		
6. Interviewer evaluations	2.09	0.46	-.14**	.15**	.03	.16**	.29**	(.75)	
7. Self-verification striving	5.88	0.67	.07*	-.26**	.02	-.08**	.00	-.05	(.88)

Note. N=1,240. Where appropriate, alpha reliabilities are shown on the diagonal in parentheses. Two-tailed.

* $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$.

Table 2.

Study 1: Hierarchical Logistic Regression Analysis of the Moderating Effect of Self-Verification on the Likelihood of Receiving a Job Placement, as a Function of Interviewer Evaluations

Variables	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	b	SE	Exp (b)	95% lower	95% upper	b	SE	Exp (b)	95% lower	95% upper	b	SE	Exp (b)	95% lower	95% upper
Constant	0.71**	0.27	2.03			0.82**	0.29	2.28			0.83**	0.29	2.30		
Gender (men=1)	-0.20	0.13	0.82	0.64	1.05	-0.02	0.13	0.98	0.75	1.27	-0.04	0.14	0.97	0.74	1.26
Race (white=1)	-0.00	0.13	1.00	0.78	1.29	-0.17	0.14	0.85	0.64	1.12	-0.14	0.14	0.87	0.66	1.14
Age	-0.03**	0.01	0.97	0.96	0.99	-0.03**	0.01	0.97	0.96	0.98	-0.03**	0.01	0.97	0.96	0.98
International exchange experience (presence=1)	1.04*	0.26	2.82	1.70	4.67	0.65*	0.27	1.92	1.14	3.24	0.68*	0.27	1.98	1.17	3.34
Interviewer evaluations (IE)						1.58**	0.17	4.86	3.49	6.78	1.57**	0.17	4.79	3.41	6.73
Self-verification striving (SV)						0.05	0.10	1.05	0.88	1.27	-0.02	0.10	0.98	0.81	1.19
IE × SV											0.91**	0.27	2.49	1.45	4.26
Model χ^2 (df)	32.72 (4)**					140.40 (6)**					151.64 (7)**				
Model $\Delta\chi^2$ (df)						107.68 (2)**					11.25 (1)**				

Note. N=1,240. An odds ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a positive relationship with job offer, an odds ratio of 1.0 indicates a null relationship, and an odds ratio less than 1.0 indicates a negative relationship. b=log odds; Exp(b)=odds ratio; 95% lower=lower limit of 95% confidence interval for odds ratio; 95% upper=upper limit of 95% confidence interval for odds ratio.
* $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$.

Table 3.

Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations for Relevant Variables

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender (men=1)	0.68	0.47	–											
2. Race (white=1)	0.80	0.40	.12*	–										
3. Age	26.49	3.37	.19**	.04	–									
4. College status	3.73	0.71	.04	-.07	-.11	–								
5. College GPA	3.45	0.35	-.10	.14*	-.22**	-.11	–							
6. Law school rank	80.22	50.83	-.07	.06	-.02	-.21**	-.24**	–						
7. Law school GPA	3.15	0.38	.10	.17**	.00	.05	.20**	-.22**	–					
8. LSAT percentile	72.64	19.89	.12*	.20**	.01	.20**	.17**	-.64**	.40**	–				
9. Legal experience	2.26	2.15	-.02	-.07	.21**	.02	-.08	-.07	-.11	-.02	–			
10. Job offer (offer=1)	0.11	0.31	-.08	.03	.03	.21**	.03	-.17**	.21**	.22**	-.03	–		
11. Interviewer evaluations	3.24	0.67	.02	.00	.07	.06	-.01	-.16**	.14**	.16**	.04	.33**	(.82)	
12. Self-verification striving	5.54	0.65	-.09	.02	.04	.01	.02	.00	.05	-.02	-.06	-.01	.01	(.76)

Note. N=305-333 due to missing data in some cells. Where appropriate, alpha reliabilities are shown on the diagonal in parentheses.

* $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$.

Table 4.

Study 2: Hierarchical Logistic Regression Analysis of the Moderating Effect of Self-Verification on the Likelihood of Receiving a Job Offer, as a Function of Interviewers' Evaluations

Variables	Step 1					Step 2					Step 3				
	b	SE	Exp (b)	95% lower	95% upper	b	SE	Exp (b)	95% lower	95% upper	b	SE	Exp (b)	95% lower	95% upper
Constant	-17.11**	4.86	0.00			-19.81**	5.82	0.00			-23.27**	6.80	0.00		
Gender (men=1)	-1.07*	0.47	0.34	0.14	0.87	-1.38*	0.55	0.25	0.09	0.74	-1.60**	0.59	0.20	0.06	0.64
Race (white=1)	-0.27	0.60	0.76	0.24	2.47	-0.18	0.65	0.83	0.23	3.00	0.21	0.72	1.23	0.30	4.99
Age	0.13	0.07	1.13	1.00	1.29	0.14	0.08	1.15	0.99	1.33	0.16*	0.08	1.18	1.01	1.38
College rank score	0.84*	0.34	2.32	1.19	4.52	0.95*	0.38	2.58	1.22	5.44	1.34**	0.44	3.80	1.62	8.91
College GPA	-0.40	0.71	0.67	0.17	2.69	-0.05	0.82	0.95	0.19	4.73	-0.12	0.91	0.89	0.15	5.29
Law school rank	-0.00	0.01	1.00	0.98	1.01	-0.00	0.01	1.00	0.98	1.01	-0.00	0.01	1.00	0.98	1.02
Law school GPA	2.55**	0.89	12.82	2.26	72.82	2.55*	0.99	12.83	1.86	88.55	2.56*	1.06	12.88	1.61	102.75
LSAT percentile	0.03	0.02	1.03	0.99	1.08	0.03	0.03	1.03	0.99	1.09	0.04	0.03	1.05	0.99	1.10
Legal experience	-0.14	0.13	0.87	0.67	1.13	-0.18	0.15	0.83	0.62	1.11	-0.21	0.16	0.81	0.60	1.11
Interviewer evaluations (IE)						2.19**	0.50	8.92	3.36	23.69	2.54**	0.58	12.69	4.11	39.19
Self-verification striving (SV)						0.03	0.40	1.03	0.47	2.22	-1.17*	0.51	0.31	0.12	0.83
IE × SV											2.74**	0.85	15.55	2.97	81.59
Model χ^2 (df)	41.81 (9)**					67.68 (11)**					79.38 (12)**				
Model $\Delta\chi^2$ (df)						25.88 (2)**					11.70 (1)**				

Note. N=333. An odds ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a positive relationship with job offer, an odds ratio of 1.0 indicates a null relationship, and an odds ratio less than 1.0 indicates a negative relationship. b=log odds; Exp(b)=odds ratio; 95% lower and 95% upper represent the limits of the 95% confidence interval for the odds ratio.
* $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$.

Table 5.

Study 2: T-tests Comparing Differences in Candidates' Language Use as a Function of Self-Verification Striving

	High self-verification striving		Low self-verification striving			
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*
Function words (%)	62.14	2.20	61.09	2.49	1.73	.089
Insight words (%)	3.35	1.04	3.04	1.23	1.03	.306
Causal words (%)	1.78	1.03	1.66	0.86	0.49	.627
Conjunction words (%)	9.57	1.56	8.69	1.68	2.12	.038
Seeing words (%)	0.32	0.39	0.17	0.20	2.01	.049

Note. N=62.

Table 6.

Study 3: Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Candidate-reported											
1. Gender (1=men)	0.34	0.48									
2. Age	26.58	6.91	.13								
3. Self-verification striving (1=high, 0=low)	0.44	0.50	-.01	.32*							
LIWC analyses											
<u>Linguistic style</u>											
4. Function words (%)	61.55	2.40	-.16	-.15	.22†						
<u>Self-knowledge</u>											
5. Conjunctions (%)	9.07	1.67	-.17	-.13	.26*	.38**					
6. Seeing words (%)	0.24	0.30	.04	.33*	.25*	-.08	-.12				
Rater perceptions											
7. Perceived inauthenticity	2.38	1.87	.20	-.08	-.07	-.31*	-.08	-.24†	(.99)		
8. Perceived active misrepresentation	2.53	2.00	.18	.12	.02	-.22†	-.08	-.09	.87**	(.98)	
9. Perceived omissive misrepresentation	3.72	1.90	.04	-.14	-.11	-.11	.14	-.27*	.67**	.55**	(.94)
10. Job offer likelihood	3.15	1.28	-.08	.16	.13	.15	-.16	.21	-.66**	-.48**	-.56**

Note. N=62 except for age, which 3 participants declined to provide. Where appropriate, alpha reliabilities are shown on the diagonal in parentheses.

†*p*<.10. **p*<.05. ***p*<.01.

Table 7.

Study 3: Model Summaries for Models Predicting Job Offer Likelihoods from Self-Verification Striving via Candidate Language Use and Rater Perceptions

	M1 (function words)			M2 (inauthenticity)			Y (job offer likelihood)		
	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*
Constant	61.09	0.40	.000	17.43	6.04	.006	7.03	3.48	.048
X (high SVS=1)	1.05	0.61	.089	0.00	0.47	.994	0.27	0.26	.303
M1 (function words)				-0.24	0.10	.016	-0.05	0.06	.404
M2 (inauthenticity)							-0.46	0.07	.000
						95% CI			
Indirect X→M1→M2				-.26	.20	-.845 to -.002			
									95% CI
Indirect X→M1→M2→Y							.12	.10	.001 to .413

	M1 (function words)			M2 (active misrepresentation)			Y (job offer likelihood)		
	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*
Constant	61.09	0.40	.000	14.61	6.61	.031	3.48	3.94	.381
X (high SVS=1)	1.05	0.61	.089	0.27	0.52	.601	0.35	0.30	.248
M1 (function words)				-0.20	0.11	.072	0.00	0.06	.941
M2 (active misrepresentation)							-0.31	0.07	.000
						95% CI			
Indirect X→M1→M2				-.20	.20	-.791 to .007			
									95% CI
Indirect X→M1→M2→Y							.06	.07	-.001 to .278

	M1 (seeing words)			M2 (inauthenticity)			Y (job offer likelihood)		
	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*
Constant	0.17	0.05	.001	2.74	0.34	.000	4.07	0.26	.000
X (high SVS=1)	0.15	0.08	.049	-0.03	0.49	.949	0.20	0.26	.445
M1 (seeing words)				-1.44	0.81	.078	0.15	0.45	.733
M2 (inauthenticity)							-0.44	0.07	.000
						95% CI			
Indirect X→M1→M2				-.22	.15	-.662 to -.021			
									95% CI
Indirect X→M1→M2→Y							.10	.06	.008 to .286

	M1 (seeing words)			M2 (omissive misrepresentation)			Y (job offer likelihood)		
	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*	Coeff	*SE*	*p*
Constant	0.17	0.05	.001	4.18	0.34	.000	4.40	0.37	.000
X (high SVS=1)	0.15	0.08	.049	-0.19	0.49	.700	0.14	0.29	.616
M1 (seeing words)				-1.60	0.81	.053	0.20	0.49	.683
M2 (omissive misrepresentation)							-0.37	0.08	.000
						95% CI			
Indirect X→M1→M2				-.24	.16	-.687 to -.013			
									95% CI
Indirect X→M1→M2→Y							.09	.06	.006 to .264

Note. N=62. X→M1→M2 models used PROCESS model 4 with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

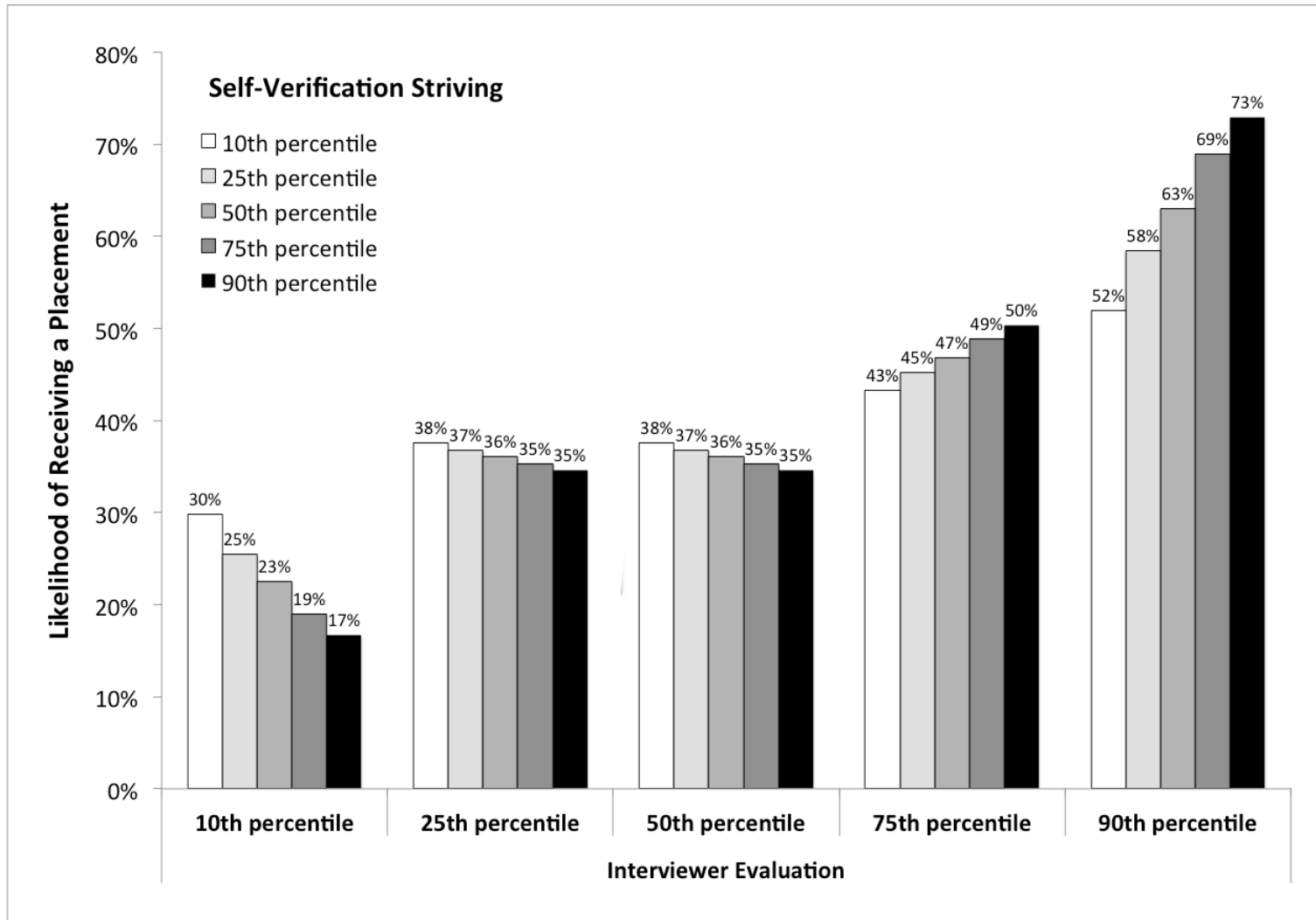X→M1→M2→Y models used PROCESS model 6 with 5,000 bootstrap samples.

Figures

Figure 1. Study 1: Predicted probabilities of receiving a job placement at different levels of interviewer evaluations and self-verification striving, holding control variables at their mean
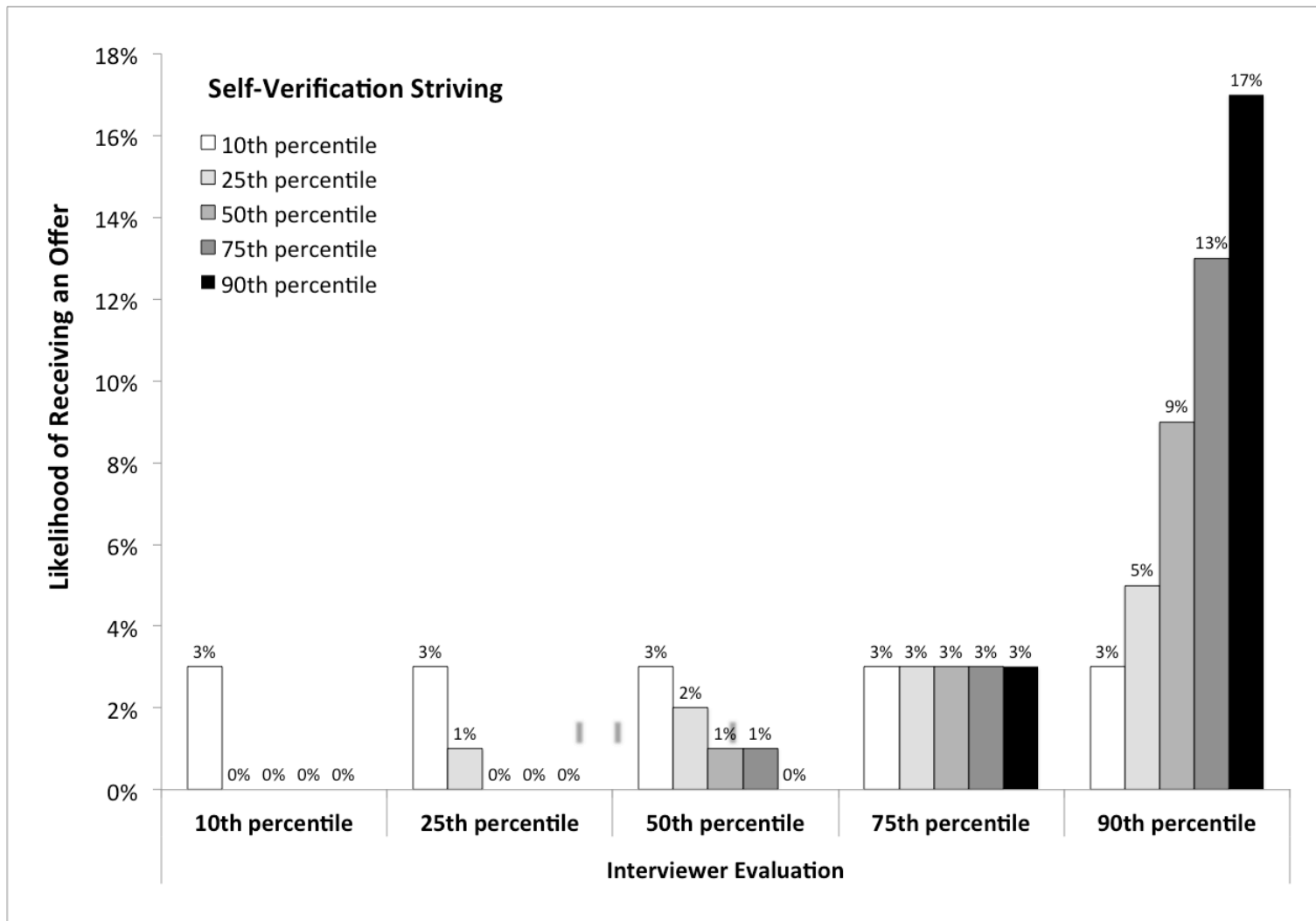
Figure 2. Study 2: Predicted probabilities of receiving a job placement at different levels of interviewer evaluations and self-verification striving, holding control variables at their mean.

Appendix A. Self-Verification Striving Measure (from Cable & Kay, 2012)

1. It's worth it to be truthful with others about my habits and personality so that they know what they expect from me.
2. For me it's better to be honest about myself when meeting new people, even if it makes me appear less than ideal.
3. It's important for an employer to see me as I see myself, even if it means bringing people to recognize my limitations.
4. When interviewing for a job, I try to be honest about my personality and work style.
5. I like to be myself rather than trying to act like someone I'm not.
6. I'd rather have people know who I really am than have them expect too much out of me.
7. I'd be willing to take a little less pay in order to work with people who know who I am and what to expect from me.
8. When looking for a job, I work hard to find a place where people will accept me for who I am.

Notes. The response scale ranges from 1=*strongly disagree* to 7=*strongly agree*.

Appendix B. Study 4 Interview Protocol

Introductory material read by the participant:
You applied to be a Manager at the restaurant "El Fresco" and today you have an interview for the position. Below you will find information about the company and the job role.

About El Fresco
El Fresco is a highly regarded Italian restaurant in central London. Started by husband and wife William and Marjorie Fresco in 1989, the Fresco family is still highly involved in the restaurant. The restaurant strives to be authentically Italian, serving home-style rustic cooking from the Southern Region of the country. It is consistently highly rated on travel sites like Trip Advisor, for both the authenticity of its cuisine and high quality of its service.

Customer Service Manager – Job Role
The main duties of the restaurant's manager are to maintain high standards of courteous and efficient customer service. The manager is also responsible for supervising and training all servers and kitchen staff in the restaurant. You are about to interview for the Manager role at El Fresco. We want you to do your best in the interview to ensure you are offered the job. We want you to imagine that you have actually applied for this role, and you are actively trying to land this position. Behave as you would during an actual interview for an actual job you are trying to get.

Interviewer Script:
Thank you for coming today to interview for the position of restaurant manager at El Fresco. I have six questions to ask you, and we have 15 minutes together for you to answer them. I want you respond as you would in a real interview. We are videotaping these interviews so that they can be evaluated by an external rater. Your identity will remain completely anonymous, but the top 10% of the rated interviews will receive an additional £10 bonus (via Amazon gift certificate). To keep it fair, I will be asking the same six questions of every participant candidate, and I'm not going to ask you for any more information than you provide as responses for the six questions I will ask you, so be sure to let me know everything you think we will need to know in order to make the decision about whether or not to hire you for the position. Are you ready now? Let's begin.

   1. What do you consider your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a candidate for this position?
   2. Do you think you are a good fit for this position?
   3. What is your relevant experience for this position?
   4. A restaurant manager needs to be both extroverted and conscientious. Are you?
   5. What are your concerns about taking on this type of role?
   6. The restaurant often hires cooks from Italy, and sometimes their English language skills are not well developed. How are your language skills?
   7. Is there anything else that you would like to add before we end the interview?