

How and Why Do Interviewers Try To Make Impressions on Applicants? A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

To remain viable in today's highly competitive business environments, it is crucial for organizations to attract and retain top candidates. Hence, interviewers have the goal not only of identifying promising applicants, but also of representing their organization. Although it has been proposed that interviewers' deliberate signaling behaviors are a key factor for attracting applicants and thus for ensuring organizations' success, no conceptual model about impression management (IM) exists from the viewpoint of the interviewer as separate from the applicant. To develop such a conceptual model on how and why interviewers use IM, our qualitative study elaborates signaling theory in the interview context by identifying the broad range of impressions that interviewers intend to create for applicants, what kinds of signals interviewers deliberately use to create their intended impressions, and what outcomes they pursue. Following a grounded theory approach, multiple raters analyzed in-depth interviews with interviewers and applicants. We also observed actual employment interviews and analyzed memos and image brochures to generate a conceptual model of interviewer IM. Results showed that the spectrum of interviewers' IM intentions goes well beyond what has been proposed in past research. Furthermore, interviewers apply a broad range of IM behaviors, including verbal and nonverbal as well as paraverbal, artifactual, and administrative behaviors. An extensive taxonomy of interviewer IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes is developed, interrelationships between these elements are presented, and avenues for future research are derived.

Keywords: employment interview, impression management, signaling theory, recruitment, qualitative study

How and Why Do Interviewers Try to Make Impressions on Applicants?

A Qualitative Study

The employment interview continues to be the most popular selection tool used by both applicants and organizations to assess and select one another (Macan, 2009). It is characterized by social exchange processes between applicants (who want to get hired) and representatives of the organization (who want to attract and select the best candidates). To reach their goals, applicants and interviewers try to detect what their interaction partner is interested in and try to use this information to send appropriate signals (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012).

Signaling processes in the interview have mainly been studied in terms of impression management (IM) efforts (Delery & Kacmar, 1998). Scholars have repeatedly pointed out that interviewers frequently use IM, and that these deliberate behaviors are a key factor for attracting applicants and thus ensuring an organization's economic success (e.g., Dipboye & Johnson, 2013; Rosenfeld, 1997). However, it is striking that past interview research has rarely addressed the phenomenon of interviewer IM, as most prior studies have limited their focus on how applicants use IM (Koslowsky & Pindek, 2011). Furthermore, research has assumed that interviewers use the same IM behaviors as applicants (e.g., Stevens, Mitchell, & Tripp, 1990) without taking a closer look at what interviewers actually do when they interact with applicants.

We define interviewer IM as interviewers' deliberate attempts to create impressions on applicants (cf. Schlenker, 1980) and argue that it is important to identify and explain interviewer IM. As outlined below, we argue that interviewers' aims and opportunities may be different from those of applicants, and therefore their IM efforts should be somewhat different as well. Furthermore, scholars have noted that signaling theory, which is most often used to explain recruitment phenomena (Bangerter et al., 2012; Spence, 1973), is currently not well-defined and understood in the context of interviewers' IM intentions and behaviors (Celani & Singh, 2011). Thus, to provide a more

comprehensive theoretical understanding of how and why interviewers try to create impressions on applicants, it is crucial to learn more about interviewers' deliberate signaling behaviors as well as their underlying intentions.

Therefore, the aim of the present study is to use a qualitative approach to create a taxonomy and a conceptual model by identifying and analyzing the broad range of possible interviewer IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes. We use this conceptual model to point out propositions for future research on interviewer IM. Drawing on interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), this study sheds light on how interviewer and applicant IM are similar and distinct. Furthermore, our study elaborates signaling theory (Bangerter et al., 2012; Spence, 1973) in the interview context by gaining insights into specific signals that are deliberately used by interviewers, and why these signals are being sent.

Theoretical Background

Signaling Processes in the Interview

The employment interview is a dynamic exchange in which interviewers and applicants engage in social interaction, gather information, and create and form impressions (Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, & Campion, 2014). Consequently, in the last two decades, researchers have increasingly considered both interviewer and applicant perspectives and have given more attention to how applicants and interviewers intentionally adapt their behaviors to pursue their interests (Dipboye, Macan, & Shahani-Denning, 2012).

In employment interviews, applicants have information that is of interest to interviewers but to which interviewers do not necessarily have access (e.g., information about applicants' personality). Similarly, interviewers have information that is of interest to applicants but to which applicants do not necessarily have access (e.g., selection criteria). In situations like this, when two parties have access to dissimilar information, signaling theory (Bangerter et al., 2012; Spence, 1973) is helpful for

describing and explaining behavior. According to this theory, signaling processes consist of several elements, such as two primary actors – the signaler, sender, or insider (e.g., the interviewer), and the receiver or outsider (e.g., the applicant) – as well as the actual signals sent by the signaler to the receiver (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2011). As Connelly et al. (2011) pointed out, the signaler can also take an active part in this signaling process. For instance, interviewers can deliberately choose whether and how to reduce information asymmetry by intentionally communicating (or signaling) certain qualities to applicants who lack this information (Connelly et al., 2011).

In this vein, IM behaviors reflect an intentional way of sending signals (cf. Schlenker, 1980). While interviewers' signals could be anything that is interpreted as a signal by the applicant, interviewer IM refers to signals that are deliberately sent by the interviewer. In other words, interviewer IM relates to a deliberate facet of signaling theory (Bangerter et al., 2012). In addition, it is important to note that any behavior that an interviewer applies could constitute interviewer IM behavior if this behavior is shown with the intention to create impressions on applicants (e.g., asking challenging interview questions not only because they are part of the interview guide but also with the intention to signal the organization's high performance expectations). Conversely, if an interviewer's behavior is not linked with such an intention (e.g., asking challenging interview questions only because they are part of the interview guide), it does not constitute interviewer IM.

Although signaling theory is the framework most often used to explain recruitment phenomena, it is currently not well-defined and understood when it comes to organizational representatives' intentions and deliberate signaling behaviors (Celani & Singh, 2011). To further develop signaling theory, there have been calls to view and study signals within their social context, such as the context of employment interviews. As such, a typology of signals that are sent in certain contexts – like the employment interview – would be of high value to partition these signals into

meaningful categories and thus further understand the signaling phenomenon. In addition, research would benefit from investigating the incentives of signalers, such as the outcomes they want to achieve by using signals (Connelly et al., 2011). Thus, the main focus of this study is on signaling intentions, the signals that interviewers deliberately send through their behavior to create applicant impressions, and the outcomes interviewers want to achieve.

Potential signaling on the side of the interviewer. When organizations try to attract and retain promising applicants, deliberate signals such as interviewer IM behavior have been proposed to be particularly important (Celani & Singh, 2011). Nevertheless, despite extensive calls in the literature to examine how and why interviewers intend to affect applicant impressions (cf., Delery & Kacmar, 1998; Dipboye & Johnson, 2013; Gilmore, Stevens, Harrel-Cook, & Ferris, 1999; Macan, 2009), there have been no systematic attempts to examine the broad range of IM behaviors used by interviewers. However, evidence suggests that interviewers pursue specific goals and that there are certain interviewer characteristics that positively influence applicant attraction (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005; Derous, 2007).

It is important to note that only vague categories of behavior have been examined with regard to applicants' perceptions of interviewer behaviors, (e.g., competent behavior, professional behavior, friendly behavior, cf. Chapman et al., 2005). Whereas it has been found that certain interviewer behaviors and characteristics influence recruiting outcomes, such as perceived interviewer personableness, competence, informativeness, trustworthiness, warmth, humor, and job knowledge (Carless & Imber, 2007; Chapman et al., 2005), the signals that interviewers deliberately send through their behavior to create these intended impressions have not been identified. Knowing more about these specific, deliberate signals is crucial because it would help interviewers to influence applicant impressions and thus to enhance recruitment success.

Furthermore, we do not know to what degree these interviewer behaviors represent IM in terms of intentional, goal-directed behaviors. For instance, Tullar (1989) examined on-campus interviewer utterances and found that about two-thirds of the utterances could be categorized as being structuring (e.g., expanding on a previous statement) and nearly one-third as demonstrating equivalence such as mutual identification (e.g., “That is interesting”). Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether, how, and why interviewers intentionally adjust their behaviors to create images on applicants’ minds, for example, images of being competent, professional, or friendly.

Potential differences between applicants’ and interviewers’ signaling. Applicants and interviewers find themselves in the same social setting, but it might be misleading to apply existing applicant IM taxonomies to interviewers. There may be considerable differences in applicants’ and interviewers’ roles, intentions, and scopes of action. Interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003) focuses on the causal determinants of dyadic social behavior and provides a conceptual framework on the structure of interpersonal situations. The main idea of this theory is that characteristics of the situation (e.g., individuals’ interests, information, and level of dependence) exert strong effects on individuals’ behavior, for example, IM behavior. Thus, although interviewers should apply some IM behaviors similar to those of applicants, they should also apply different IM behaviors because they differ from applicants regarding several situational characteristics.

First, interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003) suggests that individuals are likely to use IM in different ways when they pursue different goals. As pointed out by Bangerter et al. (2012), applicants and interviewers have partly divergent interests. For instance, while applicants’ primary signaling interest is to get a job offer, one of interviewers’ interests is to identify, attract and finally hire the best performer. With this end in mind, interviewers try to create an image not only of themselves but also of the job and the organization as a whole (Connelly et al., 2011). In other words, interviewers need to influence applicants’ image of multiple targets. Thus, in addition to IM

behaviors that we know from applicant IM research such as self-promotion or self-focused IM behaviors (i.e., describing one's past accomplishments and competencies in a positive way), and ingratiation or other-focused IM behaviors (i.e., flattering one's interaction partner), interviewers may use additional strategies to promote the job and the organization.

Furthermore, many existing taxonomies distinguish between assertive IM behaviors that aim to enhance one's own image and defensive IM behaviors that aim at defending against threats to a positive image (e.g., Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Van Iddekinge, McFarland, & Raymark, 2007). However, in addition to the goal of promoting or defending oneself, the job, and the organization, interviewers have also been given recommendations to provide realistic information to facilitate self-selection (Wanous, 1976) and to signal honesty (Earnest, Allen, & Landis, 2011). Thus, in order to create realistic applicant impressions, interviewers may apply behaviors that go beyond applicant IM and that should result in a broader range of IM behaviors than the ones that applicants apply.

Second, according to interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), individuals' behavior is influenced by the information that is available to them. This is particularly relevant in employment interviews, which involve interaction between strangers and are characterized by the presence of vague information about the other (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). For example, interviewers have access to information on applicants' past failures, potential weaknesses, and gaps in the applicants' CV – whereas applicants usually do not easily get information before the interview regarding the job, the organization, and the interviewer. This depth of interviewers' information on applicants should give them more possibilities to deliberately send signals and should thus translate into a broader set of IM behaviors as compared to applicants.

For example, while research on applicant IM has primarily focused on verbal IM behaviors (i.e., the content of applicants' responses and statements), scholars have pointed out that much more

could be considered as part of one's attempt to create images (Dipboye et al., 2012). For instance, nonverbal IM has been seen as a fruitful area of research, including IM behaviors such as smiling, eye contact, body posture (Levine & Feldman, 2002), as well as head nods, handshakes, and hand gestures (McFarland, Yun, Harold, Viera, & Moore, 2005). In addition, verbal behaviors through ways other than words may be used, also referred to as paraverbal or paralinguistic behaviors (DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999). Examples of paraverbal behaviors include style of delivery (e.g., pitch and speech rate) and verbal fluency.

Third, interviewers and applicants are to some extent dependent upon each other, but in distinct ways, which should result in some differences in their IM (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003). For instance, applicants rely on interviewers because interviewers' evaluations affect their chances of a job offer (cf. Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009). Therefore, applicants aim to create positive images. Similarly, interviewers depend on applicants in terms of applicants' job choice behavior, and hence intend to create impressions on applicants (Dipboye et al., 2012). However, interviewers are usually in a more powerful position than applicants because applicants only get to make a decision about whether or not to work for the organization if they are offered a job (Anderson, 1992). Consequently, interviewers might have the intention of signaling this power by using IM behaviors that go beyond applicants' IM.

Aims of the Present Study

In summary, interviewers' goals and opportunities for IM are likely to differ from applicants' goals and opportunities. Therefore, to enhance our theoretical understanding of this phenomenon, it is crucial to develop a comprehensive taxonomy and a conceptual model about the deliberate signaling processes on the side of the interviewer in terms of interviewer IM. To address these empirical and theoretical gaps, we want to explore three main questions with our qualitative study. Based on these

research questions, our aim is to develop a conceptual model and a taxonomy about how and why interviewers apply IM.

Research Question 1: What do interviewers intend to signal to applicants, that is, what are interviewers' IM intentions?

Research Question 2: What signals do interviewers deliberately use to create their intended impressions, that is, what IM behaviors do interviewers apply?

Research Question 3: What outcomes do interviewers want to achieve by deliberately sending signals to applicants, that is, what are interviewers' intended IM outcomes?

Method

Grounded Theory Approach

Grounded theory is a qualitative methodology that is particularly appropriate for our study because it has been developed to understand phenomena about which little is known (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) – such as interviewer IM. In addition, grounded theory has been shown to help researchers understand complex social processes (Willig, 2009). Thus, it has been suggested that researchers apply qualitative research strategies, like grounded theory, in employment interview and IM research (cf. Macan, 2009).

A core characteristic of grounded theory research is that data collection and analysis are closely interrelated to engage with a phenomenon as deeply as possible. As such, analyzing data influences the strategy of data collection and vice-versa (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Hence, in our study, data analysis influenced our subsequent choice of participants, interview questions, observation emphasis, and our choice of topics for further data analysis.

Furthermore, grounded theory involves collecting data from multiple sources using multiple techniques and analyzing it from multiple perspectives to create a multi-faceted sense of the phenomenon (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thus, following recommendations by Bluhm, Herman, Lee,

and Mitchell (2011), we sampled diverse interviewers and applicants and collected comprehensive information from in-depth interviews with interviewers and applicants, observations of selection interviews, the review of memos related to these in-depth interviews and observations, and the review of informational material that was given or recommended to applicants during the interview. These data were analyzed and discussed by multiple researchers (following recommendations by Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Moreover, according to grounded theory, data collection and analysis continues until no new information is gained, that is, until no new categories and concepts emerge from the data. In the present study, this point, which is called *theoretical saturation* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), was reached after analyzing 30 in-depth interviews, 10 observations of real employment interviews, 43 memos, and 12 pieces of informational material.

Samples

To better understand interviewers' IM behaviors, we studied samples of populations who had firsthand experience with the social interaction processes in employment interviews: people regularly conducting employment interviews (i.e., interviewers) and people who had recently been interviewed in several employment interviews (i.e., applicants). We included applicants because signalers (i.e., interviewers) might not always report all of the signals they apply. Specifically, we used information provided by applicants to develop ideas about possible interviewer IM intentions and behaviors. We then asked interviewers whether the behaviors and intentions reported by applicants actually represented deliberate interviewer IM.

To achieve high heterogeneity of data sources, we began our study with different variables in mind that might influence interviewer IM, such as gender, age, interview experience, hierarchical level, and educational level (Dipboye, 2005). Interviewers were 27 to 63 years old ($M = 41.5$, $SD = 12.2$), and 60.0% were male. Their interview experience ranged from several months to 40 years, and

the number of interviews conducted in the past 12 months ranged from 4 to 300. Furthermore, their hierarchical levels were very diverse ranging from assistant positions (e.g., HR assistant) to senior manager positions (e.g., commanding officer in the army), and their vacancies ranged from trainee and administrative positions to positions with managerial functions. The industry sectors of these vacancies were also very diverse, such as human health services, financial services, and the army.

Applicants were 25 to 46 years old ($M = 31.1$, $SD = 7.7$), and 33.3% were male. Their interview experience was very diverse, ranging from 5 to 30 interviews, and the number of interviews in which they had participated in the past 12 months ranged from 3 to 11. Furthermore, our applicant sample consisted of people applying for various positions such as paid internships, administrative jobs, PhD programs, executive officer, senior consultant, and senior manager positions in various industry sectors ranging from human health services, financial services, travel services, to research and education.

Following an approach within grounded theory called *theoretical sampling* (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), we did *not* determine *a priori* what kind of and how much data we wanted to collect. Instead, we used information gathered during the research process to develop ideas about who could be interviewed and observed next. These new data were used to see whether additional relevant categories might emerge, whether categories were well established, and whether relationships between categories were fully developed (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Thus, later in the process, we also approached interviewers and applicants from industry sectors that were not yet included in our sample (e.g., manufacturing and gambling services) because industry sectors were mentioned as a potentially important aspect by participants. In addition, we purposely included organizations that were facing difficulties regarding their reputation (e.g., a wholesale trade service organization that had recently faced a scandal) because participants pointed out that this might help to capture potential defensive strategies by interviewers. Furthermore, participants' comments led us

additionally to include third-party interviewers (e.g., recruiting consultants) and interviewers within an employing organization; interviewers with experience in college recruiting and in initial screening interviews in addition to late-stage interviews; and interviewers and applicants with experience in telephone interviews, video interviews, and panel interviews (because of the commonness of such interviews). Sampling was done through job websites, an alumni pool of a Swiss university, and references from our participants.

Data Collection

For data collection, we applied several methods as suggested by Bluhm et al. (2011): semi-structured in-depth interviews of interviewers and applicants, observations of real employment interviews, memos, and review of informational materials provided to applicants. It is important to note that behaviors that were observed and ones that were reported by applicants provided us with additional ideas of potential IM behaviors that we could verify in subsequent in-depth interviews to ensure that these behaviors constituted IM (i.e., that they were applied by interviewers with the intention of creating impressions on applicants). The in-depth interviews and observations are further described below. Memos (one to two pages) were written subsequent to each in-depth interview and observation and during the coding process. They were used to document ideas for data interpretation and to engage in self-reflection about potential personal biases (see Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Suddaby, 2006). Furthermore, as suggested by Bansal and Corley (2011), informational material (such as brochures) that was given or recommended to applicants was analyzed.

In-depth interviews. All of the 30 in-depth interviews (1 hour) with interviewers and applicants were conducted by the first author in Switzerland and Germany. Regarding in-depth interviews with applicants, the main goal was to develop ideas about what IM intentions interviewers might have had and what signals they might have applied to create favorable impressions. Regarding the in-depth interviews with interviewers, however, we placed special emphasis on whether they

really reported having had these intentions and whether they deliberately engaged in them in terms of IM.

Following an *orienting theoretical perspective* (Locke, 2001), in-depth interviews were based on semi-structured interview guides derived from insights gained during the review of the existing literature. As can be seen in Appendices A and B, these interview guides covered four aspects: (a) whether the particular impressions that applicants form during interviews might be important to interviewers, (b) impressions that interviewers want applicants to form, (c) behaviors that interviewers apply to create these favorable impressions, and (d) possible consequences of interviewer IM. Part (a) of the interview guide ensured that our participants were concerned about the impressions applicants form during the interview. It also prepared the mind-set of our participants and stimulated them to take a recruitment perspective on the interview to ensure that we had a common basis for the data from all interviews.

Furthermore, our interview questions were continuously adapted during the data collection process depending on the insights we gained (Glaser & Strauss, 1967): Questions asked earlier in the research process were different from those asked later as we better understood the interviewers' and applicants' experiences and contexts (see Appendices A and B). For instance, to verify ideas that emerged from applicants' statements or from observations, we adapted the questions for our in-depth interviews with interviewers to verify that these behaviors were intentionally applied IM behaviors rather than some other, naturally occurring behavior. Hence, our in-depth interviews became increasingly focused over the course of the study.

At the beginning of each in-depth interview, participants were ensured of confidentiality and anonymity during further data processing. They were instructed to answer our questions based on the employment interviews they had conducted (or participated in as an applicant) within the past 12

months. At the end of each in-depth interview, participants were given a survey that covered demographic and context information. Furthermore, we audio-recorded all in-depth interviews.

Observations. As interviewer IM behaviors might not always be recognized by either interviewers or applicants, we decided to observe 10 actual employment interviews. Following recommendations by Bluhm et al. (2011), these observations served as an additional data source to develop ideas on possible interview IM categories that could be verified in subsequent in-depth interviews with interviewers.

The observed employment interviews were between 25 minutes and 2 hours long and took place in seven different organizations. Two of these employment interviews were with the same interviewers. Furthermore, one interviewer took part in both the in-depth interviews and the observations. In addition, three of the employment interviews were not only observed but also audio or video recorded. To avoid observer-expectancy effects, observation participants were not told that this study examined interviewer IM behavior (Kazdin, 1977). Instead, they were briefly informed that we were interested in the social processes taking place in employment interviews and were ensured confidentiality.

The first author and a trained I/O Master's level student conducted all of the observations using an observation guide (see Appendix C). The goal of this observation guide was to help consider all important aspects of the interview. The guide consisted of three main parts: observations prior to the employment interview (e.g., what interviewers say and ask prior to the interview), different kinds of interviewers' IM behavior during the employment interview (e.g., how interviewers talk to the applicants during the interview), and observations after the employment interview (e.g., body language of interviewers after the interview). In addition, the observation guide contained sections for unstructured observations in order to include data that might lead to new interpretations or

themes. Similar to the in-depth interview questions, the content of the observation guide was constantly adapted in the course of the research process.

During and after each observation, the observers wrote down which IM behaviors interviewers showed on the basis of the observation guide, and noted verbatim what the interviewers said. Observed behaviors were described with as much detail as possible. At the end of each observation, the observed interviewers filled out a survey that covered demographic and context information. As described above, the observed behaviors were then incorporated into the in-depth interviews with interviewers to ensure that they actually constituted instances of IM rather than some other kind of behavior.

Data Analysis

Content analysis. Following grounded theory principles (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Suddaby, 2006), all data were analyzed in four main steps. First, data were inspected sentence by sentence by two independent raters of a pool of five raters (the first author, the I/O Master's level student who also served as an observer, and three other I/O Master's level students). Raters participated in a half-day training session conducted by the first author to learn and practice how to code (e.g., how to apply and modify categories) using the coding software ATLAS.ti 6 (Friese, 2011). The use of two coders ensured multiple perspectives on the data, as suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008) to increase creativity in the analysis while also decreasing personal bias. Furthermore, to increase immersion in the data content, one of these two coders had always either conducted, observed, or transcribed the in-depth interview under investigation and was therefore familiar with the interview content. Regarding the coding of the in-depth interview data, interviews were transcribed verbatim until we came closer to saturation (i.e., when the number of new categories was decreasing notably). This was the case when twenty of the interviews had been transcribed, which totaled 613 double-spaced pages. For the remaining ten interviews, tape recordings were directly coded. Observations

were coded based on observation notes and, if available, based on audio and video recordings.

Following Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep (2009), coding was done based on an evolving system of categories, a so-called coding dictionary that was continually modified based on iterative comparisons between newly coded and previously analyzed data. Each word, sentence, paragraph, and passage was seen as a feasible coding unit and could be coded. The ATLAS.ti 6 software was used to enter codes, perform text and audio searches, and identify intersections of codes (following recommendations by Grzywacz et al., 2007).

In a second step, the two coders met in joint coding meetings. They compared individual codings and discussed discrepancies until consensus was established about which code was appropriate. Furthermore, the technique of triangulation was used, meaning that agreement and discrepancies among different data sources and different types of data were examined and discussed to see whether they led to the same categories (Willig, 2009). For example, our observations of actual employment interviews provided particularly valuable insights into nonverbal and artifactual interviewer IM behaviors that were not spontaneously reported by interviewers. These behaviors were either confirmed when we directly asked interviewers about it (e.g., displaying application documents on the interview table), or not confirmed and thus not integrated into our system of categories (e.g., displaying one's security pass).

In a third step, coders identified abstract categories or concepts at the end of each joint meeting to enhance the conceptual structure of the categories. The aim was to 'lift' the data to a conceptual level by comparing codes and ideas emerging from the data (Martin & Turner, 1986). Coders remained attentive to how these abstract concepts were related to existing research, and how existing research could be used to identify and name new categories (Locke, 2001). After these meetings, any new categories (including descriptions and example quotes), and any category changes were documented in the coding dictionary.

In a fourth step, to move further from a descriptive to a conceptual level, our analysis focused mainly on how the categories were linked (Schilling, 2006), especially on links between interviewer IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes. For this purpose, one rater went back to the transcripts and audio recordings of the in-depth interviews with interviewers to examine which categories were reported together in terms of forming a common theme over the course of each in-depth interview. All of the links that were identified were documented to gain an overview about which categories were associated, which associations were the strongest, and which patterns of associations emerged.

Interrater agreement. Given the emergent nature of our categories, it was not possible to determine interrater agreement during the primary coding process described above. Therefore, we engaged in a secondary coding process to test the reliability of our categories and to determine the fit of the emergent categories with the data (Butterfield, Trevino, & Ball, 1996). Following Kreiner et al. (2009), we gave two of the five coders mentioned above a final version of the coding dictionary that had emerged as well as a representative transcript subsample of 60 pages (10 percent, following Bluhm et al., 2011) containing 185 interview passages. The coders were instructed to assign each interview passage to the category that they believed best represented the passage. The overall percentage of agreement between the two coders was .91, and Cohen's Kappa was .88, suggesting very good agreement (Fleiss & Cohen, 1973).

Member checks. Finally, we conducted member checks (also known as participant checks, informant feedback, communicative validation, or respondent validation) to give voice to our participants (Bluhm et al., 2011) and to ensure that the categories derived in this study were indeed grounded in the data (Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Member checks imply that categories are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). We went back to the 30 participants in the in-depth interviews and asked for

their feedback on our categories. Three of these member checks were conducted by telephone, and 23 were conducted online (an 86.7 % overall response rate).

First, participants were introduced to all of the categories derived in this study. As we were interested in in-depth feedback, participants were then allocated to one of four different groups. Each group was given a different subsample of categories to focus on. Regarding this subsample of categories, participants were asked to what extent they believed each single category was useful for conceptualizing interviewer IM. Specifically, they were asked to indicate whether the behaviors represented deliberate interviewer IM in terms of behaviors that are applied to create favorable applicant impressions. Second, we asked participants whether any categories should be merged, deleted, divided, or added, and whether they would change the categories' structure. Third, we analyzed participants' ideas and commentaries, went back to our data for confirmation, and integrated the results into our system of categories.

Results

Overview

The aim of this study was to investigate *how* interviewers try to create impressions on applicants in terms of interviewer IM intentions and behaviors, and *why* they engage in these behaviors in terms of intended IM outcomes. Regarding interviewer IM intentions, the data analysis yielded five categories that we organized into two major themes (see Table 1): primary interviewer IM intentions that refer to interviewers' overriding goal of representing the organization, the job, and themselves (i.e., signaling attractiveness and signaling authenticity), and secondary interviewer IM intentions that refer to interviewers' actual personal interactions with applicants (i.e., signaling closeness, signaling distance in terms of professionalism, and signaling distance in terms of superiority). In terms of interviewer IM behaviors, we found five different types of behavior: verbal, paraverbal, nonverbal, artifactual, and administrative interviewer IM behaviors (see Table 2). With

regard to intended interviewer IM outcomes, we found three different types: outcomes related to the interview's recruitment function, related to the interview's selection function, and related to interviewers themselves (see Table 3). As can be seen in Tables 1 to 3, these types of IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes could each be further differentiated into higher-level (left column) and lower-level categories (right column) based on our data. In addition, many of the emergent categories were unanticipated by past IM research (indicated by italicized category names in Tables 1 to 3). Our conceptual model of interviewer IM is depicted in Figure 1 and displays how interviewer IM intentions (square boxes), behaviors (round-edged cells), and intended outcomes (at the end of arrows outside of boxes) are linked. Please note that the IM behaviors presented in Figure 1 are not comprehensive, but constitute representative examples to demonstrate the main patterns of relationships that we found between IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes gleaned from Tables 1 to 3.

How Interviewers Apply IM

What are interviewers' IM intentions? To gain insights on how interviewers apply IM, we analyzed interviewers' underlying intentions. We found a broad spectrum of impressions that interviewers intend to create on applicants, and that different aims or foci can be distinguished. We found that interviewers try to influence applicant impressions not only regarding impressions of the interviewers themselves, but also regarding impressions of the team, the job, and the organization as a whole. For example, one interviewer said¹ "The impression I create on the applicant concerning myself as a person and concerning our company and our way of working, I think that's the basis for the whole [hiring] process that may start afterwards ... What counts is the perception that the

¹ For the sake of brevity, quotes supporting these categories are not presented for all categories but are available from the first author upon request.

candidate gets of me and everything I'm representing" (Interviewer 6²). Hence, compared to applicant IM, interviewer IM may be considered as a more complex phenomenon because applicants' major (and maybe only) aim is to enhance interviewer impressions of themselves (cf. Barrick et al., 2009).

Furthermore, we noticed that early in the in-depth interviews, participants mainly told us about the impressions applicants should receive regarding the organization, the job, and the interviewer as a person. As these IM intentions have to do with the main goal of the interviewer (i.e., representing the company) and constitute very basic intentions, we called them "*primary*" (see Table 1). Data analysis suggested that interviewer IM serves two main purposes: signaling attractiveness (IM intention 1) and signaling authenticity (IM intention 2).

While the intention of appearing attractive is in line with the dominant understanding of IM (e.g., Jones & Pittman, 1982), the intention of appearing authentic adds an important new aspect. It suggests that for interviewers, creating realistic images is important not only in terms of realistic job previews and self-selection (Wanous, 1976), but also in terms of being perceived as sincere and taken seriously by applicants.

Furthermore, participants told us about additional IM intentions that we called "*secondary*" because in contrast to the two primary IM intentions, these intentions seemed to be more closely related to interviewers' personal interaction with the applicant and were usually mentioned later in the in-depth interviews (see Table 1). Regarding secondary interviewer IM intentions, three major categories emerged from what interviewers reported in the in-depth interviews: signaling closeness (IM intention 3), signaling distance in terms of professionalism (IM intention 4), and signaling

² Quotes are labeled with participant code numbers, which either start with "Interviewer" to indicate that an interviewer was the source of information or "Applicant" to indicate that an applicant was the source of information. More detailed information about any quotes presented in this article is available from the first author upon request.

distance in terms of superiority (IM intention 5). As can be seen in Table 1, these secondary intentions could each be further differentiated into lower-level categories based on the data.

Interestingly, the secondary interviewer IM intention of distance in terms of superiority indicates that interviewers do not always try to be friendly and build rapport with the applicant. In some cases, interviewers might rather have the intention to signal their status and power (IM intention 5a) or to convey a feeling of uncertainty to applicants about the likelihood of receiving a job offer (IM intention 5c).

How are interviewers' IM intentions interrelated? Data analyses revealed various interrelations between interviewer IM intentions. For instance, the two primary interviewer IM intentions of signaling attractiveness and signaling authenticity were found to constitute two separate dimensions that often co-occur with each other (e.g., "It's not only about a positive impression but also about a realistic one," Interviewer 15). In addition, these two intentions were reported by most interviewers, which indicates that signaling attractiveness and signaling authenticity are both fundamental for most interviewers.

Furthermore, our findings show that the secondary IM intentions differ regarding their importance for interviewers. Whereas signaling closeness was reported in almost all of the in-depth interviews and thus seems to be a universal and fundamental IM intention, signaling distance in terms of professionalism and superiority was reported less often and may thus play an important role only for some interviewers. Interestingly, those interviewers who reported the intention of signaling distance always reported the intention of signaling closeness as well. This provides some indication that interviewers can have both intentions simultaneously.

In addition, we found that all interviewers reported multiple primary and secondary IM intentions, and some of these intentions seemed synergetic while others seemed rather incompatible. This is also represented in the way the different kinds of impressions are arranged in Figure 1 in

terms of being located closer together vs. further apart. For example, interviewers with the intention of creating an impression of authenticity often also reported the intention of creating an impression of professionalism, such as “There may be companies ... that only present the positive and try to mislead people, but with us, that’s not the case ... I don’t want to persuade [the applicant] of something that’s not true. One should be truthful, open, transparent. I don’t think this is about putting on a show” (Interviewer 3). In contrast, interviewers with the intention to signal distance in terms of superiority rarely reported the intention of signaling attractiveness, indicating that these intentions may be rather incompatible for interviewers.

What IM behaviors do interviewers apply? We found that interviewers apply a broad range of different IM behaviors that do not only include verbal and paraverbal behaviors but also nonverbal, artifactual, and administrative behaviors (see Table 2).

Verbal interviewer IM. Verbal interviewer IM means that interviewers use the content of what they are saying to influence applicant impressions. As can be seen in Table 2, results suggest that verbal interviewer IM behaviors can be divided into self-focused (i.e., interviewer-focused; IM behavior 1), applicant-focused (IM behavior 2), fit-focused (IM behavior 3), job-, team-, or organization-focused (IM behavior 4), and interview process-focused IM behavior (IM behavior 5). Additionally, another form of verbal interviewer IM is modifying one’s style of communication (IM behavior 6), such as modifying the applicants’ speech portion, adapting one’s vocabulary and dialect to the applicant, and using verbal encouragers (e.g., “mmmh”, “ya”, “yeah”).

Analysis of our in-depth interviews with interviewers indicated that to place themselves, their organization, and the job in a favorable light, interviewers are likely to present positive information and express enthusiasm to the applicant (IM behavior 1e). We also found that to induce an impression of authenticity, sometimes interviewers intentionally state negative aspects of the company or the job such as, “To be authentic and honest, I indicate weaknesses of the company ...,

indicate the positive but also weaknesses” (Interviewer 10; IM behavior 4c). Furthermore, we found that to signal attractiveness despite negative aspects, interviewers often frame negative information in a positive way (IM behavior 4d). For example, an interviewer reported, “I personally try to do this in a frank way, in a straightforward way ... There are negative aspects regarding the work load but, of course, that results in a higher quality of our [services]. So negative aspects are justified in a positive way” (Interviewer 8).

Paraverbal interviewer IM. Paraverbal interviewer IM refers to interviewers’ verbal behaviors other than words that are applied to influence applicant impressions (cf. Barrick et al., 2009; DeGroot & Motowidlo, 1999). As depicted in Table 2, we found three different categories of how interviewers modulate their voice when communicating with applicants: speaking in an empathetic way to signal closeness (IM behavior 7), speaking in an authoritative way to signal distance in terms of superiority (IM behavior 8), and speaking in an unobtrusive, neutral way to signal distance in terms of professionalism (IM behavior 9). The finding that interviewers may intentionally talk in an authoritative way provides empirical support for propositions by Gilmore et al. (1999) and Connerley and Rynes (1997), who suggested that interviewers might sometimes have the goal of intimidating applicants.

Nonverbal interviewer IM. Nonverbal interviewer IM means that interviewers use their body language to create impressions on the applicant. As shown in Table 2, we found that interviewers may use nonverbal IM both to create an impression of closeness, for example by laughing (IM behavior 10a) and making eye contact (IM behavior 10d). For example, an interviewer reported, “To make sure it’s casual and comfortable, maybe chuckling with the candidates” (Interviewer 7). In addition, data indicated that nonverbal interviewer IM can also be applied in the form of body contact. This includes not only handshakes (IM behavior 10i), as suggested by applicant IM research (e.g., McFarland et al., 2005), but also friendly backslaps (IM behavior 10j), for example at the end

of the interview. Furthermore, we found that interviewers apply elements of empathetic listening (cf., Bodie, 2011) to influence applicant impressions, such as mirroring the applicant's posture (IM behavior 10g) and nodding affirmatively (IM behavior 10c). Data also revealed that a lack of empathetic listening may serve as IM (i.e., doing something unrelated to the conduct of the interview, IM behavior 10k). To irritate applicants and convey superiority, some interviewers intentionally avoided eye contact, for example, by paging through documents or looking out of the window while applicants were talking. For example, an interviewer stated "Putting on a poker face, well, I try to restrain myself" (Interviewer 7).

Artifactual interviewer IM. Artifactual interviewer IM refers to how interviewers use "an object made by a person" (Hornby & Wehmeier, 2005, p. 72), such as manipulating professional, status, and aesthetic cues to influence applicant impressions (Gardner & Martinko, 1988; Schneider, 1981). As can be seen in Table 2, we found that interviewers use four different kinds of artifacts to create images: aspects of their appearance (IM behavior 12), premises appearance (IM behavior 13), visual information displayed during the interview (IM behavior 14), and giveaways or promotional items for applicants (IM behavior 15).

First, consistent with applicant IM taxonomies, interviewers reported that they modify their clothing (IM behavior 12a) and accessories (IM behavior 12b) to influence impressions. However, in contrast to applicants, interviewers were found to also consider the appearance of the interview building (IM behavior 13a), interview room (IM behavior 13b), and the seating arrangement (IM behavior 13g) as a very important IM tool. For instance, an interviewer said, "A conference room ... portraying the department, that certainly has a more positive impact than if one gets the impression that it's a chilly cubbyhole" (Interviewer 7; IM behavior 13b). Additionally, regarding the seating arrangement, sitting kitty-corner may aim to create impressions of closeness (e.g., "then he [the applicant] certainly doesn't feel so exposed ... not like being before the court," Interviewer 8), while

sitting face-to-face may aim to signal superiority (e.g., “it’s always been face-to-face... a typical exam situation,” Applicant 1).

Second, we found that interviewers provide applicants with visual information during the interview to convey images. For instance, interviewers reported that they intentionally display applicants’ application documents on the table (IM behavior 14b), sometimes marked in bright colors, to create a professional image.

Finally, an aspect that has not been considered in past research is that interviewers may hand out giveaways and promotional items to applicants to influence the impressions they gain, such as informational material (IM behavior 15a), promotional gifts (IM behavior 15b), and business cards (IM behavior 15c). These items can convey appreciation and help to stick in the applicant’s memory.

Administrative interviewer IM. While collecting and analyzing data, we noticed that many interviewers were telling us about how they time their communication and provide services to applicants to influence applicant impressions (see Table 2). We called this type of interviewer IM “administrative” because it refers to behaviors connected with organizing the interview. Regarding timing of communication (IM behavior 16), our study goes beyond existing work on pre-interview communication (cf. Carless & Hetherington, 2011) by showing that interviewers may intentionally ensure timeliness in order to create applicant impressions of closeness. For instance, one interviewer said, “I think in a way it’s appreciation ... So it’s fatal when somebody from the line management is late for the interview” (Interviewer 8).

Concerning administrative interviewer IM by providing services to applicants (IM behaviors 16 to 19), our data suggest that many aspects of conducting interviews that have only been understood as standard elements in previous research can actually constitute interviewer IM if these behaviors are applied with the intention of creating impressions on applicants. For example, interviewers reported sending confirmations of receipt of application documents to applicants (IM

behavior 17a) not only because it was part of the standard procedure, but also because they wanted to convey appreciation, which makes it IM behavior.

In addition, interviewers seem to provide services for IM purposes not only during the interview, but also beforehand and subsequently. For instance, to create an impression of closeness before the actual interview, interviewers may call and invite applicants personally instead of asking somebody else to extend an invitation (IM behavior 17c): “I prefer a personal telephone call. That makes a completely different impression than an anonymous e-mail ... When I talk to the person by telephone, it seems much more significant” (Interviewer 11).

During the interview, offering drinks (IM behavior 18c), breaks (IM behavior 18d), site visits (IM behavior 18f), and refund of travel expenses (IM behavior 18g) can be considered as IM, if these service features are intended to serve as signals to the applicant (i.e., signals of professionalism). For instance, one interviewer reported, “I offer something to drink. Often they [the applicants] don’t even have the courage to pour the water themselves. Then I do that as well” (Interviewer 3). However, interviewers may also intentionally choose not to offer certain drinks in order to signal professionalism, such as “I don’t serve any coffee ... I want to lay emphasis on professionalism because to me, a selection interview is not an afternoon coffee party” (Interviewer 10).

After the interview, interviewers were found to intentionally influence applicant impressions by modifying their way of giving feedback to applicants about interview results (e.g., by providing feedback by telephone instead of by e-mail, IM behavior 19b). For example, an interviewer told us, “Usually I do that orally. Communicating that we decided to choose somebody else, I try to do that orally, if possible” (Interviewer 3).

When do interviewers apply which IM behaviors? Our analyses revealed that interviewers apply different IM behaviors depending on their IM intentions. These links between interviewer IM intentions and behaviors are depicted in Figure 1; behaviors (white, round-edged cells) are placed

within or touching intentions (light or dark gray, square boxes) to indicate association. First, we found that most of the IM behaviors are used with a certain purpose, that is, there is a clear link between each of these IM behaviors and a single IM intention. In Figure 1, this is visualized by cells of behavioral examples that are located within each larger box representing an IM intention. For example, expressing enthusiasm (IM behavior 1e) and decorating the interview room (IM behavior 13c) are often used with the intention to signal attractiveness (IM intention 1), whereas demonstrating similarity (IM behavior 3b) is often used with the intention to signal closeness (IM intention 3). Second, some IM behaviors are related to multiple IM intentions at the same time. In Figure 1, this is visualized by cells of behavioral examples that are bridging the boxes of two different IM intentions. For instance, positive framing (IM behavior 4d) may be used to signal both attractiveness (IM intention 1) and authenticity (IM intention 2), and the IM behavior of incorporating future colleagues (IM behavior 18e) may be used to signal both authenticity (IM intention 2) and superiority (IM intention 5). It is noteworthy that we only found one IM behavior, challenging, with the goal of creating a professional and superior image. Third, the remaining IM behaviors can be described as being multipurpose, that is, they can be related to different IM intentions depending on how they are applied. In Figure 1, these multipurpose IM behaviors are located in the center of the figure. For example, interviewers can modify applicants' speech portion (IM behavior 6c) in a way that the portion is high to signal appreciation (IM intention 3b), or in a way that the portion is low to signal status and power of decision (IM intention 5a).

As described above, we found that most of the variance regarding underlying IM intentions lies within the lower-level categories of IM behaviors. However, we also found some indications regarding how the five broad categories of IM behaviors (verbal, paraverbal, nonverbal, artifactual, and administrative; see Table 2) might be linked to IM intentions (see Figure 1). For example, paraverbal and nonverbal IM behaviors may play a particularly important role for signaling closeness

versus signaling distance. Paraverbal and nonverbal IM behaviors represent indirect ways of communicating, which seems especially important regarding interviewers' personal interaction with applicants, that is, interviewers' secondary IM intentions.

In addition, our data suggest that some interviewer IM behaviors are more prevalent than others. Some IM behaviors were reported by almost all interviewers, which indicates that these behaviors are rather universally applied and fundamental for interviewers (e.g., challenging, modifying interview length, offering drinks). In contrast, some IM behaviors were reported only by a few interviewers, which indicates that these behaviors are rather idiosyncratic (e.g., backslapping, displaying test results, handing out promotional gifts).

Furthermore, our analyses revealed that those IM behaviors that are linked to the same IM intention are most likely to be applied in combination. For instance, if an interviewer aims to signal closeness (IM intention 3), IM behaviors such as demonstrating similarity (IM behavior 3b), referring to the applicant by name (IM behavior 2a), and thanking (IM behavior 2f) tend to be combined. In contrast, IM behaviors that are related to rather incompatible IM intentions are unlikely to be combined.

Additionally, we found that the use of IM behaviors might depend on the interviewer's industry sector. For instance, when we compared interviewers from the army with interviewers from human health services, we found that those from the army reported more intentions to signal authenticity and performance expectations to create a realistic image and enhance applicants' self-selection. This is in line with the army's tough image and clear command structure. In contrast, interviewers from the human health services such as hospitals put more emphasis on signaling attractiveness by reinforcing the advantages of the job and their respective hospital (IM behavior 4a), and put more emphasis on signaling closeness, for example, by stepping up to the applicant before the interview (IM behavior 18a). As hospitals are service providers, these interviewers were also

much more concerned about applicants' future consumer behavior (intended IM outcome 4c) in terms of choosing their hospital if they require treatment. Thus, an interviewer's industry sector is likely to influence the specific set of IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes that is applied.

Furthermore, we found that there are some interviewer IM behaviors that can only be applied in certain interview settings such as panel interviews. Specifically, regarding nonverbal IM, interviewers were found to intentionally smile at other interviewers (IM behavior 11a), nod in response to other interviewers' questions (IM behavior 11b), and mirror other interviewers' body postures (IM behavior 11c) to induce an impression of harmony and signal positive corporate climate. These findings suggest that panel interviews may offer interviewers additional possibilities for influencing applicant impressions.

What is more, interviewers may change their IM intentions and behaviors over the course of the interview. For instance regarding paraverbal IM, interviewers and applicants reported that interviewers tend to speak in an empathetic way (IM behavior 7) at the beginning and end of interviews, and when asking delicate questions. In contrast, interviewers tend to speak in an authoritative way (IM behavior 8) when asking challenging questions. For example, interviewers reported, "I ask questions rather snappily" (Interviewer 7), and "When I want to hear an answer, then I express myself in a very bald way, then I'm not welcoming anymore" (Interviewer 11). This suggests that the way in which interviewers apply IM might depend on the timing in the interview and on the content of the conversation.

Why Interviewers Apply IM

What are interviewers' intended IM outcomes? To examine why interviewers apply IM, we asked interviewers and applicants about their experiences and assumptions on intended IM outcomes. As can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 3, our data revealed that interviewers try to influence

applicant impressions in order to enhance many different outcomes related to recruitment, selection, and to interviewers themselves.

First, interviewer IM may be applied to improve the interview's recruitment function such as a strong organizational image and reputation on the side of the applicant (intended IM outcome 3c). For instance, an interviewer reported, "Ideally, in the end the applicant says 'They did not hire me, but this is a GOOD company.' That's the goal" (Interviewer 12). In addition, interviewers reported that they applied IM to ensure that applicants leave the interview room feeling good about themselves (intended IM outcome 2), and react with positive attitudes (intended IM outcome 3), intentions, and behaviors towards the organization (intended IM outcome 4). For instance, an interviewer reported, "To give the applicant a positive feeling, even in situations where it's clear that the candidate is not qualified ... So that the applicant gets an impression of the company, what we do, what we stand for, particularly the positive we stand for, and has a positive attitude towards us" (Interviewer 7).

Second, we found that interviewers not only apply IM for recruitment purposes but also to enhance the interview's selection purpose. Specifically, we found that interviewers intend to increase the amount of personal information applicants reveal during the interview (intended IM outcome 5a) and the informative value of this information (intended IM outcome 5b) in terms of applicants being honest and explicit. For example, one interviewer reported "When I find something in the CV where I have experience myself ... when the applicant can tell, aha, this person knows what I've experienced ... then he's more relaxed, tells me more, and is more open towards me" (Interviewer 8).

Third, our interview data revealed that interviewers also apply IM to influence outcomes related to themselves, such as a strong interviewer reputation (intended IM outcome 6a) and their own career advancement (intended IM outcome 6b). So far, interview research has primarily focused on outcomes related to the interview's selection and recruitment purpose (Dipboye et al., 2012), so these findings add a new aspect to interview research by stressing interviewers' aims. Intended

interviewer IM outcomes such as interviewer reputation and career advancement indicate that interviewers have certain self-centered motives and career goals in mind when they interact with applicants.

When are interviewers' intended IM outcomes likely to be reached? First, we found that not all interviewers intend to achieve all of the outcomes presented in Table 3 and Figure 1. Some intended outcomes were reported more than others in our in-depth interviews and thus seem to be fundamental to interviewers, such as a strong organizational image and reputation (intended IM outcome 3c), job choice as well as recommendation and reapplication intention and behavior (intended IM outcomes 4a, 4b, and 4d). In contrast, some intended outcomes were reported only in a few in-depth interviews and thus seem more idiosyncratic, such as influencing applicants' self-esteem (intended IM outcome 2b), preventing legal action (intended IM outcome 4e), promoting strong interviewer reputation (intended IM outcome 6a), and improving interviewer career advancement (intended IM outcome 6b).

Second, as can be seen in Figure 1, our results indicate that there is a pattern to which IM behaviors and outcomes are most closely linked, that is, certain IM behaviors are more closely linked to certain outcome components than to others. Interviewers' IM intentions and behaviors seem to differ for short-term versus long-term perspectives regarding their intended recruiting-related outcomes. For example, we found that IM behaviors used to signal attractiveness are primarily linked to the intended outcome of fast recruiting (filling the vacancy as quickly as possible), whereas IM behaviors used to signal authenticity are primarily linked to sustainable recruiting (trying to achieve high job tenure).

Third, the intended recruiting-related outcome of preventing legal action was found to be primarily related to IM behaviors that are applied to signal distance in terms of professionalism. In addition, selection-related outcomes such as retrieving a high amount of valid personal information

from applicants were found to be primarily associated with IM behaviors applied to signal closeness. For example, as one interviewer put it “an emotional tie makes the applicant trust in me, so that he communicates with me in a transparent way” (Interviewer 6).

Fourth, the interviewer-related outcome of strong interviewer reputation was found to be mainly associated with IM behaviors applied to signal distance in terms of superiority. For instance, an interviewer told us, “Well, I’m well known because of my reputation ... I’m one of the most ruthless ones in our HR department” (Interviewer 2).

Finally, we found indications that the different intended IM outcomes intertwine in a complex pattern. For example, an organization’s strong image and reputation partly depend on how applicants experience the interview process and spread the word, such as “When he goes home with positive emotions then he’ll tell others about it, he’ll tell his friends and other people he knows, and hopefully these others will apply, too” (Interviewer 7). Furthermore, the intended outcome of interviewers’ career advancement is not depicted in Figure 1 because we found that this component intertwined with (and implicit in) other intended interviewer IM outcomes. For instance, if an interviewer achieves good acceptance rates and gets positive feedback from applicants, colleagues, and supervisors, this should have a favorable impact on the interviewer’s career.

Discussion

Previous research on IM in interviews has been fruitful, but this literature has lacked a conceptual model to aid in understanding how and why interviewers try to make impressions on applicants. Instead, previous work has been based on the assumption that interviewers use the same IM behaviors as applicants without acknowledging what intentions and opportunities interviewers actually have when they interact with applicants. Thus, as a response to repeated calls for research on interviewer IM (e.g., Dipboye & Johnson, 2013; Gilmore et al., 1999; Macan, 2009), our study offers a new perspective on the selection interview by systematically examining interviewer IM. Following

a grounded theory approach, we identified *how* interviewers apply IM in terms of what they intend to signal to applicants (i.e., interviewer IM intentions) and which signals interviewers deliberately use to create their intended impressions (i.e., interviewer IM behaviors). Furthermore, we examined *why* interviewers apply IM in terms of the outcomes they want to achieve by deliberately sending signals to applicants (i.e., intended interviewer IM outcomes).

We developed a conceptual model of interviewer IM that comprises interviewer IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes, which also shows patterns of relationships among these elements. In addition to the model, we generated an extensive taxonomy of different interviewer IM intentions, behaviors, and outcomes. Specifically, we found that interviewers' primary intentions are to signal attractiveness and authenticity, while their secondary intentions are to signal closeness and distance (i.e., distance in terms of professionalism and in terms of superiority). Another finding was that interviewer IM may have different aims – aims in terms of creating a certain impression of the interviewer as a person, an impression of the job, of the team, and of the organization as a whole. In order to create these impressions on applicants, interviewers may deliberately apply a broad spectrum of signals such as verbal, nonverbal, paraverbal, artifactual, and administrative IM behaviors. Additionally, we found that interviewers use IM behaviors in order to improve a wide range of different outcomes related to recruitment, selection, and interviewers themselves.

Implications for Theory

This study makes at least three important contributions to the literature. First, this study elaborates signaling theory (Bangerter et al., 2012; Spence, 1973) in the context of interviewer behavior by presenting a conceptual model on the key elements of deliberate signaling processes on the part of the interviewer. Notably, our model not only focuses on IM behaviors, but also includes interviewer IM intentions, and intended outcomes, which are particularly important to understanding the phenomenon of interviewer IM (Dipboye et al., 2012). In addition, as a response to calls to study

signals and incentives of signalers within their social context (Connelly et al., 2011), we present an extensive taxonomy of the impressions that interviewers aim to create, the signals they deliberately use to create these intended impressions, and the outcomes they want to achieve. As such, we found that interviewers' intentions and signals are very broad and complex, and we uncovered numerous aspects that clearly go beyond those assumed by previous IM research (see Tables 1 to 3). Regarding intended IM outcomes, interviewers deliberately use signaling behaviors not only to enhance organizations' recruitment success and the quality of selection decisions, but also to enhance outcomes that are directly related to themselves such as their reputation as an interviewer.

Second, this study sheds light on how interviewers' and applicants' IM are similar and distinct. Consistent with interdependence theory (Rusbult & Van Lange, 2003), the present findings show that while applicant and interviewer IM share similarities, there is a broad range of differences. Similarities can be found, for example, in categories of verbal IM (e.g., fit-focused IM), nonverbal IM (e.g., smiling), and artifactual IM behaviors (e.g., modifying one's appearance). However, in contrast to assumptions in previous studies (e.g., Stevens et al., 1990), many interviewer IM intentions and behaviors seem to be distinct from those of applicants. Unlike applicants, interviewers may have multiple aims of IM (e.g., influencing applicant impressions of the job, the organization, and themselves) and may have diverse IM intentions that go well beyond mere friendliness (e.g., signaling distance).

Another difference between interviewer and applicant IM is that, because interviewers are in a more powerful position than applicants, they may apply IM behaviors such as applicant-depreciation and challenging applicants to signal their superiority. Also, as another consequence of interviewers' more powerful position, they have a greater freedom of action than applicants and are therefore able to control and modify diverse artifactual (e.g., providing giveaways) and administrative aspects of the interview (e.g., inviting the applicant personally) to favorably influence applicant impressions.

Therefore, because of these differences, interviewer IM should be considered a phenomenon that may be related to, but is nevertheless quite distinct from applicant IM.

Finally, our results suggest a shift in the way that we think about interviewers in the employment interview. For instance, our study draws attention to the social nature of the interview and contributes to a more person-centric picture of the interviewer (following suggestions by Weiss & Rupp, 2011). We found that interviewers are well aware that they may influence applicant impressions and explicitly state their aims to do so. Interviewers know very well which specific impressions they want applicants to form and intentionally use a broad range of different signals to create these intended impressions. Our findings support efforts by other researchers to enhance the theoretical understanding and the quality of the interview as an assessment tool by acknowledging social exchange processes in the interview, such as interviewer IM (cf. Dipboye et al., 2012).

Potential Limitations

Although this study provides valuable insights into how and why interviewers intentionally try to create impressions on applicants, it has its limitations. This study included a range of different interview formats, which allowed us to capture a broad range of IM behaviors. However, by the same token, we did not focus on one individual type of format (e.g., panel interviews), which would have allowed for more extensive insights about IM behavior within a particular interview format.

However, we believe that the IM behaviors presented in this study that refer to specific interview formats (e.g., IM behaviors applied in panel interviews) constitute important initial findings.

Another limitation is that even though the application of a qualitative approach can lead to new research questions and new perspectives (Cassell & Symon, 2011), the generalizability of the findings might be limited because of small sample sizes (Lee, Mitchell, & Sablinski, 1999).

Moreover, the present study was conducted in Germany and Switzerland. Interviewer IM intentions and behaviors may vary between different national cultures, as it has been found for applicant IM

(e.g., König, Hafsteinsson, Jansen, & Stadelmann, 2011). Hence, more research on interviewer IM with additional samples is clearly needed. However, the present study sampled a broad range of interviewers and applicants, included different interview formats (face-to-face, telephone, video, one-on-one, and panel interviews), and used multiple qualitative methods (in-depth interviews, observations, memos, and analyses of informational material) to generate a comprehensive taxonomy of interviewer IM, thus providing insights into associations between interviewer IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes. In addition, data were collected until theoretical saturation was reached (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Taken together, the diversity of samples and methods and the achievement of theoretical saturation suggest that these results should generalize to other interview contexts.

Implications and Propositions for Future Research

The goal of our conceptual model is to provide a framework for future research on interviewer IM, ultimately leading to practical recommendations to organizations and interviewers. Thus, we believe that the initial qualitative findings presented in this paper should be bolstered by insightful future research before such practical recommendations can be convincingly made. As can be seen in Table 4, the conceptual model of interviewer IM presented in this study provides a promising blueprint for future research in at least three different ways: 1) testing the conceptual model as it is presented in this paper in terms of the elements and relationships within the model, 2) expanding the conceptual model on the basis of this study, that is, integrating further factors and relationships that were indicated by our data and mentioned in our results, and 3) expanding the conceptual model beyond the scope of our study, that is, connecting the model to ongoing discussions in the literature. In Table 4 and in the following sections, we point out promising paths for future research and provide specific ideas for research propositions for each of these three research paths. It is important to note

that the research topics and propositions that we present are intended to be illustrative and stimulating rather than all-inclusive.

On a first level, future research should focus on the elements and associations in our conceptual model. Each relationship within the model constitutes an actionable proposition for future research that could be tested using quantitative methods. Specifically, the model can be tested in terms of the way the boxes of IM intentions are arranged (i.e., structure of IM intentions) and the way the cells of IM behaviors are embedded within or are bridging boxes of IM intentions (i.e., relationships between IM intentions and IM behaviors). Accordingly, researchers could also examine whether the model as developed from the qualitative methods in this study translates into a factor structure as determined through quantitative research. In addition, each arrow in Figure 1 that points from IM behaviors and their underlying intentions to intended IM outcomes might be tested (i.e., relationships between IM behaviors and intended IM outcomes).

As a second research path, future research should add additional aspects to the conceptual model of interviewer IM that have been suggested by our data. One idea to expand the model would be to integrate the higher-level category structure of IM behaviors that we found (see Table 2). It would be worthwhile to examine how the five types of IM behaviors (i.e., verbal, paraverbal, nonverbal, artifactual, and administrative) are linked to primary and secondary IM intentions. For example, our data suggest that paraverbal and nonverbal IM behaviors may play a particularly important role for expressing secondary IM intentions because they represent indirect ways of communicating, which might be especially important for interviewers' personal interactions with applicants. Another example would be research on whether intentions as expressed by the interviewer translate into behaviors as observed by the interviewee. Additional promising themes and propositions for future research that are suggested by our data refer to the question of how interviewer IM may depend on the industry sector (e.g., industry sector's image and the types of

services provided), the timing in the interview (e.g., beginning or end of the interview), and the content of the conversation (e.g., asking delicate vs. challenging questions).

As a third path, future research should connect the conceptual model of interviewer IM to ongoing discussions in the literature, such as how IM relates to truthfulness in terms of honest vs. deceptive IM and how the validity of interviews might be affected by IM. Regarding the discussion on IM and truthfulness, we believe that it would be helpful to weave an additional conceptual layer into our conceptual model in terms of honest versus deceptive interviewer IM. In line with recent suggestions by Tsai and Huang (2014), we believe that interviewer IM can be honest or deceptive depending on whether the signal being sent to an applicant relates to an existing attribute of the interviewer, the job, or the organization instead of being misleading in terms of creating false impressions. We see high potential in honest interviewer IM for increasing long-term outcomes that are highly relevant for organizations and their employees. For example, our data indicate that honest IM can stress positive attributes of the job and the organization while at the same time creating a realistic image on the applicants' minds. In contrast, we believe that there is a risk in deceptive interviewer IM by leading to unrealistic expectations and psychological contract breach, which should result in negative long-term consequences for organizations and their employees such as low levels of job satisfaction, performance, and tenure.

Regarding the ongoing discussion on potential effects of IM on interview validity, one possibility is that interviewers' attempts to influence applicants' impressions might prevent interviewers from accurately assessing applicant performance (Dipboye et al., 2012). As such, Marr and Cable (2014) found that interviewers' selling orientation reduced the accuracy and predictive validity of their judgments. However, our data indicate an additional possibility, namely that interviewer IM may also facilitate the quality of selection decisions. Specifically, we found initial evidence that interviewer IM behavior such as demonstrating empathy may facilitate effective

selection by enhancing feelings of trust and reciprocity, which may encourage applicants to open up and provide not only more but also more honest personal information. This would provide interviewers with a better basis for performance assessment and would thus enhance valid selection decisions. We believe that these potential positive impacts on interview validity are well worth further examination.

In sum, we hope that future research will provide further confirmation and refinement of the qualitative insights gained in this study. Specifically, we suggest that future research should drill down further in the direction of both the numerous potential risks and opportunities that are involved in interviewer IM, hopefully inspired by the research propositions presented. If future research follows these paths, our theoretical understanding of interviewer IM can be substantially enhanced. Importantly, this future research will facilitate practical recommendations that will move interviewers closer to successfully selecting and recruiting applicants.

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Table 1

How Interviewers Apply IM: Structure of Interviewer IM Intentions

Higher-level categories	Lower-level categories
Primary IM intentions: What do interviewers intend to signal to applicants with regard to representing the organization?	
1. Attractiveness	
2. Authenticity	
Secondary IM intentions: What do interviewers intend to signal to applicants with regard to their personal interaction with the applicant?	
3. Closeness	3a. Building rapport 3b. <i>Individuality and appreciation</i> 3c. Trustworthiness
4. Distance in terms of professionalism	4a. <i>Fairness</i> 4b. <i>Selection complexity and effort</i> 4c. <i>Straightforwardness</i>
5. Distance in terms of superiority	5a. Status and power of decision 5b. <i>Performance expectations</i> 5c. <i>Suspense</i>

Note. Categories of interviewer IM intentions that are printed in italics are new in comparison to Barrick et al. (2009) and Jones and Pittman (1982).

Table 2

How Interviewers Apply IM: Structure of Interviewer IM Behaviors

Higher-level categories	Lower-level categories
Verbal IM behaviors: What do interviewers deliberately say to influence applicant impressions?	
1. Self-focused	1a. Self-enhancement 1b. <i>Demonstrating job knowledge</i> 1c. <i>Demonstrating humor</i> 1d. Telling personal stories 1e. <i>Expressing enthusiasm</i>
2. Applicant-focused	2a. <i>Referring to applicant by name</i> 2b. Demonstrating knowledge of the applicant 2c. Applicant-enhancement 2d. <i>Goal setting for the applicant</i> 2e. <i>Demonstrating empathy</i> 2f. <i>Thanking</i> 2g. Offering support 2h. <i>Giving voice</i> 2i. <i>Challenging</i> 2j. <i>Applicant-depreciation</i>
3. Fit-focused	3a. Fit enhancing 3b. Demonstrating similarity
4. Job-, team-, or organization-focused	4a. <i>Enhancement of job, team, or organization</i> 4b. <i>Goal setting for the job, team, or organization</i> 4c. <i>Confessing</i> 4d. <i>Positive framing</i>
5. Interview process-focused	5a. <i>Enhancement of the interview process</i> 5b. Apologizing
6. Through style of communication	6a. <i>Paraphrasing and summarizing</i> 6b. <i>Verbal encouragement</i> 6c. <i>Modifying applicant's speech portion</i> 6d. <i>Modifying one's detailedness of language</i> 6e. <i>Modifying one's formality of language</i> 6f. <i>Adapting one's vocabulary and dialect</i>
Paraverbal IM behaviors: How do interviewers deliberately use their voice to influence applicant impressions?	
7. Speaking in an empathetic way	7a. <i>Speaking with low pace</i> 7b. <i>Speaking with low volume</i> 7c. <i>Speaking with high pitch</i>

8. Speaking in an authoritative way

- 8a. *Speaking with high pace*
- 8b. *Speaking with high volume*
- 8c. *Speaking with low pitch*

9. Speaking in an unobtrusive

- 9a. *Speaking with moderate pace*
- 9b. *Speaking with moderate volume*
- 9c. *Speaking with moderate pitch*

Nonverbal IM behaviors: How do interviewers deliberately use body language to influence applicant impressions?

10. Towards the applicant

- 10a. *Laughing*
- 10b. *Smiling*
- 10c. *Nodding affirmatively*
- 10d. *Making eye contact*
- 10e. *Making hand gestures*
- 10f. *Leaning forward*
- 10g. *Mirroring*
- 10h. *Note taking*
- 10i. *Shaking hands*
- 10j. *Backslapping*
- 10k. *Doing something else*

11. Towards other interviewers

- 11a. *Smiling*
- 11b. *Nodding affirmatively*
- 11c. *Mirroring*

Artifactual IM behaviors: How do interviewers deliberately use appearance, visual information, and promotional items to influence applicant impressions?

12. Through interviewer appearance

- 12a. *Modifying one's clothing*
- 12b. *Modifying one's accessories*

13. Through premises appearance

- 13a. *Choosing the interview building*
- 13b. *Choosing the interview room*
- 13c. *Decorating the interview room*
- 13d. *Checking the light intensity*
- 13e. *Choosing the interview table*
- 13f. *Choosing the seating furniture*
- 13g. *Placement of seating furniture*

14. Through visual information

- 14a. *Showing printed information material*
- 14b. *Displaying application documents*
- 14c. *Displaying notes taken prior to the interview*
- 14d. *Displaying test results*

15. Through promotional items

- 15a. *Handing out printed information material*
- 15b. *Handing out promotional gifts*
- 15c. *Handing out one's business card*

Administrative IM behaviors: How do interviewers deliberately use timing of communication and provide services to influence applicant impressions?

- | | |
|--|---|
| 16. Through timing of communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16a. <i>Ensuring timeliness of pre-interview communication</i> 16b. <i>Modifying timeliness of interview start</i> 16c. <i>Modifying interview length</i> 16d. <i>Ensuring timeliness of feedback</i> 16e. <i>Offering time to think the offer over</i> |
| 17. By providing services to applicants before the interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17a. <i>Confirming receipt of application</i> 17b. <i>Giving directions</i> 17c. <i>Inviting the applicant personally</i> 17d. <i>Inviting the applicant by telephone</i> 17e. <i>Accommodating with the interview date</i> 17f. <i>Accommodating with the interview location</i> 17g. <i>Preventing interruptions</i> 17h. <i>Modifying the room temperature</i> 17i. <i>Airing the interview room</i> |
| 18. By providing services to applicants during the interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18a. <i>Approaching the applicant</i> 18b. <i>Taking the applicant's jacket</i> 18c. <i>Offering drinks</i> 18d. <i>Offering a break</i> 18e. <i>Incorporating future colleagues</i> 18f. <i>Offering a site visit</i> 18g. <i>Offering refund of travel expenses</i> 18h. <i>Escorting</i> |
| 19. By providing services to applicants after the interview | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 19a. <i>Giving feedback personally</i> 19b. <i>Giving feedback orally</i> 19c. <i>Giving detailed feedback</i> |

Note. Categories of interviewer IM behaviors that are printed in italics are new in comparison to Barrick et al. (2009), Bolino et al. (2008), DeGroot and Motowidlo (1999), Ellis et al. (2002), Levashina and Campion (2007), McFarland et al. (2005), Peeters and Lievens (2006), and Schneider (1981).

Table 3

Why Interviewers Apply IM: Structure of Intended IM Outcomes

Higher-level categories	Lower-level categories
Recruitment-related IM Outcomes: What outcomes in terms of the interview's recruitment function do interviewers want to achieve by deliberately sending signals to applicants?	
1. Organizations' recruiting success	1a. Fast recruiting 1b. <i>Sustainable recruiting</i>
2. Applicants' positive emotions	2a. Positive affective state 2b. Self-esteem
3. Applicants' positive attitudes towards the organization	3a. Job-organization attraction 3b. <i>Identification with the organization</i> 3c. Strong organizational image and reputation
4. Applicants' positive intentions and behaviors towards the organization	4a. Job choice intention and behavior 4b. Recommendation intention and behavior 4c. Consumer intention and behavior 4d. Reapplication intention and behavior 4e. Prevention of legal action
Selection-related IM Outcomes: What outcomes in terms of the interview's selection function do interviewers want to achieve by deliberately sending signals to applicants?	
5. Information disclosed by applicants	5a. <i>Amount of personal information disclosed</i> 5b. <i>Informative value of personal information</i>
Interviewer-related IM Outcomes: What outcomes in terms of self-centered motives do interviewers want to achieve by deliberately sending signals to applicants?	
6. Interviewers' career	6a. <i>Strong interviewer reputation</i> 6b. <i>Interviewer career advancement</i>

Note. Categories of intended interviewer IM outcomes that are printed in italics are new in comparison to Chapman et al. (2005) and Hausknecht et al. (2004).

Table 4

Examples of Propositions for Future Research

 Level 1: Testing relationships within the conceptual model of interviewer IM (see Figure 1)

Examples of research issues**Examples of specific propositions**

Structure of IM intentions

P1-1 Five kinds of interviewer IM intentions can be distinguished, which differ regarding their interrelations: intentions that are located closer together in the figure co-occur more often than intentions that are located further apart.

P1-2 There are two major themes of interviewer IM intentions: (a) primary IM intentions that refer to interviewers' goal of representing the organization, the job, and themselves, and (b) secondary IM intentions that refer to interviewers' personal interaction with the applicant.

Relationships between IM intentions and IM behaviors

P1-3 There are three kinds of IM behaviors that differ in how they are related to IM intentions: (a) behaviors that are most strongly related to one single IM intention, (b) behaviors that are most strongly related to two IM intentions, and (c) behaviors that are multipurpose, that is, they are related to different IM intentions depending on how they are applied.

Relationships between IM behaviors and intended IM outcomes

P1-4 IM behaviors used to signal attractiveness are related to intended short-term outcomes such as fast recruiting, whereas IM behaviors used to signal authenticity are related to intended long-term outcomes such as sustainable recruitment.

Level 2: Expanding the conceptual model of interviewer IM on the basis of this study

Relationships between the five types of IM behavior and IM intentions

P2-1 Paraverbal and nonverbal IM behaviors are more strongly related to secondary IM intentions than to primary IM intentions, whereas verbal, artifactual, and administrative IM behaviors are related to both primary and secondary IM intentions.

Influence of industry sector

P2-2 The specific set of IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes depends on the industry sector such as the industry sector's image and the types of services provided.

Influence of timing

P2-3 The IM intention of signaling closeness is more predominant in the beginning and at the end of interviews.

Influence of interview content

P2-4 The IM intention of signaling closeness is more predominant when interviewers ask delicate questions, whereas signaling distance in terms of superiority is more predominant when interviewers ask challenging questions.

Level 3: Expanding the conceptual model of interviewer IM beyond the scope of this study

Honest vs. deceptive IM

P3-1 Deceptive interviewer IM decreases long-term outcomes such as employees' job satisfaction, job performance, and job tenure through unrealistic job expectations and psychological contract breach.

Interview validity

P3-2 Interviewer IM of signaling closeness increases (a) the amount and (b) the informative value of personal information provided by applicants, which, in turn, positively influences interview validity.

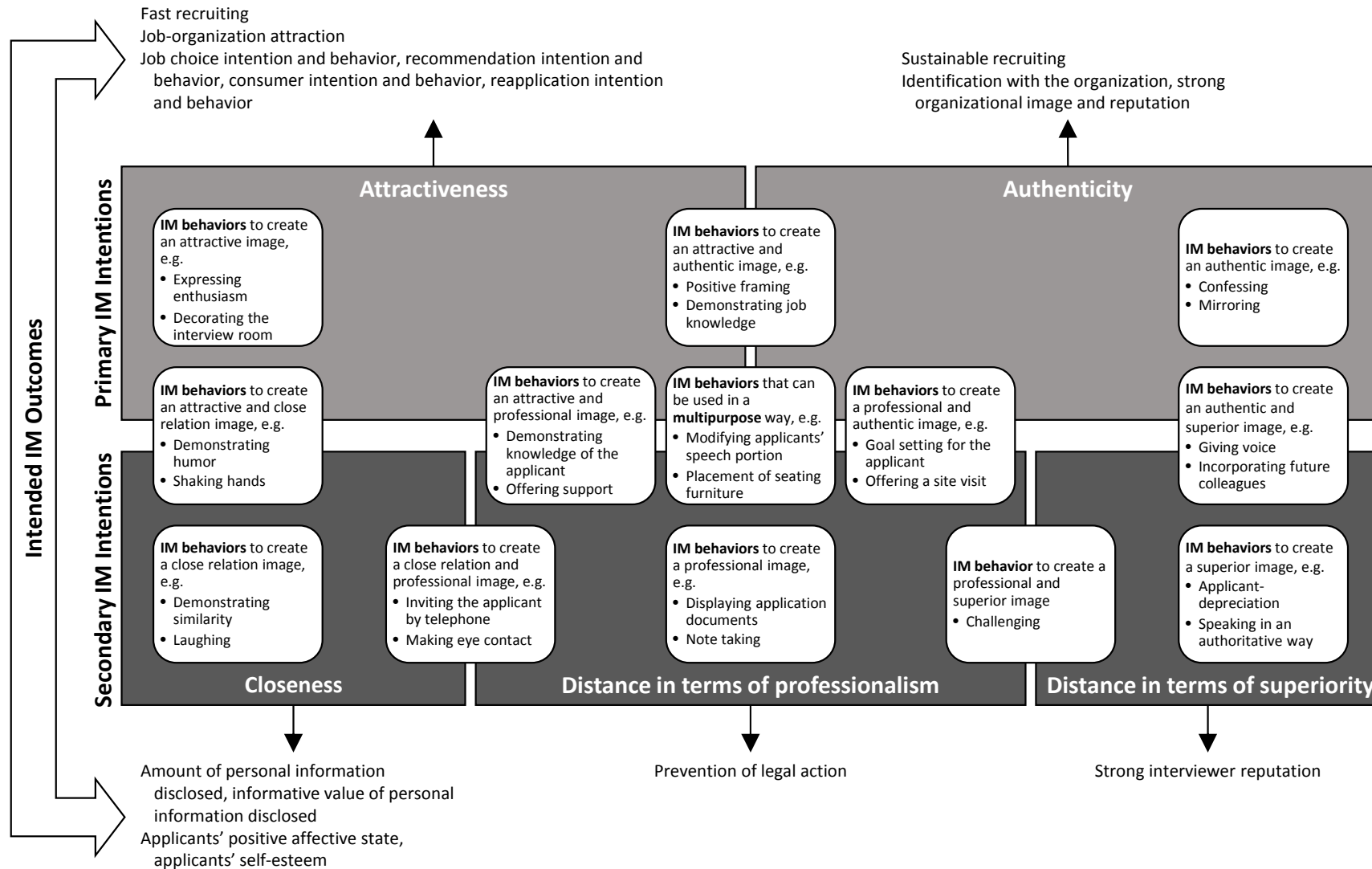


Figure 1. Conceptual model of how interviewers apply impression management (IM) in terms of IM intentions (light and dark gray, square boxes) and IM behaviors (white, round-edged cells), and why interviewers apply IM in terms of intended IM outcomes (at the end of arrows outside of boxes). Behaviors (cells) are within or touching intentions (boxes) to indicate association. The IM behaviors presented in this figure are not comprehensive, but constitute representative examples of the links that were found between IM intentions, behaviors, and intended outcomes gleaned from Tables 1 to 3 to demonstrate the main patterns of these links.

Appendix A

Interview guide for in-depth interviews with interviewers

Examples of questions asked throughout the whole research process

- (a) In what ways are the kinds of impressions applicants form during your employment interviews important to you?
- (b) Could you please describe the specific types of impressions you want applicants to form during your employment interviews?
- (c) Would you please tell me how you behave during your employment interviews in order to create these impressions on applicants?
- (d) What outcomes can applicants' impressions lead to?

Examples of questions that were added later in the research process based on prior in-depth interviews and observations

- What kind of information about yourself do you present to create your intended impressions on applicants?
- How do you welcome applicants to create your intended impressions?
- Could you please tell me how you present negative aspects of the job or the organization to create your intended impressions on applicants?
- Would you please tell me how you interact with applicants after the interview to create your intended impressions?

Appendix B

Interview guide for in-depth interviews with applicants

Examples of questions asked throughout the whole research process

- (a) What kinds of impressions did you form during employment interviews you have recently participated in?
- (b) What specific types of impressions do you think the interviewers might have wanted you to form?
- (c) What interviewer behaviors did you observe that might have been intended to influence the impressions you formed?
- (d) What outcomes can applicants' impressions lead to?

Examples of questions that were added later in the research process based on prior in-depth interviews and observations

- What kind of personal information did the interviewers reveal that might have been intended to influence the impressions you formed?
- How did the interviewers welcome you?
- Could you tell me how the interviewers presented negative aspects of the job or the organization?
- What interviewer behaviors did you observe after the interview that might have been intended to influence the impressions you formed?

Appendix C

Observation guide used to observe actual employment interviews

Instruction: Please write down any actions you see and statements and questions you hear that may be relevant in terms of how and why interviewers apply IM. Please make sure to include specific examples (e.g., direct quotes). The following headings are meant to focus your attention on important aspects. However, please add further observations wherever applicable.

Examples of aspects documented throughout the whole research process

- Date
 - Location
 - Number of interviewers
 - Type of job vacancy
 - Duration of the interview
- (a) Observations *prior* to the employment interview
- Verbal, e.g. what interviewers say and ask
 - Paraverbal, e.g., how interviewers talk to applicants
 - Nonverbal, e.g. body language of interviewers
 - Any other aspect that may be worth further exploration in future observations and in-depth interviews
- (b) Observations *during* the employment interview
- Verbal, e.g. what interviewers say and ask
 - Paraverbal, e.g., how interviewers talk to applicants
 - Nonverbal, e.g. body language of interviewers
 - Any other aspects that may be worth further exploration in future observations and in-depth interviews
- (c) Observations *after* the employment interview
- Verbal, e.g. what interviewers say and ask
 - Paraverbal, e.g., how interviewers talk to applicants
 - Nonverbal, e.g. body language of interviewers
 - Any other aspects that may be worth further exploration in future observations and in-depth interviews

Examples of additional aspects that observers were asked to consider and document later in the research process (based on prior observations and in-depth interviews)

- (a) Observations *prior* to the employment interview
- Administrative, e.g. timeliness of the interview start
- (b) Observations *during* the employment interview
- Administrative, e.g. refreshments offered
 - Artifactual, e.g. seating arrangement, objects visible on the interview table
- (c) Observations *after* the employment interview
- Administrative, e.g. feedback to applicants