

Selling Oneself: Construct and Criterion-Related Validity of Impression Management in Structured Interviews

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Interviewee impression management has been a long-standing concern in the interview literature. Yet recent insights into the impact of impression management on interviewee performance in structured interviews suggest that interviewee impression management may be more than just a source of bias and a nuisance. Rather, impression management should possess construct-related validity and contribute to the interviews' criterion-related validity. These hypotheses were tested with 129 participants using a simulated selection interview aimed at university graduates. Results confirmed most of the hypotheses. In particular, interviewee impression management behavior showed construct-related validity across different structured interview types and correlated positively with interviewees' performance on subsequent typical and maximum performance proxy criteria. Implications and directions for future research are discussed.

Impression management (IM) is one of the most emergent areas in selection interview research (Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002). The high stakes and social interaction inherent in the interview create an ideal opportunity for applicants to engage in IM, defined as the attempt to control other people's impressions of particular facets of one's personality in social interactions (Schlenker, 1980). Contrary to the common expectation that structured interviews should be resistant to IM (Campion, Palmer, & Campion, 1997), several studies have shown that applicants do use IM behaviors—and use them successfully—in structured interviews (e.g., Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995), that is, past- or future-oriented interviews with pre-established questions and scoring guides (Janz, 1989; Latham, Saari, Pursell, & Campion, 1980). Studies have illustrated the frequencies with which interviewees use different IM behaviors (McFarland, Ryan, & Kriska, 2002). They have also addressed factors that predict IM behaviors (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Van Iddekinge, McFarland, & Raymark, 2007), as well as their consequences on hiring decisions (Ellis et al., 2002; Peeters & Lievens, 2006). However, to date, most of these findings rely on single data sets, and, what's more, whether and how IM affects the inter-

view's criterion-related validity is still unexamined and thus unresolved (Ellis et al., 2002; Weiss & Feldman, 2006).

IM in structured interviews may diminish the interviews' criterion-related validity. Anderson (1991), for example, suspected that "impression management by the interviewee . . . represents a potent source of error in interviewer judgments which may or may not be recognized as such" (p. 414). Thus, if interviewees misrepresent their job qualifications through IM behavior, then their interview ratings could contain error variance, which reduces the interview's criterion validity. Alternatively, Stevens and Kristof (1995) assumed that

many jobs require some ability to work effectively with others or the public. Conceivably, this ability may entail skilful management of others' impressions (e.g., fostering liking and cohesion in work groups and convincing clients of one's competence and professionalism). Therefore, applicants' IM success also may predict their future performance on these jobs. (p. 603)

Following this argument, IM behavior may even contribute to the interview's proven (e.g., Huffcutt et al., 2004) criterion-related validity because the type of IM behavior successfully used during the interview will also improve the performance measured in the criterion.

In the current study, we address the issue of IM construct and criterion-related validity, building on earlier findings on IM in structured interviews. Past research has shown that the use of specific IM behaviors in structured interviews is a meaningful function of the interview requirements (Ellis et al., 2002) and of stable personality differences (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007). Being a meaningful expression of a candidate's personality, we argue that IM behavior represents a relatively stable behavioral expression or manifestation of individuals' behavioral style. In this sense, the first major contribution of this study lies in building and testing the assumption that participants' use of IM behaviors should possess good convergent and discriminant validity across structured interviews—much in contrast to the construct validity that has been reported for the performance dimensions that are originally being targeted in structured interviews (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Huffcutt, Conway, Roth, & Stone, 2001; Melchers, Kleinmann, Richter, König, & Klehe, 2004; Schuler & Funke, 1989; Van Iddekinge, Raymark, Eidson, & Attenweiler, 2004). Second, if the aforementioned arguments hold true, then the adequate use of IM behavior in structured interviews could additionally contribute to the interviews' criterion-related validity. Both the internal construct validity of IM in structured interviews and the relationship between these IM behaviors in the interview and subsequent job-related behaviors have never been tested. Therefore we try to close this gap, shedding more light onto both the construct and criterion-related validity of IM behavior in structured interviews.

IM BEHAVIOR IN STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

IM is often divided into assertive and defensive behavior. "Assertive IM behavior is used to acquire and promote favorable impressions and consists of both ingratiation and self-promotion" (Tedeschi & Norman, 1985, p.1201). Ingratiation behavior aims at evoking interpersonal liking, for example, by flattering the interviewer or by emphasizing common values between the interviewer and oneself. Self-promotion is done to evoke attributions of competence. The applicants try to convince the interviewers of their job-relevant qualities. Examples of such behaviors are self-promoting utterances, enhancements, or entitlements.

In contrast, defensive IM behavior is designed to repair or protect one's image. Although different defensive behaviors exist, the most prominent are excuses and justification (cf. Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Excuses serve to reduce one's own responsibility for a negative outcome, for example, by explaining why other factors are responsible for such an outcome rather than the interviewee himself or herself. In the case of justifications, the interviewee accepts responsibility for a negative behavior or outcome but suggests that there were good reasons to show this behavior. For instance, one may justify one's behavior by presenting a past decision as a judgment call in which the chosen course of action appeared to outperform the obvious alternative.

Although research on IM in structured interviews is relatively scarce, the few studies that exist largely converge on the finding that structured interviews are not immune to the use of IM. In combination, results from these few studies (Ellis et al., 2002; McFarland et al., 2002; Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007) suggest that (a) interviewees show more assertive than defensive IM behaviors, (b) interviewees rely more heavily on ingratiation when answering future-oriented questions and rely more heavily on self-promotion when answering past-oriented questions, and (c) the use of these assertive techniques leads to a better evaluation by the interviewers. Because, there is very limited published research in this area, as previously stated, we tried first to reproduce these results as a basis for subsequent novel assumptions. Therefore, we assume that

- H1: Participants show more assertive than defensive IM in both (a) past- and (b) future-oriented structured interviews.
- H2: Participants show (a) more self-promotion when answering past-oriented interview questions and (b) more ingratiation when answering future-oriented interview questions.
- H3: Participants' use of (a) self promotion and (b) ingratiation is positively related to interviewers' evaluations.

CONSTRUCT-RELATED VALIDITY OF IM BEHAVIOR

Structured interviews have been developed to assess an abundance of different job-related constructs (Huffcutt et al., 2001), yet studies investigating the dimensional format of structured interviews raise considerable doubt about the interviews' construct-related validity (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Huffcutt et al., 2001; Melchers, Kleinmann, Richter, König, & Klehe, 2004; Schuler & Funke, 1989; Van Iddekinge et al., 2004). Targeting identical dimensions with different sets of questions (e.g., with past- and future-oriented questions), multitrait-multimethod (MTMM) analyses consistently reveal that correlations between evaluations of identical dimensions with different sets of questions (i.e., the interviews' convergent validity) fail to be notably larger than correlations between evaluations of different dimensions within only one set of questions (i.e., the interviews' discriminant validity). This indicates that the constructs that the interview is intended to measure are only of limited importance for interviewers' actual performance ratings—and thus that they do not sufficiently explain the interviews' criterion-related validity.

What about IM behaviors? The classic literature on IM during selection interviews assumes that these behaviors present undesirable error variance (e.g., Anderson, 1991), yet no research has actually tested whether individually different uses of IM behaviors show any consistency or internal construct-related validity across structured interviews. The internal construct-related validity of IM is particularly interesting given recent findings suggesting that IM is neither random nor a

mere function of the selection situation: Peeters and Lievens (2006) as well as Van Iddekinge et al. (2007) found that both assertive and defensive IM behaviors were a function of stable individual difference variables such as self-monitoring, self-esteem, locus of control, and specific facets of the Big Five personality dimensions. As Peeters and Lievens argued, IM behavior can be considered behavioral manifestations of underlying traits (see also Ferris & Judge, 1991). Similarly, Van Iddekinge et al. (2007) concluded “that verbal IM behaviors appear to have a dispositional component that is related to personality” (p. 768). Yet, if IM behaviors have a dispositional component, this would imply that these behaviors are somehow consistent and that applicants reliably differ in their use of different IM behaviors. IM could thus be regarded as individually specific behavioral patterns. In other words, unlike the behavioral dimensions originally targeted in the interviews, IM behavior should also show internal construct-related validity. Correlations between evaluations of identical IM behaviors with different sets of questions should be notably larger than correlations between evaluations of different IM behaviors within only one set of questions.

H4: The different IM behaviors exhibited in a structured interview have high internal construct-related validity (i.e., higher convergent than discriminant validity coefficients).

EFFECTS OF IM BEHAVIOR ON THE INTERVIEWS’ CRITERION-RELATED VALIDITY

Underlying the long standing concern that IM represents an undesirable source of error which reduces the interviews’ criterion validity (e.g., Anderson, 1991) is the primary assumption that applicants’ IM behavior during interviews comes from their desire to do particularly well during the high-stakes selection situation. This IM behavior would then have no predictive value for applicants’ performance in day-to-day working situations.

At the same time, assertive IM behaviors in structured interviews improve interview ratings (e.g., Ellis et al., 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995) and these ratings, in turn, are good predictors of job performance (e.g., McDaniel, Whetzel, Schmidt, & Maurer, 1994). Ellis et al. (2002) therefore speculated that specific IM behaviors may even be criterion relevant for certain jobs (p. 1206 ff.). Similarly, Van Iddekinge et al. (2007) argued that “if IM behaviors influence interview ratings, and if IM similarly influences measures of on-the-job performance, then IM may enhance the predictive validity of interviewer ratings for predicted valued outcomes such as job performance” (p. 770).

In line with this argument, research on job performance ratings has found that assertive IM can also raise supervisors’ (e.g., Barrick, Shaffer, & DeGrassi, 2009; Chen & Fang, 2008; Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska, & Shaw, 2007; Zivnuska, Kacmar, Witt, Carlson, & Bratton, 2004) and colleagues’ evaluations of people’s performance. For example, Nguyen, Seers, and Hartman (2008) found that when group members evaluated a colleague high on ingratiation they also evaluated this person high on altruism. Bolino and Turnley (2003) found that nonaggressive assertive IM behavior was associated with more interpersonal liking among group members. Conceptually speaking, most jobs include at least some component of social interaction during which both performers and their teams will benefit from interpersonal influence and persuasion. Supervisors, colleagues, and subordinates may well expect people skilled in IM to have valuable abilities that also contribute to the goals of the work group or organization. Consequently, we assume that assertive IM during structured interviews is not merely a source of error that reduces the interviews’

criterion related validity but that assertive IM will actively contribute to the interviews' criterion-related validity.

When addressing criterion-related validity, it is important to decide which criterion one is actually interested in (e.g., Guion, 1991; Klehe & Latham, 2006). More specifically, Sackett (2007; Sackett, Zedeck, & Fogli, 1988) proposed a continuum between maximum and typical performance criteria, that is, performance in short, evaluative situations in which people show what they *can* do when highly motivated (maximum performance) on the one hand and non evaluative day-to-day working situations which reveal what people *will* do (typical performance) on the other hand.

This distinction, an adaptation of Cronbach's (1960) differentiation in the selection literature of typical versus maximal predictors of performance, is particularly relevant in relation to applicant interviews because interview situations resemble maximum performance situations (more than typical performance situations) due to the evaluative nature of the situation and the necessity to perform at one's best (Klehe & Latham, 2006). Consequently, we assume that

H5: The use of assertive IM behavior in the interview is (a) positively related to interviewees' performance in maximum performance situations, and (b) more strongly related to interviewees' performance in maximum performance than in typical performance situations.

The previous hypotheses are likely to be confirmed just based on the similarity between maximum performance situations and the applicant interview context. Yet, as noted earlier, we assume that IM presented in structured interviews is more than a mere reaction to the situational demand to sell oneself. Rather, we assume that IM behaviors represent stable behavioral patterns in line with Peeters and Lievens's (2006) argument that "candidates appear to choose the specific IM tactics that match their own personality traits" (p. 210). Thus, not only should interviewees' IM behavior during the interview generalize to maximum performance situations but IM should also have a substantial, albeit potentially somewhat reduced, criterion-related validity for the interviewees' behavior in typical performance situations. Thus, our last assumption is that

H5c: The use of assertive IM behaviors in the interview is positively related to interviewees' performance in typical performance situations.

METHODS

Setting

The present study relied on the research paradigm of a selection simulation procedure used and validated in earlier studies (Klehe, König, Richter, Kleinmann, & Melchers, 2008). This setting is usually perceived as very realistic by participants and as motivating to present oneself at one's best. For the purpose of the current study, this setting allowed us to conduct the interviews under standardized yet ecologically valid applicant conditions and to assess participants' IM behavior on clearly defined preestablished IM dimensions during the interview procedure. Finally, it allowed us to assess participants' performance during realistic job simulations of both more maximum and more typical performance situations on the same performance dimensions as they had been targeted in the interview (cf. Klehe & Anderson, 2007). Participant interest in the simulated selection procedure was high (after announcement, the online sign-up was sold out within 2 hr), and participants indicated that the situation felt realistic to them ($M = 3.78$, $SD = .85$ on a 5-point scale) and

that they had put themselves into the position of an applicant during the simulated selection process ($M = 4.15$, $SD = .56$).

Procedure

To enhance the realism of the situation and to give participants some indication about the requirements of the tasks, participants received a fictitious job advertisement about a management trainee position at an internationally active multitechnological company and they were asked to prepare a written application for this position. The study focused on the position of a management trainee because such a position represents a realistic and attractive job for university graduates from diverse academic backgrounds. The subsequent simulation lasted for 1 day, during which we first conducted the interviews and then assessed participants' performance on the more typical and more maximum job simulations. Participants were debriefed and received feedback about their results only after the completion of the study.

Participants

Target participants were university graduates who were applying for a job or would soon do so. Participants were recruited via an e-mail from the university's career center to take part in a professional hands-on applicant selection simulation program that would allow them to participate in a selection interview and to subsequently receive individual feedback on their performance. All participants signed an informed consent form stating that they might be videotaped throughout the procedure. Of the 129 participants (51 men), 25% held a master's degree, 29% an undergraduate degree, and 36% were still completing their undergraduate studies. Nine percent held nonuniversity degrees (e.g., apprenticeship) and 1 participant did not indicate his or her level of education. Participants were on average 28 years old ($SD = 5.0$) and had studied for 5 years ($SD = 2.0$) in business administration (36%); social sciences including law (29%), politics (3%), humanities (21%), and natural sciences (2%); and other subjects (9%).

Interviewers and Observers

To prevent rating contamination, the study relied on four independent and trained groups of interviewers and/or observers selected from graduate students specializing in applied social and/or work and organizational psychology. In all groups, sets of two observers rated independently the behaviors that should be assessed. The first dyad of interviewers/observers interviewed and rated participants' responses on the dimensions the interview had been developed to assess. The second dyad rated participants' IM during the interviews. On the criterion side, the third dyad of observers rated participants' performance in a subsequent more maximum job performance simulation, targeting the same behavioral dimensions that had been targeted in the interview. Finally, the fourth dyad of observers rated participants' performance on the same dimensions during a more typical performance simulation. In total, the study relied on the help of 42 interviewers/observers who underwent a 1-day training session and served as observers for about 24 participants each.

The 1-day training session in which all interviewers/observers participated had been tailored to their particular tasks. During the training, observers learned about their tasks (to conduct and observe the interviews or during the performance situations, respectively) and about the dimensions

that they were to observe (either the performance or the IM dimensions, respectively). Observers learned only about their own dimensions—and not about the dimensions observed in the other groups, that is, performance observers did not learn about the IM dimensions and IM observers did not learn about the performance dimensions. Training employed a frame-of-reference logic (Lievens, 2001) and was designed to achieve a homogeneous understanding of the rating scales and anchors among observers. Observers also received information about typical rating errors. As both observers and participants did not receive information concerning the objectives of the study, this study was double blind. Also, all four groups of observers did not know the evaluations provided by any of the other groups involved.

Behavioral Dimensions Observed During the Interviews

Targeted Performance Dimensions

Based on a job analysis for management trainees, subject matter experts had rated the following three dimensions to be most conceptually independent from one another and most assessable during the interview questions and the subsequent work tasks (see Latham & Skarlicki, 1995; Schuler & Funke, 1989, for a full description of this procedure): Planning was defined as prioritizing tasks, making plans for tasks and projects, making appointments in due time and allocating tasks. Leadership was defined as striving for and taking on responsibility for tasks and groups, coordination of teams, and arguing one's point of view within a group. Finally, Cooperation was defined as consideration of others' needs and assisting with others' problems as well as being prepared to compromise and to mediate between diverging interests and points of view.

IM Dimensions

Based on earlier conceptualizations (Ellis et al., 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995), IM was rated on the two assertive dimensions self-promotion and ingratiation as well as the two defensive dimensions justification and excuses. Self-promotion was defined in terms of behaviors such as embellishing and pointing out one's own extraordinary experiences, highlighting the relevance of one's own qualities and information, and explicitly presenting oneself as particularly competent for the current position. Ingratiation was defined in terms of pronounced friendly conduct such as expressing gratitude toward the conversation partner, praising the counterpart or pointing at similarities between one's own and the counterpart's experiences or perspectives. Justifications included behaviors such as explaining the reasons behind difficult decisions, rationalizing one's own behavior when this behavior might not be successful, or arguing that a negative outcome appeared like the best outcome possible, given the situation. Finally, excuses included behaviors such as finding excuses and belittling one's own responsibility for negative outcomes.

Interview

Questions

The interview consisted of two components: nine past-oriented questions and nine future-oriented questions. The past-oriented questions asked interviewees to remember specific situations

from their past and to describe their actions in these situations. A sample item is, "You'll certainly remember your undergraduate exams. You had to revise two years of material and reproduce it in short sequences. How did you handle the load of material that you had to learn?" The future-oriented questions confronted interviewees with hypothetical situations and asked them to describe what they would do in these situations. A sample item is, "Imagine that you become the new head of department in a branch office. Yet, your new employees don't have much confidence in you and behave a little restrained. What would you do?" In total, the past- and future-oriented questions took approximately 30 min to administer. As is common in interview studies (e.g., Conway & Peneno, 1999; Huffcutt et al., 2001; Melchers et al., 2004; Schuler & Funke, 1989; Van Iddekinge et al., 2004), a panel of two interviewers asked each participant all interview components in direct succession. One person read the questions and the observers recorded and scored the interviewees' answers.

Scoring of Targeted Performance Dimensions

The two interviewers/observers scoring the targeted performance dimensions per interview knew that three questions per interview format had been explicitly developed to address each of the three targeted performance dimensions and also knew which performance dimension was targeted by each question (in the previous example Systematic Planning for the past-oriented and Leadership for the future-oriented question). They recorded and scored the given answers individually on the basis of a behavioral scoring guide ranging from 1 (*weak performance*) to 5 (*strong performance*). The final score per interview dimension was averaged between the two observers. The average interrater agreement (i.e., the average correlation between the interviewers) was .89 overall (averaged across all three dimensions) and .90 for the past- and .87 for the future-oriented questions, respectively.

Scoring of IM Dimensions

The most common method to measure IM behaviors in structured selection interviews (e.g., Ellis et al., 2002; Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Stevens & Kristof, 1995) is via audiotapes or transcripts of interviews that trained observers are allowed to listen to as many times as needed to in order to arrive at definite conclusions. Judging from the interrater agreement (e.g., .87 in Ellis et al., 2002), this procedure renders an accurate estimate of interviewees' IM behaviors during the interview. In the current study, however, we decided to use a slightly modified procedure that more closely reflects the actual interview situation and runs more parallel to the assessment of the targeted performance dimensions. The logical reason why IM behaviors should influence the decisions of interviewers is that interviewers—consciously or unconsciously—perceive the IM behaviors exhibited by applicants during the interview situation. If the time available for observing, detecting, and coding such behaviors is considerably longer due to repeating tapes or transcripts, then observers may have more opportunity to detect IM behaviors than actual interviews would have in an "online" situation. Therefore, we decided to measure IM only during and not after the real interview process.

IM observers did not receive any information about the dimensions originally targeted by each question and did not receive the original behavioral scoring guide. Instead, their observation sheets asked them to note down candidates' responses and whether and how these responses re-

flected any of the four IM dimensions. For this purpose, their observation sheet was equipped with examples of IM behaviors for each dimension (e.g. embellishes his or her report; justifies past decisions). Again, both IM observers recorded the interviewees' answers individually and scored them immediately on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*weak impression management*) to 5 (*strong impression management*) for each IM dimension and each interview component. The final score per interview dimension was averaged between the two observers. The average interrater agreement (i.e., the average correlation between the observers) for these IM behaviors was .88 for self-promotion, .76 for ingratiation, .85 for justification, and .89 for excuses. In summary, these interrater agreements are comparable to those reported in earlier research (e.g., Ellis et al., 2002).

Proxy Criteria

We used a set of high-fidelity job simulations as proxy criteria for measuring both participants' more typical and more maximum performance on the three behavioral performance dimensions of interest in the current study (Systematic Planning, Leadership, Cooperation; see Klehe et al., 2008; Smith-Jentsch & Wiese, 2008, for a comparable approach). Each job simulation had undergone careful conceptual screening and empirical pretesting before finally being selected for the current study. To be included in the study, a job simulation had to allow for the unbiased and reliable observation of the three behavioral dimensions of interest (Systematic Planning, Leadership, Cooperation) and be moderately difficult. These simulations were observed and evaluated by different observers than those who had attended and observed the participants' interviews. Observations were made with the help of prevalidated observation schemes that provided behavioral examples for each of the same three behavioral performance dimensions and that asked observers to take notes about their observations during the performance simulation. Performance was scored between 1 (*weak performance*) and 5 (*strong performance*) on each of the three dimensions.

Maximum Performance Simulations

More maximum performance was estimated from the mean performance on four high-fidelity job simulations: Two simulations required participants to solve different problems in a group setting, one task was a one-on-one negotiation, and one was a presentation. During each of these simulations, participants were instructed to do their best. They faced explicit observation by two observers who recorded and scored participants' behaviors, thus highlighting the maximum performance nature of the simulation (e.g., Marcus, Goffin, Johnston, & Rothstein, 2007). The interrater agreement for the maximum performance simulation was .95.

Typical Performance Simulation

During the typical performance simulation, participants were without any obvious monitoring or announced evaluation or time pressure. Rather, participants were observed via a hidden camera of which they were unaware at the time of data collection. Participants were asked to work together in groups of two or three on deciding upon the scheduling of several events. For this purpose, they received access to a free meeting room in which to work and received the collection of events and tasks to be accomplished. Their task now was to decide on how to prioritize, coordinate, and schedule these tasks. Although participants' motivation was not constrained by any of

the demand effects possibly elicited during maximum performance situations (DuBois, Sackett, Zedeck, & Fogli, 1993; Klehe & Anderson, 2007; Sackett, 2007; Sackett et al., 1988), participants' behavior was recorded via a hidden camera and the videos were coded post hoc by the fourth group of trained observers. Due to technical difficulties and participants moving beyond the hidden camera's focus (they were free to move around in the room), the sample size for the assessment of participants' performance in the typical performance simulation is 85. Observers' interrater agreement for the typical performance proxy criterion was .80.

Manipulation Check

To ensure that our proxy criteria reflected more typical versus more maximum performance criteria, participants answered the eleven situational questions of the Typical-Maximum Performance Scale (Klehe & Anderson, 2005) after each typical or maximum performance task. Items addressed the degree to which participants perceived the situation as representing a typical or a maximum performance situation (e.g., "It was obvious to me that my performance was being evaluated" or "I understood and accepted that I should focus my full attention on the task"), answered on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

RESULTS

Descriptives

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and intercorrelations among the studied variables. Participants reported the proposed difference between the more typical ($M = 2.38$; $SD = .48$) and more maximum performance situations ($M = 3.38$; $SD = .48$), $t(121) = 17.54$, $p < .00$, $d = 2.08$, in terms of perceived evaluation, instruction, and duration of the situations.

H1

H1 assumed that interviewees would use more assertive than defensive IM behaviors in both the past- and the future-oriented interviews. Overall, these results were supported: Applicants used significantly more assertive IM behaviors ($M = 3.42$; $SD = .65$ for the past- and $M = 3.33$; $SD = .66$ for the future-oriented interviews, respectively) than defensive IM behaviors: $t(115) = 9.69$, $p < .01$ ($M = 2.72$; $SD = .80$), for the past-oriented and $t(115) = 9.50$, $p < .01$, $d = 1.08$ ($M = 2.70$, $SD = .80$) for the future-oriented interviews, respectively.

H2

H2 assumed that participants would use more self-promotion behaviors when answering past-oriented questions and more ingratiation behaviors when answering future-oriented questions. H2a was supported: The use of self-promotion was significantly higher during the past-oriented ($M = 3.45$, $SD = .83$) than during the future-oriented questions ($M = 3.36$, $SD = .85$), $t(125) = 1.96$, $p = .05$, $d = .25$. Yet H2b was not supported. Rather, interviewees again showed significantly more ingratiation when answering past-oriented ($M = 3.38$; $SD = .69$) than future-oriented ques-

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Intercorrelations Among the Studied Variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Performance past oriented interview																			
1 Leadership	3.20	0.69																	
2 Cooperation	3.17	0.68	.39**																
3 Planning	3.16	0.62	.28**	.18*															
4 Perf. overall	3.18	0.48	.79**	.74**	.65**														
Performance future oriented interview																			
5 Leadership	2.94	0.65	.28**	.30**	.16	.34**													
6 Cooperation	3.06	0.58	.34**	.39**	.20*	.43**	.33**												
7 Planning	2.88	0.57	.31**	.31**	.28**	.41**	.29**	.38**											
8 Perf. overall	2.96	0.44	.41**	.45**	.29**	.53**	.75**	.73**											
Impression management past oriented interview																			
9 Self-Promotion	3.45	0.83	.44**	.19*	.26**	.41**	.25**	.25**	.33**	.37**									
10 Ingratiation	3.81	0.69	.24**	.15	-.00	.18*	.17	.21*	.12	.23*	.47**								
11 Justification	3.30	0.84	.32**	.12	.23*	.31**	.24**	.18*	.34**	.34**	.68**	.26**							
12 Excuses	2.14	1.19	.11	-.05	.07	.06	.09	-.06	-.02	.01	.12	.10	.23*						
Impression management future oriented interview																			
13 Self-Promotion	3.36	0.85	.42**	.19*	.14	.35**	.26**	.25**	.29**	.36**	.81**	.45**	.69**	.17					
14 Ingratiation	3.30	0.67	.30**	.17	-.01	.22*	.25**	.24**	.15	.29**	.45**	.84**	.28**	.03	.50**				
15 Justification	3.36	0.87	.45**	.23*	.16	.39**	.25**	.20*	.29**	.33**	.59**	.37**	.76**	.21*	.71**	.37**			
16 Excuses	2.05	1.13	.25**	.07	.23**	.25**	.08	.14	.14	.16	.25**	.17	.28**	.72**	.22*	.12	.28**		
Performance criteria																			
17 Maximum	3.25	0.56	.26**	.08	.05	.18*	.23*	.13	.13	.22*	.26**	.02	.17	.00	.29**	.10	.14	.08	
18 Typical perf.	2.92	0.65	.22*	.05	.25*	.24*	.04	.18	.10	.14	.30**	.00	.10	-.19	.22*	.05	.14	-.12	.28*

Note. $N = 129$, except for typical performance, $N = 85$.

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

tions ($M = 3.30$; $SD = .67$), $t(125) = 2.25$, $p = .03$, $d = .29$. No differences emerged between the two interview formats in regard to the use of either of the two defensive IM behaviors.

H3

H3 assumed that both forms of assertive IM behaviors would be positively associated with interview success. As can be seen in Table 1, this assumption was supported for both self-promotion ($r = .41$ and $.36$, both $p < .01$, in the past- and future-oriented interviews, respectively) and for ingratiation ($r = .18$, $p < .05$ in the past-oriented and $r = .29$, $p < .01$ in the future-oriented interview).

H4

H4 assumed that the IM dimensions would show construct-related validity. We evaluated the interviews' construct-related validity for the IM dimensions via MTMM analyses. For these analyses we did expect convergent and discriminant validity for the IM dimensions.

Comparable to earlier studies (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Huffcutt et al., 2001; Melchers et al., 2004; Schuler & Funke, 1989; Van Iddekinge et al., 2004), we also evaluated the interviews' construct-related validity for the behavioral performance dimensions via MTMM analyses. Regarding the behavioral performance dimensions that the interviews had been developed to assess, we expected to find results similar to those of earlier studies in that the correlations between evaluations of identical dimensions with different sets of questions should fail to be notably larger than correlations between evaluations of different dimensions within only one set of questions. This means we expected the pattern of results to change substantially as soon as we entered the targeted performance dimensions instead of the IM dimensions into the MTMM matrix.

Table 1 includes the MTMM scores that resulted from correlating the mean scores for the different dimensions from the two interview components with each other. With regard to the convergent validity of the IM dimensions, the average of the three monotrait-heteromethod coefficients (using an r -to- Z transformation) were high (average $r_{\text{MTHM}} = .79$) whereas the discriminant validity between different IM dimensions within the same interview format was much lower (average $r_{\text{HTMM}} = .36$), thus suggesting that the IM dimensions do indeed show construct-related validity and supporting H4.

Regarding the use of performance dimensions, however, the result changed considerably. With regard to the convergent validity of the interview, the average of the three monotrait-heteromethod coefficients (using an r -to- Z transformation) was only $r_{\text{MTHM}} = .31$. This value did not surpass the interviews' average discriminant validity of $r_{\text{HTMM}} = .32$. Thus, the current interviews yielded the same results as reported elsewhere (Conway & Peneno, 1999; Huffcutt et al., 2001; Melchers et al., 2004; Schuler & Funke, 1989; Van Iddekinge et al., 2004), namely, low construct-related validity for structured interviews on the performance dimensions that the interviews had been developed to assess.

H5

Our last hypothesis addressed the prediction of actual performance, either in a more maximum (H5a) or more typical (H5c) performance situation. To test our assumption that assertive IM be-

TABLE 2
 Regressions Predicting Typical and Maximum Performance With the Help
 of Assertive Impression Management Behavior

Predictor	Performance					
	Maximum Performance			Typical Performance		
	β	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2	β	Adjusted R^2	ΔR^2
Step 1						
Interview performance	.23*	.04	.05*	.22*	.04	.05*
Step 2						
Interview performance	.13			.12		
Ingratiation	-.12			-.15		
Self-promotion	.30**	.07	.06*	.30*	.09	.06

Note. $N = 85$ for the prediction of typical, $N = 129$ for the prediction of maximum performance.
 * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

havior would contribute to the prediction of these criteria, we ran multiple regressions, controlling for the effect of interviewees’ overall interview performance across both past- and future-oriented questions in Step 1 and entering the proposed predictors, that is, the assertive IM behaviors, into the regression in Step 2.

Regarding the prediction of performance in the maximum performance situation, Table 2 shows that the significant prediction of behavioral performance based on participants’ interview performance in Step 1 ($\beta = .23, p < .01$) became nonsignificant in Step 2 ($\beta = .13, ns$), whereas the use of self-promotion in the interview became a significant predictor of behavioral performance ($\beta = .30, p < .01$), thus supporting H5a for self-promotion although not for ingratiation. In summary, interview performance and assertive IM account for 9% of the variance in performance during the maximum performance proxy criterion.

Results are highly comparable for the prediction of typical performance. Whereas interview performance could somewhat predict participants’ behavioral performance during the typical performance situation in Step 1 ($\beta = .21, p < .05$), interview performance became nonsignificant in Step 2 ($\beta = .12, ns$), whereas the use of self-promotion in the interview became a significant predictor of behavioral performance ($\beta = .30, p < .01$), thus supporting H5c for self-promotion although not for ingratiation. In summary, interview performance and assertive IM account for 7% of the variance in performance during the more typical performance situation.

In comparison, both the regression weights and the correlations between assertive impression management behaviors and performance did not significantly differ depending on whether the performance proxy criterion is one of typical or maximum performance. A comparison of dependent correlations via Williams’s t (Williams, 1959) revealed that maximum and typical performance showed no differences in correlations with either self-promotion ($tW = .56, ns$) or ingratiation ($tW = .39, ns$), thus failing to confirm H5b, although the explained variance for the maximum proxy criterion (9%) was a little higher than for the typical proxy criterion (7%).

DISCUSSION

Prior studies investigating IM in employment interviews have examined various effects of IM behaviors and their antecedents. However, these studies did not test the influence of IM on the criterion-related validity of structured interviews. Therefore, the purpose of the present study was to investigate how IM contributes to the criterion-related validity of structured interviews. Furthermore, we examined the underlying construct-related validity of the interview for both the dimensions targeted in the interview and for the IM behaviors shown by interviewees.

Similar to the scarce existing research, results from the current study showed that IM occurs during structured interviews and that it has a significant effect on interview evaluations. More specifically, people used more assertive IM techniques, that is, self-promotion behavior and ingratiation behavior, than defensive techniques. Also in line with prior research is the finding that participants' use of self-promotion and ingratiation was positively related to interviewers' evaluations. Thus, the findings obtained in the current setting are consistent with prior findings obtained in the field (cf. Ellis et al., 2002).

Also consistent with prior research is the finding that correlations between evaluations of identical targeted dimensions with different sets of questions (i.e., the interviews' convergent validity) failed to be notably larger than correlations between evaluations of different dimensions within only one set of questions (i.e., the interviews' discriminant validity). This indicates that the constructs that the interview had intended to measure are of little importance in establishing interviewer impressions of a candidate (Conway, Jako, & Goodman, 1995). At the same time, the current study makes several substantial new contributions.

Conceptual and Methodological Contributions

The first major contribution of the current study is the finding that the IM behaviors shown during structured interviews seem to represent both consistent and distinct individual difference variables across interview types. The different IM behaviors exhibited internal construct-related validity (i.e., higher convergent than discriminant validity coefficients) across structured interview formats. This result is not only in contrast to the dimensions that the interviews had been carefully constructed to assess but also in line with earlier studies suggesting that IM demonstrates external construct-related validity in the form of substantial and meaningful correlations with relevant facets of personality (e.g., Ellis et al., 2002; Ferris & Judge, 1991; Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Van Iddekinge et al., 2007). This suggests that instead of being a meaningless source of error due to situational demand effects, the impression management observed in the interview may reflect a consistent and simultaneously distinct aspect of interviewees' interpersonal style.

The second major finding of our study is that the relationships between applicants' IM behaviors during the interviews and subsequent behavioral criteria are positive and that IM is able to explain some of the interviewees' variance in both typical and maximum performance proxy criteria. This result indicates that IM behaviors can contribute to the interviews' criterion-related validity instead of being simply error variance. The finding that the prediction of interviewee performance with the help of assertive IM behaviors, predominantly self-promotion, did not differ between typical and maximum performance proxy criteria further supports the notion that IM behavior is more than a temporary response to high-demand situations. Some researchers have argued that applicant IM interferes with interviewers' decision processes (cf. Anderson, 1991). Yet the relation-

ship between applicant IM and interview validity may be more complex. Applicants may use a variety of IM behaviors. Similarly, interviewers may base their ratings on applicants' IM skills, even when job performance is unrelated to applicants' IM behaviors. In these cases, IM behaviors may indeed produce measurement errors that undermine validity. Alternatively, many jobs require individuals to possess the skills needed to work effectively with colleagues, subordinates, or clients. Conceivably, this should require a skillful management of others' impressions (e.g., by fostering liking and cohesion in groups and by convincing customers of one's competence). Therefore, applicants' IM behaviors also may predict their future performance for such types of jobs.

Finally, our results are based on a somewhat adapted measure of IM behavior. We believe that this measure presents a valid methodological contribution, since results may be even more realistic than video-based analyses for at least two reasons. First, although traditional studies on IM in structured interviews make every effort to ensure realism, the fact that interviewees know that they are being videotaped might have affected prior results (cf. Ellis et al., 2002). For example, Van Iddekinge et al. (2007) assumed that for participants "videotaping may have increased the "good subject effect" (Orne, 1962)" (p. 763), suggesting caution about generalizing results from videotaped interviews to real-life selection interviews. Second, videotaped evaluations of IM may overestimate the influence of IM, because observers have much more time to regard videotapes than interviewers have time in real settings to observe behaviors. Therefore a rating procedure in real life may be more conservative and adequate.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

A possible limitation of the current study lies in the fact that unlike a "real" job interview, the personnel selection simulation had no important consequences for the candidates. However, like earlier studies relying on comparable study paradigms (e.g., Kleinmann, 1993; Kleinmann, Kuptsch, & Köller, 1996), the procedure explicitly targeted participants who were looking for jobs and wanted to use the simulation to prepare for a real selection interview. In addition, our attempts to ensure the external realism of the setting were rewarded with more than 93% of participants indicating that they acted as though they were in a real selection setting. Also, the psychometric properties (e.g., interrater reliabilities), frequencies, and effects of IM behaviors on interview evaluations were comparable to reported values in the literature, thus attesting to the internal and external validity of our findings.

A second possible limitation may lie in the use of our concurrent proxy criteria. Yet unlike on-the-job performance measured in an organizational setting, the proxy criteria chosen for the current study allowed us a detailed observation of participants' performance on the dimensions targeted in the interviews under standardized typical and maximum performance conditions. Such a controlled setting was necessary to test the impact of IM on actual performance, rather than on supervisory evaluations of performance. Although they represent the most frequently used criterion measure in work psychology and in organizational psychology, supervisory evaluations of job performance are arguably not the best measure of performance itself (Murphy, 2008). In addition, they are influenced by performers' engagement in IM behaviors (e.g., Bolino & Turnley, 2003; Chen & Fang, 2008; Harris, Kacmar, Zivnuska & Shaw, 2007, Zivnuska et al., 2004) without us knowing how much of this influence is due to possible positive effects of IM on performance itself versus possible positive effects of IM on supervisors' *evaluations* of performance. Results of the current study suggest that IM is not merely an error or bias but that it actually con-

tributes to performance itself. Nonetheless, it would be interesting to test the relationship of IM in structured interviews with performance data obtained in an organizational context several years later.

On a related note, meta-analytic work has confirmed that consistently using the same job-related past- or future-oriented interview questions across candidates contributes to higher interview reliability and validity (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; McDaniel et al., 1994; Wiesner & Cronshaw, 1988). Yet whether IM contributes to or diminishes from these interview questions' criterion validity may depend on the nature of the job. If success on the job requires successful interaction with others, then IM in interviews may contribute to the validity, whereas for jobs without social interaction, IM during the interview may reduce the interviews' criterion validity. Future research should clarify the role of the regarded job attributes on IM effects.

Finally, Melchers et al. (2009) found that the degree to which interviewees are able to correctly identify the evaluation criteria (i.e., the targeted dimensions) considerably influenced their performance on both future-oriented and past-oriented questions. Perhaps applicants are not only motivated to identify the relevant targeted dimensions but also interested in using adequate and successful IM behaviors. The role of interviewees' cognitions in identifying such adequate IM behaviors is unexplored, however. Further research might clarify the role of cognitions that may influence interviewees to use or to avoid specific IM behaviors.

Conclusion

Although IM has a long research tradition, the extant literature leaves us with various unresolved issues concerning its effects. Results from the current study demonstrated that IM seems to play a significant role in determining interview outcomes. IM behaviors shown during structured interviews represented relatively consistent individual difference variables across interview types and the relationships between interviewees' IM behaviors during the interviews and subsequent behavioral performance proxy criteria were substantial. This indicates that IM behaviors may actually contribute to the interviews' criterion-related validity.

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