“Self-verification striving” means bringing others to know you for who you really are, which can be difficult during organizational entry. We predict that some individuals place higher value on self-verification striving than others and that these differences affect the organizational entry process. We present results from two samples of 2,673 people from 107 countries to show how self-verification striving is independent from related constructs (i.e., self-disclosure, self-monitoring, core self-evaluations) and is related to the validity of interviewers’ evaluations, job seekers’ ability to find satisfying work, and supervisors’ evaluations of newcomers’ performance.

The only problem was that, having got this man to fall in love with an unauthentic me, I had to keep on not being myself.

-Gloria Steinem

I prefer to be true to myself, even at the hazard of incurring the ridicule of others, rather than to be false, and to incur my own abhorrence.

-Frederick Douglass

When people join new employers, they get a fresh chance to define who they are. From their initial interactions with recruiters to meeting their new supervisors, newcomers have the opportunity to negotiate their identity through the way they act, the clothes they wear, and the way they describe themselves and their experiences. Thus, the process called organizational entry is an unusual period because identity can be negotiated—in contrast to most of life, when an individual interacts with people who have already agreed to honor the identities he or she has negotiated with them (Goffman, 1959; Swann, 1990). Organizational entry refers to the process of newcomers’ moving from the outside to the inside of organizations, a progression that ultimately results in organizational commitment and job performance (Kammeyer-Mueller & Wanberg, 2003; Wanous, 1977). As such, the identity that one fashions during organizational entry is important because it casts a long shadow on the future. After all, employment relationships generally are not fleeting interactions, and people spend many of their waking hours working.

What version of their identities, then, will people present? On one hand, the job search context is famous for its power to make people present themselves in the best possible way. In fact, research shows that many job applicants even pretend to have better traits, experiences, and abilities than they actually possess. Levashina and Campion (2007) found that 80 percent of job candidates engaged in “extensive image creation” during employment interviews (e.g., told fictional stories prepared in advance to showcase their credentials). Weiss and Feldman (2006) found that 81 percent of job applicants admitted lying at least once during an interview for a job, and the vast majority of lies were related to self-promotion (46%) and self-enhancement (51%). Moreover, inflating self-presentations in the organizational entry process may be effective, at least in the short run. Barrick, Shaffer, and DeGrassi’s (2009) meta-analysis revealed that applicants’ impression management tactics were positively related to interviewer ratings.

On the other hand, Gloria Steinem’s opening quote reminds us that it can be problematic when you pretend to be someone you are not. Consider a job applicant who misrepresents his past successes as a leader during his interviews and obtains a job in which he is expected to lead change in a dysfunctional team. Un-
information about themselves. However, even in this encouraging many people to present overly positive text of organizational entry, a situation that strongly

corresponds with their self-views. Swann and colleagues have presented strong logic for a basic human need to self-verify, or give an accurate portrayal of one’s self to others, based on both epistemic (e.g., feelings of psychological coherence) and pragmatic (e.g., ensuring that interactions proceed smoothly) concerns. In short, self-verification theory predicts that people will strive to preserve continuity in their self-views by bringing others to see them as they see themselves (e.g., Lecky, 1945; Swann, 1983; Swann, Stein-Seroussi, & Giesler, 1992).

A large and widening stream of research has shown that people do in fact gravitate toward relationships that provide them with evaluations that confirm their self-views, even when those self-views are negative (for reviews, see Swann [1990], Swann et al. [1992], Swann, Polzer, Seyle, and Ko [2004], Swann, Rentfrow, and Guinn [2003]). In fact, when people have negative self-views, they work to verify them by eschewing positive feedback in favor of negative feedback (Swann et al., 2003; Swann, Pelham, & Krull, 1989). Likewise, if people end up in marriages in which their spouses perceive them more (or less) favorably than they perceive themselves, they become less intimate with them (Swann, De La Ronde, & Hixon, 1994). In work settings, individuals with low self-esteem appear to prefer lower raises (Schroeder, Josephs, & Swann, 2006) and lower procedural justice (Wiesenfeld, Swann, Brockner, & Bartel, 2007).

In this article, we extend past research in two ways. First, we examine self-verification striving in the context of organizational entry, a situation that strongly encourages many people to present overly positive information about themselves. However, even in this “strong situation,” we predict that some individuals place a high enough value on the process and outcomes of self-verification striving that they continue to present realistic information about themselves. This perspective contributes to past self-verification research representing implicit or explicit assumptions that people are equally motivated to self verify. Second, we explore how differences in people’s self-verification striving affect the organizational entry process. To this end, we develop a measure of the self-verification striving construct, and we use this scale to test theoretical predictions about how self-verification affects the organizational entry process. In so doing, we provide initial evidence regarding the validity and nomological network of self-verification striving. Our findings come from two independent samples of 2,673 people from 107 countries pursuing employment in many different organizations and professions.

**SELF-VERIFICATION STRIVING DURING ORGANIZATIONAL ENTRY**

In a seminal paper, Swann described self-verification as the tendency for people to “promote the survival of their self-conceptions, regardless of whether the self-conception happens to be positive or negative” (1987: 1039). Self-verification has been conceptualized in the literature as a universal human need, since stable self-conceptions “provide people with a crucial source of coherence, an invaluable means of defining their existence, organizing experience, predicting future events, and guiding social interaction” (Swann et al., 2003: 369). Self-verification theory therefore predicts that when people form long-term relationships with others, they take pains to present themselves in a way that they believe is honest and realistic.

Although the logic for self-verification striving is strong and well supported, it has not yet been examined in the context of organizational entry, which provides an interesting setting for two reasons. First, there is a lot on the line when a person is interviewing for a new job and meeting potential supervisors and colleagues. It not only provokes anxiety to be evaluated by others in a competitive situation, but is also psychologically painful and financially impactful to be rejected for a job (e.g., McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). Second, the organizational entry process is ambiguous because neither party typically has extensive, first-hand knowledge of the other. Because people are more likely to present themselves positively when it is important that others evaluate them positively (Tedeschi & Melburg, 1984), many authors have argued that this ambiguity encourages applicants to skew others’
impressions of them (Higgins & Judge, 2004; Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Stevens & Kristof, 1995; von Baeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981).

The characteristics of organizational entry thus result in a “strong situation,” since it leads most people to construe component events the same way, induces uniform expectancies regarding the most appropriate response pattern, and provides adequate incentives for the performance of that response pattern (Mischel, 1973: 276). As such, organizational entry is a situation in which many people forego their natural tendency to promote the survival of their honest self-conceptions. To the extent that some job applicants value self-verification enough that they strive to self-verify despite the “strong situation,” it suggests individual differences as the explanation of that behavior. As Mischel noted, “Person (trait) explanations are invoked when the individual’s behavior is ‘distinctive’... that is, when it deviates from others’ behavior in the same situation” (1973: 262).

Our perspective is that the emphasis a person places on revealing either accurate or exaggerated information about him- or herself depends on the person. We propose that some people perceive greater value in self-verification than others, that people’s propensity to self-verify is relatively stable over time, and these individuals strive harder to ensure that their opportunity structures satisfy their desire for self-confirmatory feedback (e.g., McCall & Simmons, 1966; Swann, 1983, 1987). An individual differences approach adds an important perspective to the existing self-verification research stream, because it permits theory development about how individual variation in self-verification striving affects entry into new social settings. The basic prediction advanced in this study is that individuals who strive to self-verify are more likely to enter organizations in which they are satisfied and successful.

In proposing that self-verification striving should lead to better organizational entry, our research aligns with positive organizational scholarship, a field of scientific inquiry emphasizing the benefits of personal authenticity to both employees and organizations (e.g., Cameron, Dutton, Quinn, & Wrzesniewski, 2003; Kernis, 2003). Within humanistic and existential psychology, individual differences in authenticity have been important to understanding general well-being and freedom from psychopathology (Rogers, 1980). The core concept of authenticity is that (1) lying within each individual there is a true inner self that she or he can get in touch with through introspection and self-reflection and (2) only by expressing one’s inner self through actions in the external world can one achieve self-realization and self-fulfillment as an authentic human being (Guignon, 2004). Thus, authenticity has been described as “being one’s true self” (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005: 374) and as “the unobstructed operation of one’s true, or core, self in one’s daily enterprise” (Kernis, 2003: 13). Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, and Joseph’s (2008: 386) review of the literature suggested three steps to achieving authenticity: (1) knowing oneself versus being alienated from oneself (“self-alienation”); (2) behaving and expressing emotions consistent with the knowledge of oneself (“authentic living”); and (3) remaining true to oneself instead of conforming to the expectations of others (“not accepting external influence”). Kernis (2003: 13–14) described a similar framework, but he emphasized the unbiased processing of self-information as a separate process, and he focused on openness in close relationships rather than accepting external influence.

Although conceptually related to authenticity, self-verification striving refers to how important it is for people to promote the survival of their self-conceptions when they enter new social environments. As such, self-verification striving differs from authenticity in two ways. First, at its core authenticity demands that individuals be open to their true selves—that they “listen” closely to what their true selves are telling them about their values, interests, goals, and feelings. Thus, the concept of authenticity emphasizes discovering (becoming aware of) and living out (communicating or acting on) whatever one learns about his or her self. Although self-verification striving also emphasizes an awareness of self, it focuses more on trying to hold onto something that one possesses than on self-discovery. Self-verification striving therefore involves trying to preserve a sense of coherence about oneself, and authenticity is more concerned with the process of learning who one is. In this sense, self-verification striving might be classified as more defensive and authenticity as more exploratory.

Second, the concept of authenticity implies a global consistency between individuals’ behaviors and true selves—from the places people decide to live, to the careers and hobbies they pursue, to the relationships they foster. Self-verification striving also implies a consistency between self and behavior, but it is considerably more narrow than authenticity since the focus is on revealing information about self to others in social settings. Thus, a person who is living authentically might know herself quite well, and pursue a career and hobbies that are authentic, but not be motivated to reveal idiosyncratic information about herself when first meeting people in a new social environment. In fact, Kernis (2003: 14) suggested, fully authentic individuals might try on new selves in new social settings as part of the self-discovery and growth process.
In the present study, we focus on the more specialized concept of self-verification striving and how it affects organizational entry. Specifically, we conducted two investigations to provide information on the meaning and validity of the self-verification striving construct. In Study 1, we developed and tested the logic for why self-verification striving (1) helps interviewers evaluate job candidates and (2) helps applicants find work that makes them satisfied. In Study 2, we examined self-verification striving relative to other constructs in its nomological net (e.g., self-disclosure, self-monitoring, core self-evaluations), and we demonstrate its incremental predictive validity when predicting supervisor evaluations.

STUDY 1: THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

Interview Validity

Interviews have long been the most popular selection procedure used in organizational entry (Guion, 1976; Posthuma, Morgeson, & Campion, 2002). One of the primary goals of the interview process is to gather information about applicants so that interviewers can identify which applicants have the greatest chances of high future performance. Yet decades of research have suggested that, despite their widespread use, interviews are not very predictive of applicants’ future performance. For example, interviews appear to be less valid than work samples, cognitive ability tests, and tests of conscientiousness (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

One likely reason for interviewers’ low predictive validity is that many applicants are not forthright about themselves during interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2007). To the extent that an applicant only presents enhanced information, an interviewer is forced to base predictions on inaccurate information, which limits the validity of interviewer ratings. Our premise is that some applicants are motivated to be more forthright about themselves than other applicants, because they wish others in their new environment to understand both their capabilities and their limitations. Since interviewers receive more complete and realistic information from self-verifying applicants, they should be able to make better predictions about the future success of these applicants. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1. Individuals’ self-verification striving moderates the validity of interviewers’ evaluations in predicting future success in such a way that interviewers’ ratings of applicants high in self-verification striving are more positively related to future performance than interviewers’ ratings of applicants low in self-verification striving.

Work Attitudes

Many job seekers present embellished selves to obtain jobs. Unfortunately, after these individuals start working they may find themselves bound to inauthentic identities, which leads to feelings of isolation, hypocrisy, and dissonance (Morris & Feldman, 1996). We propose that when individuals strive to self-verify during organizational entry, their future work attitudes should be more positive for two reasons. First, “high self-verifiers” (people whose level of self-verification is high) make it more likely that their behaviors will match up with the expectations they created during the hiring process with future colleagues. Research suggests that consistency between one’s expectations of others and others’ actual behaviors increases trust, interpersonal attraction, and group acceptance (e.g., Whitener, Brodt, Korsgaard, & Werner, 1998). Thus, newcomers should experience better group dynamics when they strove to self-verify during organizational entry.

Second, high self-verifiers are more likely to locate and join organizations in which their colleagues confirm their views about themselves (Swann, 1987). Past empirical research has shown that when people enter relationships with others who verify their self-views, they feel more satisfied with interactions with those others (Swann et al., 1994; Swann & Pelham, 2002) and experience greater group identification (e.g., Polzer, Milton, & Swann, 2002; Swann, Milton, & Polzer, 2000). At the extreme, Waterman (1990) described how personal expressiveness can result in a feel of intense aliveness and an engagement that is closely related to peak experiences of interest and joy (also see Csikszentmihalyi, 2003). Extending this research to the organizational entry context, we propose that self-verification striving enables individuals to obtain jobs and join employers at which they are accepted for who they really are; such a situation results in greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Hypothesis 2. Compared to individuals low in self-verification striving, high self-verifying individuals are more likely to be (a) satisfied with the jobs they accept and (b) committed to the organizations they join.

STUDY 1: METHODS

Sample and Procedures

The goal of Study 1 was to examine whether applicants’ self-verification striving helps interviewers more accurately predict future success
within an organization (Hypothesis 1), and helps job applicants locate and join work environments where they are satisfied and committed (Hypothesis 2). To this end, we focused on a group of individuals who applied to, joined, and then graduated from the MBA program of a large southeastern university. We gathered data from three sources at four points in time. First, as part of the MBA admissions process, applicants were interviewed and evaluated by one of ten school representatives (interviewer identity was unrelated to students’ subsequent grade point averages). The average interview lasted 39 minutes. We obtained the interviewer evaluations for MBA applicants from admissions office records. We also acquired applicants’ background data (i.e., age, sex, graduate management admission test [GMAT] scores, months of pre-MBA work experience) to be used as control variables in the analyses.

Second, 9 months after the matriculated students had entered the MBA program, when they were pursuing summer internships, we sent them a survey assessing their self-verification striving. This timing seemed ideal since individuals were currently engaged in self-presentation and organizational entry. Of the 285 individuals to whom we sent the survey, 260 completed it (a 91% response rate). Participation was voluntary, and respondents were entered into a drawing to win a premiere parking spot for one week.

Third, after students graduated from the MBA program, we obtained their grades from the MBA program office. The grades were coded along a traditional numeric scale (i.e., 4.0 is the highest possible grade). We obtained grades for the entire target population. After merging interviewers’ evaluations of applicants, MBA students’ demographic information, their self-verification striving scores, and their cumulative grade point averages (GPAs), we had a sample size of 254 for testing Hypothesis 1.

Finally, 4 months after the MBA students had graduated and joined their full-time employers (15 months after reporting their self-verification striving), we sent them a final survey. This survey measured the graduates’ job search success (total number of interviews and total number of offers), as well as their job satisfaction and organizational commitment with the firm they joined. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were entered into a drawing to win an Apple iPod. Of the 285 individuals to whom we sent the survey, 191 completed it (a 67% response rate). None of the variables differed significantly between those who did and did not complete this final survey (i.e., interviewer ratings, self-verification striving, grades, age, sex, GMAT scores, months of pre-MBA work experience), except that white applicants were slightly more likely to respond than nonwhite applicants ($p < .05$). Of the individuals who completed the survey, 146 (76%) had accepted full-time positions and had started working when they received our survey. Thus, our complete sample size was 146 for testing Hypotheses 2a and 2b.

Our overarching goal in timing data collection was to follow the natural cycles in the environment we were studying. As such, our research decisions followed the advice of George and Jones, who noted that data collection “should be linked to the way that organizational members bracket their experience to make sense of it and derive meaning” (2000: 662). Thus, we waited until students had completed their academic careers as MBAs before assessing their grades. In terms of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, we waited until people had worked in their new environment long enough to learn about it, form relationships, and have a sense of their fit into the new environment. For this reason, we followed past organizational entry research that has suggested approximately three months as a period that should allow the entry process to reveal itself. As Bauer, Morrison, and Callister noted in their review, “Authors often use 3-month intervals to measure socialization-related variables, especially outcome measures” (1998: 156).

Measures

**Self-verification striving.** Given that the existing literature has assumed self verification to be constant across individuals, we could find no studies that measured differences in people’s self-verification striving. To create a measurement scale of this construct, we first generated 16 items using a deductive item-generation approach (Hinkin, 1998) based on the existing conceptualization of self-verification striving as presented in the literature (e.g., “It’s worth it to be truthful with others about my habits and personality so that they know what to expect from me”). The response scale ranged from 1, “strongly disagree,” to 7, “strongly agree.” We gave the survey to 265 MBA students of a large southeastern university who were all searching for internships (none of whom were part of our main study). The surveys were handed out in a class, and completion was optional.

One hundred thirty-seven MBA students completed the scale (a 52% response rate). On the basis of exploratory factor analysis results, we eliminated self-verification striving items that demonstrated low ($\lambda < .40$) factor loadings. We then eliminated items that had similar item roots to avoid spurious high reliability (e.g., several items started...
with “When interviewing for a job...”). We retained equal numbers of items focused on general self-verification striving and work-oriented self-verification striving to ensure adequate representation of the construct, although a comparison of the one- and two-factor models using LISREL 8.8 indicated a unidimensional construct rather than two separate constructs ($\chi^2[20] = 31.73$ vs. $\chi^2[19] = 26.29$). The fit statistics of the one-factor model indicated good model fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hu & Bentler, 1999) (NFI = .91, IFI = .97, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06).

For Study 1, we used the resulting eight-item scale shown in Table 1 to measure self-verification striving. We used a response scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree,” to 5, “strongly agree,” and the coefficient alpha ($\alpha$) was .85, suggesting robustness to different response scales. The eight-item scale resulted in a single factor with all loadings above .50 (average loading = .65), and the fit statistics from the one-factor model again indicated that the one-factor model fit the data reasonably well (e.g., fit statistics of the one-factor model were NFI = .95, IFI = .97, TLI = .96, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .05). Finally, we again examined the dimensionality of the eight-item scale to ascertain whether or not work-oriented self-verification striving is independent from general self-verification striving. The difference between the chi-square fit statistic of the one-factor model of self-verification and a two-factor model ($\chi^2[20] = 105.10$; $\chi^2[19] = 101.58$; $\Delta \chi^2[1] = 3.52$) did not exceed the critical chi-square-value ($\chi^2[.001, 1] = 10.83$), supporting a one-factor solution.

**Interviewer evaluations.** To assess interviewer evaluations, we gathered interviewer ratings from the school’s records. Each applicant was evaluated on four core competencies: communication skills, professional drive, teamwork experience, and ability to accomplish goals. Interviewer ratings of each competency ranged from 1, “unacceptable,” to 5, “exceptional” (top 2%). We used these competency ratings to create a four-item measure of general interviewer assessment ($\alpha = .75$).

**Job satisfaction.** We measured graduates’ full-time job satisfaction with the three-item scale used by Edwards and Rothbard (1999) that describes overall satisfaction with the job (e.g., “All in all, the job I have is great”). The response format was a

### TABLE 1

**Self-Verification Striving Items and Factor Loadings across Four Studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Pilot 1</th>
<th>Study 1</th>
<th>Study 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It’s worth it to be truthful with others about my habits and personality so that they know what they expect from me.</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. For me it’s better to be honest about myself when meeting new people, even if it makes me appear less than ideal.</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It’s important for an employer to see me as I see myself, even if it means bringing people to recognize my limitations.</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. When interviewing for a job, I try to be honest about my personality and work style.</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I like to be myself rather than trying to act like someone I’m not.</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I’d rather have people know who I really am than have them expect too much out of me.</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I’d be willing to take a little less pay in order to work with people who know who I am and what to expect from me.</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. When looking for a job, I work hard to find a place where people will accept me for who I am.</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
seven-point scale ranging from 1 = “strongly disagree,” to 7 = “strongly agree,” and the coefficient alpha of the scale was .91.

We measured organizational commitment with a ten-item affective commitment scale used by Jones (1986) describing feelings of personal attachment to an organization (e.g., “I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for”; 1, “strongly disagree,” to 7, “strongly agree”; \( \alpha = .81 \)).

**STUDY 1: ANALYSES AND RESULTS**

The means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability estimates for the Study 1 variables are displayed in Table 2. We used LISREL 8.8 to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis of all the items representing our measured constructs (interviewer evaluations, self-verification striving, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment). Results suggested a reasonably good fit of the overall measurement model (NFI = .86, IFI = .93, NNFI = .92, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .08), indicating that the measures were suitable for our study.

To examine whether interviewers can better predict future performance when applicant self-verification is high (rather than low), we used hierarchical moderated regression analyses. To provide better estimates of the hypothesized variables, we first input the control variables (i.e., sex, race, scores on the GMAT, and previous employment) because these variables are related to GPA (Bowers, 1970). Next, we entered individuals’ self-verification striving scores and the interviewer evaluations, followed by the interaction of the two. Before computing the interaction term, we centered the self-verification striving scores and the interviewer evaluations (Aiken & West, 1991).

Table 3 reports the results for the moderated regression analyses, where the outcome variable is cumulative GPA. As shown in Table 3, the interaction variable was a significant predictor of GPA \( (p < .05) \). We plotted the slope of the interaction one standard deviation above and below the mean (see Figure 1) and tested whether each simple slope was statistically significant (Aiken & West, 1991). Results were consistent with the theoretical predictions: when applicant self-verification striving was high, interviewers’ evaluations were positively related to cumulative GPA \( (\beta = .20, p < .05, \text{two-tailed test}) \). When applicant self-verification striving was low, interviewers’ evaluations were unrelated to cumulative GPA \( (\beta = -.07, p > .05, \text{two-tailed test}) \). These results support Hypothesis 1, indicating that interviewers can better predict applicants’ future performance when applicant self-verification striving is high rather than low.

There are two issues to think about when considering these results. First, the field study nature of this investigation led to range restriction of some variables. Many applicants who received low interview ratings or low GMAT scores were not selected and thus were not available for analysis in the study. For example, GMAT percentage was lower and more distributed in the full sample than the sample we analyzed (full sample: mean = 80.9%,

<p>| Table 2 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background (n = 254)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Sex (male =1)</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. GMAT score</td>
<td>86.60</td>
<td>11.21</td>
<td>.16**</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Previous employmentb</td>
<td>62.35</td>
<td>30.97</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Self-verification striving</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Interviewer rating</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.15*</td>
<td>.14*</td>
<td>.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. MBA grade point average</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Job search (n = 191)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Numbers of job offers</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Offers/interviews</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.18*</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
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<td>Postentry (n = 146)</td>
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<td>9. Job satisfaction</td>
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<td>.06</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.05</td>
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<td>.01</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.14</td>
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<td>10. Organization commitment</td>
<td>5.24</td>
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<td>.12</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.30**</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>.66**</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reliabilities are presented on the diagonal in italic. We did not include applicant race in the correlation matrix because none of the seven categories were significantly related to self-verification striving or to the outcome variables.

b In months.

* \( p < .05 \)

** \( p < .01 \)
s.d. = 16.5%; final sample: mean = 86.6%, s.d. = 11.2%). Likewise, the interviewer evaluations were lower and more distributed in the full sample than the sample we analyzed (full sample: mean = 3.40, s.d. = .79; final sample: mean = 3.59, s.d. = .57). Although range restriction is a natural element of selection decisions and reflects the external validity of our study, it means our results for interviewer evaluations are conservative, and it makes it difficult to directly compare the predictive validities of self-verification striving with GMAT scores.

Second, results suggested that the interaction term accounted for an additional 2 percent of the variance in grade point average. Clearly, there are many other (unmeasured) variables that affect students’ success in the program, although a change in $R^2$ of .02 is a reasonable effect size for an interaction analysis (Aguinis, Beaty, Boik, & Pierce, 2005), and interactions explaining as little as 1 percent of the variance may be important (Evans, 1985). The overall goal in the present study was not to demonstrate large effect sizes, but to show that the significant trend of results matches the predictions from self-verification theory.

In the next analysis, we used hierarchical regression to examine whether individuals’ self-verification striving predicted future satisfaction with their full-time jobs and commitment to their future employers. As shown in Table 4, we again entered the

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Grade Point Average</th>
<th>Grade Point Average: Hypothesis 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$p$</td>
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<td>Control variables</td>
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<td>Sex (male = 1)</td>
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<td>.57</td>
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<td>Black/African American</td>
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<td>.17</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>.73</td>
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<td>Did not report race</td>
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<td>GMAT score</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.00**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hypothesized variables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-verification striving (SVS)</td>
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<td>Interviewer evaluation</td>
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<td>SVS $\times$ interviewer evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Model $R^2$</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$ due to interaction</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ n = 254.
$^b$ In months.
$^* p < .05$
$^{**} p < .01$

### FIGURE 1

Study 1: Simple Slopes
control variables (i.e., sex, race, GMAT scores, and previous employment) because people’s work attitudes may depend on their demographic characteristics and “human capital” (Judge, Cable, Boudreau, & Bretz, 1995). We also controlled for the number of job offers obtained, because individuals’ labor market alternatives when choosing jobs can affect job satisfaction and organizational commitment (O’Reilly & Caldwell, 1981). In support of Hypotheses 2a and 2b, results revealed that self-verification striving positively and significantly predicted future job satisfaction and organizational commitment (both \( p < .05 \)).

Although our investigation focused on the effects of self-verification striving over the long run of organizational entry, it also is interesting to examine whether self-verification striving hurts or helps applicants in the short run of being offered a job. This is an open question because two countervailing processes may exist. On one hand, applicants who self-verify may be less likely to self-promote and appear less desirable than other applicants by comparison. On the other hand, being realistic about personal limitations may help build authentic relationships with interviewers and promote rapport. Thus, we examined two outcomes that offer insight into how self-verification striving affects job search success: total number of job offers received, and applicants’ conversion ratio of interviews to job offers (i.e., total offers received/total interviews). Controlling for the other variables in Table 4, we found no significant relationship between self-verification striving and job search success (for total number of job offers received, \( \beta = -.06, p > .42 \); for conversion ratio, \( \beta = .06, p > .40 \)). These results suggest that although self-verification striving seems to help over the course of organizational entry, in the short run it does not appear to interfere with job offers.

### STUDY 1: DISCUSSION

Study 1 demonstrated that differences in self-verification striving have meaningful effects on the organizational entry process—that is, the validity of interviewers’ predictions and job seekers’ ability to find satisfying work. However, Study 1 focused on MBA students and graduates, raising questions about the generalizability of the self-verification striving construct outside the MBA environment. Even more importantly, although Study 1 offered some evidence for the predictive validity of self-verification striving relative to other applicant characteristics (e.g., GMAT scores, work experience), it did not establish the convergent and discriminant validity of self-verification striving relative to other conceptually related constructs. In Study 2, we addressed these issues by first examining self-verification striving relative to related self-focused constructs. Then, we examined how self-verification striving is related to organizational entry and newcomer performance in an interna-
tional sample of job applicants for teaching positions in the United States.

**STUDY 2: THEORY AND HYPOTHESES**

A critical component of construct validation is showing the discriminant and convergent validity of a focal construct relative to related constructs, sometimes referred to as a nomological net (Cook & Campbell, 1979). In other words, one way to understand a construct is to examine whether it fits a predicted pattern of relationships between established constructs. In Study 2, we first examined the conceptual linkages of self-verification striving with self-monitoring, self-disclosure, and core self-evaluations. We then examined the relationship between self-verification striving and newcomers’ postentry success after controlling for these constructs.

**Self-Monitoring**

Self-verification striving is conceptually related to self-monitoring, since the fundamental postulate of self-monitoring theory is that “people differ meaningfully in the extent to which they can and do engage in expressive control” (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000: 530). Compared to individuals low in self-monitoring, high self-monitors are more aware of and responsive to cues of situationally appropriate performances, and they also believe that they have greater ability to act in ways that impress and entertain people, depending on the situation (John, Cheek, & Klohnen, 1996; Snyder, 1974, 1979). Thus, both high self-verifiers and low self-monitors should focus more on internal than external cues when deciding how to act (Snyder, 1974). In fact, self-monitoring has been conceptualized as a measure of self-promotion in past research. In their meta-analysis, Day, Schleicher, Unckless, and Hiller noted: “At the core of the self-monitoring construct are individual differences in the propensity for impression management involving the construction of positive social appearances (Gangestad & Snyder, 2000). A goal of impression management is to positively influence evaluations of oneself and to win approval from others” (2002: 390).

Conceptually, then, self-verification striving should be negatively related to self-monitoring, although we expect the negative relationship to be moderate for two reasons. First, self-monitoring theory focuses on whether people believe they possess the skills to diagnose and respond to social contexts (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986), while self-verification striving focuses on preserving one’s self-concept regardless of context. It is therefore feasible to be high in self-verification striving and high in self-monitoring (a man may, for example, know what behaviors a situation demands but intentionally presents himself in line with his self-image). Second, even though the self-monitoring scale appears to capture a single dimension (Day et al., 2002; Gangestad & Snyder, 2000), many items focus on individuals’ ability to act and entertain others (e.g., “I have considered being an entertainer”), which are orthogonal to self-verification striving. Accordingly, we expected self-monitoring and self-verification striving to be negatively related but independent constructs.

**Self-Disclosure**

Self-disclosure has been conceptualized as any information about her- or himself that a person communicates to another person—including descriptive and evaluative information—to foster belonging and intimacy (Collins & Miller, 1994; Jourard, 1958). Conceptually, self-disclosure should be positively related to self-verification striving, since both pertain to sharing personal information. However, self-disclosure is motivated by the development of close relationships, and self verification is motivated by a desire to maintain a coherent sense of self and to increase social predictability (Swann & Ely, 1984). From this perspective, self-disclosure is necessary but not sufficient for self-verification, since disclosed information is not necessarily true and does not necessarily include negative information. For example, an individual high in self-disclosure may frequently tell others about his positive characteristics (even those that he does not actually possess). Accordingly, we expect self-disclosure and self-verification striving to be positively related but independent constructs.

**Core Self-Evaluations**

Core self-evaluations refer to people’s global appraisals of their worthiness, effectiveness, and capability (Judge, Erez, Bono, & Thoresen, 2003). The key insight of self-verification theory is that people promote the survival of their self-views even when the views are negative, suggesting that core self-evaluations and self-verification striving should be orthogonal. However, past research suggests that it may be important to control for core self-evaluations when examining self-verification striving, since people with low core self-evaluations are less likely to present their self-views on specific dimensions than are people with high global self-esteem (Bernichon, Cook, & Brown, 2003). In fact, instead of exposing themselves to the possibility of rejection or criticism, many people with low core self-
evaluations adopt a self-protective approach to life (Baumeister, Tice, & Hutton, 1989). This stream of research implies that self-verification striving and core self-evaluations should be positively related but independent constructs.

**Effects of Self-Verification Striving on Newcomer Performance**

We theorize that, in analyses controlling for the constructs described above, newcomers will demonstrate greater postentry performance when they strive to self-verify. We conceptualize newcomer performance both in terms of effectiveness on the job and citizenship behaviors (i.e., prosocial acts not specified by a job description that benefit organization as opposed to individual). There are three main reasons why job effectiveness should be greater when people strive to self-verify. First, if individuals do not promise what they cannot deliver in terms of their skills and abilities, they are more likely to be selected into jobs they are actually suited to perform. In other words, high self-verifiers’ signals are less noisy than low self-verifiers’ signals, resulting in less problematic selection decisions and greater ability to perform.

Second, high self-verifying job applicants should present a realistic depiction of who they are and what can be expected of them. Accordingly, after entering an organization, these individuals can invest more of their energy in their jobs and less energy trying to live up to a false expectation they created. As Grandey (2003: 89) noted, when people try to display a self that is not true to themselves, they create a sense of “alienation from oneself” which increases emotional exhaustion and uses up cognitive resources that could have been focused on job performance.

Finally, high self-verifiers are more likely to join organizations that reflect their own personal values and goals, or what Swann and colleagues (2004) referred to as a “self-verifying opportunity structure.” This process also is consistent with Schneider’s (1987) attraction-selection-attrition model, which suggests that people and organizations are attracted to one another on the basis of value and goal similarity. Logically, the attraction-selection-attrition cycle should be particularly robust for high self-verifiers, since they place heavy emphasis on understanding and vocalizing their personal values in new settings.

For example, high self-verifiers are less likely to pretend to hold values that fit an organization’s culture just to get a job, and they are more likely to give more information that interviewers can use to deselect them if they do not match the organization’s core values and goals (Cable & Judge, 1997; Chatman, 1991). As a result, self-verification striving should increase value and goal congruence between employees and employers.

When individuals join organizations that reflect their personal values and goals, they find the work more personally meaningful and intrinsically motivating (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2003; Kahn, 1990; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). This is because intrinsic rewards (such as self-expression) increase the chances that people attribute their behavior to internal causes, which increases commitment to a course of action (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). As Kahn noted, “People have dimensions of themselves that, given appropriate conditions, they prefer to use and express in the course of role performances. To employ such dimensions is to drive personal energies into physical, cognitive, and emotional labors” (1990: 700). Thus, we predict that self-verification striving leads to greater congruence between personal and organizational values and goals, which ultimately should result in better job performance.

We also theorize that high self-verifiers should be more likely to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors following organizational entry. First, research has shown that when members bring the rest of their group to see them as they see themselves, they are more likely to feel recognized and understood, and the social integration of the group increases (Swann et al., 2000). Since high self-verifiers work harder to make others see them for who they really are, they should feel more integrated in their groups than low self-verifiers, which in turn should improve group cooperation and increase helping behaviors (Swann et al., 2004).

Second, as suggested above, self-verifying individuals should be more likely to obtain and accept personally meaningful roles where they identify with the broader organizational values and goals. Congruent objectives, in turn, make it more likely that employees do what is best for the organization without close monitoring, because individuals are more likely to understand and personally believe in the collective’s objectives (e.g., Ouchi, 1980). Thus, research has shown that value congruence between employees and employers increases trust and goodwill (e.g., Enz, 1988) and is related to citizenship behaviors (Edwards & Cable, 2009). To the extent that self-verification striving results in greater value and goal congruence, high self-verifiers should both (1) better understand what behaviors are most important to helping their employer, even when the behaviors go above and beyond a formal job description, and (2) experience greater intrinsic motivation to perform those behaviors.
Thus, we predict:

_Hypothesis 3. With self-monitoring, self-disclosure, and core self-evaluations controlled, individuals who strive to self-verify during organizational entry are more likely to be evaluated positively by their supervisors in terms of (a) job performance, and (b) citizenship behaviors._

**STUDY 2: METHODS**

**Sample and Procedures**

Our second study focused on a group of international job seekers who sent their application materials to a clearinghouse whose mission it is to match international teachers to school districts in the United States of America. We gathered data for Study 2 from five sources at three points in time, and we again based the timing of our data collection on the way that organizational members bracket their experience (George & Jones, 2000).

First, we acquired from the clearinghouse applicants’ background data (i.e., age, sex, previous international exchange experience) to be used as control variables in the analyses.

Second, immediately after completing the clearinghouse application process, applicants received an e-mail with a link to our survey, where they reported their self-verification striving, self-disclosure, self-monitoring, and core self-evaluations. Respondents also reported their conscientiousness, which we used as a control variable in the analyses, since research has shown conscientiousness to be a predictor of job performance (Barrick & Mount, 1991), and conscientiousness could be correlated with self-verification striving. Participation in the survey was voluntary, and applicants were informed that their responses would not be used in placement decisions.

Of the 5,221 applicants who applied, 2,419 completed our survey (a 46% response rate). The average respondent was 41 years old; 64 percent were female; and 3 percent of respondents had previous international teaching experience. In terms of the GLOBE cultural groupings (Javidan, Stahl, Brodbeck, & Wiederom, 2005), 28 percent of respondents were Latin American, 21 percent were Asian, 16 percent were Anglo (outside Europe), 6 percent were African, 6 percent were Anglo (inside Europe), 6 percent were Latin European, and 5 percent were Germanic European. Additionally, 10 percent of respondents were from the Caribbean region.

Third, of the 2,419 applicants who completed our time 1 survey, 508 were matched by the clearinghouse with a school and a teaching position. Three months after they began employment (18 months after completing the applicant survey), we sent each teacher a survey on which they again reported their self-verification. Participation in the survey was voluntary; we randomly selected two respondents to receive $35.00 gift certificates, and 236 teachers completed surveys (a 47% response rate). None of the teacher variables differed significantly between those who did and did not complete this second survey (i.e., sex, previous exchange experience, core self-evaluation, self-monitoring, self-disclosure, self-verification striving), except that older teachers were slightly more likely to respond than younger teachers (mean = 37.6 vs. 39.3; p < .05).

Finally, we sent a survey to each teacher’s principal to obtain measures of job performance and citizenship behaviors. We e-mailed a link to an electronic survey nine months after principals began their employment relationship with the teachers, just as they were completing their academic year. We also mailed a paper copy of the survey to nonrespondents after one week. The timing of this survey follows the way organizational members bracket their experience, because after one academic year principals must evaluate the teachers and decide whether to try to hire them again the following year. Participation in the survey was voluntary. Two hundred eight of 508 principals responded, for a 41 percent response rate.

**Measures**

For all the measures below, the response format was on a scale ranging from 1, “strongly disagree,” to 7, “strongly agree.”

**Self-verification striving.** We used the same eight-item scale used in Study 1 to measure self-verification striving. The coefficient alpha of the scale was .77 at time 1 and .85 at time 2; the test-retest reliability (r) over 18 months was .59, which compares favorably to the 12 month test-retest reliability of .55 revealed in Roberts and DelVecchio’s (2000) meta-analysis of dispositional (e.g., enduring, cross-situational) variables.

**Conscientiousness.** To measure applicant conscientiousness, we used Goldberg’s (1992) ten-item adjectives scale for the Big 5 personality traits (e.g., achievement-oriented, efficient, organized). The coefficient alpha was .68.

**Self-monitoring.** We measured self-monitoring with the 18-item Self-Monitoring Scale (Snyder & Gangestad, 1986). Sample items include “I can make impromptu speeches on topics about which I have almost no information” and “I would probably make a good actor.” The coefficient alpha of the
STUDY 2: ANALYSES AND RESULTS

To cross-validate the self-verification striving scale in a non-MBA sample, we first used LISREL 8.8 to examine the fit of the eight-item, one-factor measurement model (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996). The fit statistics indicated a good fit between the one-factor model and the data (NFI = .96, IFI = .98, NNFI = .98, CFI = .98, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .05), and a two-factor solution (with work and general self-verification) offered no improvement in fit (Δχ²[1] = .06). We also used LISREL 8.8 to conduct a confirmatory factor analysis and examine the fit of the entire measurement model, including both the predictors and outcomes (self-verification striving, conscientiousness, core self-evaluation, self-disclosure, self-monitoring, job performance, and organizational citizenship behaviors). Results suggested a reasonably good fit of the overall measurement model (NFI = .83, IFI = .92, NNFI = .92, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .09), indicating that the measures were suitable for our study.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability estimates for the Study 2 variables are displayed in Table 5. Results show that, as expected, self-verification striving correlated positively with self-disclosure (r = .44, p < .01) and core self-evaluations (r = .40, p < .01) and correlated negatively with self-monitoring (r = −.26, p < .01). Although the correlation between self-verification striving and self-monitoring was significant, it was relatively small in absolute terms, which could be due in part to the low reliability of the scale(s). We also ran a multiple regression in which the outcome was self-verification striving and the predictors were self-disclosure, core self-evaluations, self-monitoring, and conscientiousness. Although all predictors except conscientiousness were significant (all p < .001), the R² was .32, suggesting that the conceptually related constructs did not account for the majority of the variance in self-verification striving. These results provide some evidence for the convergent and discrimi-

Table 5
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations, Study 2a

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<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Exchange experience</td>
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<td>0.28</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>.07</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Hired</td>
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<td>0.20</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>.06</td>
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<td>5. Core self-evaluation</td>
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<td>.16*</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Self-disclosure</td>
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<td>−.10</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.02</td>
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<td>.32**</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Conscientiousness</td>
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<td>.02</td>
<td>−.24**</td>
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<td>−.02</td>
<td>.49**</td>
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<td>9. Self-verification</td>
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<td>0.72</td>
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<td>−.08</td>
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<td>.40**</td>
<td>−.26**</td>
<td>.44**</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Work performance</td>
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<td>−.14*</td>
<td>−.14*</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.12</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td>.20**</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<td>11. Citizenship behaviors</td>
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<td>−.12</td>
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<td>Employee self-verification</td>
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<td>12. Self-verification</td>
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<td>0.91</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>−.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>−.21*</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>−.04</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Reliabilities are presented on the diagonal in italic. n = 208, except for postentry self-verification, where n = 99.

* p < .05

** p < .01
nant validity of self-verification relative to the other related constructs.²

Predictive Validity

We used regression analyses to examine the validity of self-verification striving in predicting supervisory evaluations after 9 months on the job. We examined self-verification striving both as it was reported when respondents were job applicants (about 22 months prior to the supervisory evaluations) and when they were employees (about 6 months prior to the supervisory evaluations). We input control variables (i.e., age, sex, previous international exchange experience, and conscientiousness) to provide better estimates of self-verification striving. We also included the other conceptually related individual differences (i.e., core self-evaluation, self-monitoring, self-disclosure) to examine the incremental predictive validity of self-verification striving. As shown in Table 6, after the controls and the other self-related constructs had been entered, both preentry and postentry self-verification striving positively and significantly predicted newcomers’ work performance and citizenship behaviors. Thus, Hypotheses 3a and 3b were supported.³

² We initially did not collect data on individuals’ proclivities to self-enhance, because it was unclear if there should be a significant relationship with self-verification striving. On one hand, self-enhancement might be negatively related to self-verification striving, since it is difficult to promote the survival of your self-conception when you are exaggerating your strengths. On the other hand, low self-verification striving does not imply high self-enhancement (a person who is uninterested in telling others who he really is would not necessarily exaggerate his strengths; and even if you do not exaggerate your strengths, you are not logically required to communicate your weaknesses). We used the sample described in footnote 1 to examine this issue empirically. We administered our eight-item scale of self-verification striving, Kumar and Beyerlein’s four-item self-promotion scale (α = .79), and Levashina and Campion’s (2007) four-item image embellishment scale (α = .76). Results revealed that the correlation between self-verification striving and image enhancement was –.21 (p < .01), and the correlation between self-verification striving and self-promotion was –.03 (n.s.). These results suggest low to moderately negative relationships between self-promotion and self-verification striving.

³ Given that our data are nested, with multiple respondents being nested within cultures, it is important to diagnose the degree to which the nonindependence is problematic. To examine the effects of cultural groupings on our dependent variables, we created eight cultural categories based on the findings of the GLOBE Project (Javidan et al., 2005). We then estimated two separate unconditional means models to provide information about how much variation in the dependent variables (employee performance and citizenship behaviors) lay within cultural grouping and how much lay between cultural groupings. In each model, our hypothesized predictor was applicant self-verification striving, and we controlled for applicant gender, exchange experience, core self-evaluation, self-monitoring, self-disclosure, and conscientiousness. Variance in the dependent variable

| TABLE 6 |
| Study 2 Supervisor Evaluations Nine Months after Organizational Entry⁴ |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Preentry</th>
<th>Postentry</th>
<th>Preentry</th>
<th>Postentry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-Verification</td>
<td>Citizenship Behaviors</td>
<td>Self-Verification</td>
<td>Citizenship Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>−.21</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>−.18</td>
<td>.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex (male = 1)</td>
<td>−.16</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exchange experience</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>−.16</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Core self-evaluation</td>
<td>−.05</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-monitoring</td>
<td>−.07</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
<td>−.13</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>−.14</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>−.10</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>−.08</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hypothesized variable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-verification</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td>.00**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model R²</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* n = 208 for preentry self-verification and n = 99 for postentry self-verification.
* p < .05
** p < .01
Although we focused our study on the long run of organizational entry, we again examined whether self-verification striving hurt or helped applicants in the short run of job search success. Thus, we coded applicants in terms of whether or not they were matched to a school. After controlling for the other variables in Table 6, we found that results again revealed a null relationship between self-verification striving and job placement ($\beta = .01$, n.s., $n = 2,419$). These results confirm with a new, international sample that although self-verification striving seems to help over the course of organizational entry, it does not appear to hamper applicants’ ability to attain job offers.

**GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Organizational entry represents a strong situation in the sense that it encourages most people to present an unrealistically positive version of themselves. In the long run, however, it can be problematic when a person pretends to be someone she or he is not. Our perspective is that despite the strong situational demands created by the organizational entry process, some people place even greater value on bringing others to see them as they see themselves and are motivated to communicate both their capabilities and their limitations despite the potential costs.

This logic, combined with our results from two studies, suggests an individual differences approach to self-verification striving. This perspective represents an important contribution because to date, an assumption in the self-verification literature has been that self-verification is a human need and that all individuals are equally motivated to self-verify. Although some past research has examined when self-verification is more likely to occur (e.g., people are more likely to self-verify traits they are confident about [Chen, Chen, & Shaw, 2004; Swann et al., 2003]), no research has examined whether people differ in their motivation to self-verify in the first place. An individual differences approach to self-verification striving is useful because it allows theory development about successful entry into new social settings. This approach also shows the power and robust applicability of self-verification theory, even in surprising contexts generally assumed to operate according to the logic of self-promotion.

Our initial results confirmed that differences in self-verification striving predicted the fundamental outcomes of organizational entry. First, interviewers were able to make better predictions about the future success of applicants who reported higher self-verification striving. Next, high self-verifying job applicants found work that resulted in greater job satisfaction and organizational commitment after entry. In a different sample of international job applicants, self-verification striving predicted newcomers’ work performance as reported by their supervisors at the conclusion of their first year of work. Moreover, self-verification striving predicted newcomers’ performance after core self-evaluations, self-monitoring, self-disclosure, and conscientiousness had been controlled for, suggesting the unique value and predictive validity of the self-verification striving construct.

**Strengths, Limitations, and Future Directions**

One strength of this research is integrating self-verification theory into the organizational entry context. Most existing self-verification research has focused on dyadic interactions in lab studies, roommate selections, spouse relationships, and small team formation (for reviews, see Swann et al. [2003] and Swann et al. [2004]). However, self-verification theory clearly is relevant in the organizational entry context, and it provides an important conceptual balance to a literature in which self-enhancement theory is the prevalent theoretical perspective (e.g., Ellis, West, Ryan, & DeShon, 2002; Higgins & Judge, 2004). Moreover, organizational entry is a situation that is well known for causing even the most humble individuals to present an unrealistically positive version of their self-conceptions, therefore offering a conservative test of the power of self-verification theory.

A second strength of this research is that, to test our hypotheses, we developed and validated a measure of self-verification striving. Our results from use of this scale suggested that self-verification striving is a meaningful, unique construct that varies between individuals and is consistent over time within individuals. With a test-retest reliability of .59 over 18 months, people’s responses to our self-verification striving scale were more consistent over time than responses to many other personality traits have been found to be (Roberts & DelVecchio, 2000). Finally, results provided evidence for the independent position of self-verification striving relative to other constructs in the construct’s nomological network (e.g., self-monitoring, self-disclosure, core self-evaluations), and also demonstrated the scale’s predictive and discriminate validity.

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that could be attributed to cultural grouping was estimated to be zero for both dependent variables, suggesting that group membership does not bias our results (Bliese & Hanges, 2004).
Hopefuly, other researchers can use and build on this scale as they investigate individuals’ entry into new social environments.

Our methodology represents a final strength of the research. To help rule out alternative explanations for results, such as priming or mood effects, we gathered different types of data from multiple sources at different times. For example, in Study 1 we combined archival records of interviewers’ ratings with applicants’ reports of their self-verification striving, and we predicted their cumulative academic performance and work attitudes two years later. In Study 2, we used applicants’ self-verification striving scores to predict supervisors’ evaluations of their performance 18 months after reporting their self-verification striving. In addition, we tried to maximize the external validity of the results by gathering data from in-role respondents—that is, actual interviewers reported applicants’ interview performance, principals evaluated teachers’ performance, and individuals reported self-verification striving when they were interviewing for jobs. As such, we hope these studies help show the power of self-verification striving as it operates outside the lab.

Despite the strengths of this article, there are some limitations that can be addressed in future research. First, in this initial investigation we focused on demonstrating the effect of self-verification striving in the organizational entry context, but we did not test the reasons for the effects. In other words, we did not test different possible mediating mechanisms. It is possible that self-verification striving creates better organizational entry because (1) people are more likely to be selected into situations where they fit, (2) it helps newcomers form better relationships with colleagues, and (3) cognitive demands are high when an individual “fakes it” and tries to act “like someone you are not.” Clearly, future research is needed to extend our incipient research on this topic and offer better evidence regarding why self-verification striving leads to better organizational entry.

Next, the hypotheses in Study 1 were tested in the context of an MBA program. Although we did examine graduates’ attitudes about their full-time jobs after graduating, it is possible that MBA students are not representative of the broader population of organizational newcomers, and future research should examine how self-verification striving affects the work attitudes of other samples. Relatedly, we examined how self-verification striving moderated interviewers’ abilities to predict future performance, but we did not control for other possible predictor variables such as social “homophily” between the interviewer and applicant (Rivera, 2009), and as an outcome we focused on GPA and not performance in a work setting. In Study 2, we examined job performance and citizenship behaviors as rated by a direct supervisor, but it nevertheless is possible that supervisors could evaluate employees more positively if they trusted them more, or shared a more authentic relationship with them. Thus, it would be useful for future research to confirm and extend our initial results.

Third, it is possible that in Study 2, the observed relationship between self-verification and performance may be due to unmeasured variables. In Study 1, we were able to control for individuals’ cognitive ability and previous work experience, but unfortunately, we did not have these data for the international teachers. For example, if individuals possess higher levels of ability or more relevant knowledge, they may be more likely to self-verify (especially during organizational entry) and also have higher levels of performance. Although we did control for previous international teaching experience, conscientiousness, and core self evaluations, it would have been useful to have directly controlled for additional human capital variables in Study 2.

In this article, we only focused on the organizational entry process, but it would be useful to examine how differences in self-verification striving affect other interpersonal domains, such as team formation, relationships with domestic partners, family, and friendship interactions. It is possible that some individuals are more likely to self-verify in some relationships (e.g., friendships) but not in others (e.g., employment settings). It also is important to consider whether our self-verification scale may be more valid for more educated samples, towing to the complexity of survey items measuring subtle but powerful concepts such as self-verification. However, our international sample, whose members spoke English as a second language, responded well to the scale, suggesting that the linguistic difficulty of the scale was not a problem.

Next, we did not examine the basic issue of why some individuals strive to self-verify more than others. Theoretically, people should be more likely to self-verify during organizational entry, when work is an important part of their identity, so that the relationship between self-verification striving and future outcomes should be weaker when work is a relatively unimportant part of identity. Future research also may show that applicants strive hardest to self-verify elements of their self-views that are most important to them. Finally, it would be interesting for future research to examine whether self-verification striving is a conscious strategy versus an emergent behavior. For example, it is possi-
ble that some people are aware of the situational demands of organizational entry and the incentives to inflate their self-image but nevertheless believe that self-verification is the best approach, but others strive to self-verify as a matter of course, with less awareness of perceived costs.

Implications

First, our results suggest that in the long term, it may be advantageous for people to self-verify during organizational entry, attempting to bring others to know them for who they really are. Individuals with a strong proclivity to self-verify found their organizational entry to be better; they were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and committed to their organizations, and their supervisors rated them as better employees. These findings are an important complement to the existing organizational entry literature, which has highlighted the frequency of self-enhancement. Our general finding may be counterintuitive to many people, since many applicants obviously believe the best strategy is to engage in “extensive image creation” during organizational entry (e.g., Levashina & Campion, 2007).

Results from this study also may shed some new light onto the historically low validity of interviewer evaluations. For applicants who strived to self-verify, the validity of interviewers’ ratings was positive and significant, while interviewers’ ratings were unrelated to future performance for low self-verifying applicants. Presumably, this finding reflects the fact that interviewers can only make accurate predictions about a candidate’s fit with the environment when they have valid data to start with.

Our self-verification approach to organizational entry also offers a new rationale for why newcomers generally perform better when they have been recommended by existing employees (Breaugh, 1981; Lachnit, 2001). Specifically, it is possible that newcomers who are known by insiders are more compelled to act authentically since they are already bound to an identity, thus increasing their self-verification. Of course, future research is needed to examine these speculations from an initial investigation, and it would be interesting to examine the self-verification rationale relative to the differential information hypothesis for why referrals produce better hires.

A final implication is that organizations should find ways to persuade job applicants and newcomers to act authentically during the organizational entry process, since it can increase the satisfaction and performance of new hires. For example, in interviews, it may be advantageous to ask applicants directly what skills they feel most strongly about using and the values that they care about showing the most at work. It also may be useful to engage applicants in less formal selection practices than an interview, possibly allowing them to shadow potential peers for a day so that they become comfortable and exhibit their true self-views. After entry, research shows that creating a setting in which individuals feel free to express their personal views and values leads to greater innovation and creativity (e.g., Polzer et al., 2002; Swann et al., 2004), in addition to the attitudinal and performance outcomes demonstrated in the present investigation.

Conclusions

Given the strong incentives to self-promote in the organizational entry domain, it may surprise many researchers and managers that some job applicants are motivated to communicate self-reflective information when it is less than ideal. Fortunately, the self-verification research stream offers some balance to the self-enhancement emphasis in the literature, reminding us that people value stability in their self-views and are motivated to bring others to see them as they see themselves. The present article reveals that people differ in their propensity to self-verify and shows that when individuals strive to self-verify, they pave the way for smoother organizational entry.

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