

When Winning is Everything: The Relationship between Competitive Worldviews and Job Applicant Faking

Nicolas Roulin*

University of Manitoba, Canada

Franciska Krings

University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Job applicant faking, that is, consciously misrepresenting information during the selection process, is ubiquitous and is a threat to the usefulness of various selection tools. Understanding antecedents of faking is thus of utmost importance. Recent theories of faking highlight the central role of various forms of competition for understanding why faking occurs. Drawing on these theories, we suggest that the more applicants adhere to competitive worldviews (CWs), that is, the more they believe that the social world is a competitive, Darwinian-type of struggle over scarce resources, the more likely they are to fake in employment interviews. We tested our hypothesis in three independent studies that were conducted in five different countries. Results show that CWs are strongly associated with faking, independently of job applicants' cultural and economic context. More specifically, applicants' CWs explain faking intentions and self-reported past faking above and beyond the Dark Triad of personality (Study 1), competitiveness and the six facets of conscientiousness (Study 2). Also, when faking is measured using a response randomisation technique to control for social desirability, faking is more prevalent among applicants with strong vs. less strong CWs (Study 3). Taken together, this research demonstrates that competition is indeed strongly associated with undesirable applicant behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Applicant faking is a conscious attempt to misrepresent information about oneself during the selection process. Faking is common: Studies suggest that

* Address for correspondence: Nicolas Roulin, Asper School of Business, Department of Business Administration, University of Manitoba, 406 Drake Center, Winnipeg, MB, Canada R3T 5V4. Email: nicolas.roulin@umanitoba.ca

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between 81 and 99 per cent of applicants use faking to increase their chances of getting hired in employment interviews (Levashina & Campion, 2007; Weiss & Feldman, 2006). And faking is also frequent in personality tests (Griffith, Chmielowski, & Yoshita, 2007; Tett, Freund, Christiansen, Fox, & Coaster, 2012) or biodata inventories (Levashina, Morgeson, & Campion, 2009, 2012). Its consequences can be detrimental because faking produces bias and thus calls into question the usefulness of widely used tools in selection. It is a potential threat to the reliability (MacCann, 2013) and validity (Gilmore, Stevens, Harrell-Cook, & Ferris, 1999; Marcus, 2006; Rosse, Stecher, Miller, & Levin, 1998) of various selection instruments. Moreover, people who fake at selection are more likely to show various undesirable behaviors at work including lower job performance (Donovan, Dwight, & Schneider, 2014) and counterproductive behaviors (O'Neill, Lee, Radan, Law, Lewis, & Carswell, 2013).

Because of the risks that are associated with applicant faking, identifying the antecedents of faking is not only of theoretical importance but is also a practical concern of organisations (Arthur, Glaze, Villado, & Taylor, 2010; Stewart, Darnold, Zimmerman, Parks, & Dustin, 2010). Theoretical models of faking (Ellingson & McFarland, 2011; Goffin & Boyd, 2009; Levashina & Campion, 2006; Marcus, 2009; McFarland & Ryan, 2000, 2006; Tett & Simonet, 2011) as well as empirical investigations (e.g. Hogue, Levashina, & Hang, 2013; Levashina & Campion, 2007; McFarland & Ryan, 2000) have focused primarily on applicants' abilities and stable personality traits, or on the format and characteristics of specific selection instruments as antecedents of faking. In the present research, we draw on recent models of selection in general (Bangerter, Roulin, & König, 2012) and faking in particular (Roulin, Krings, & Binggeli, 2016) that assign a central role to various forms of competition, to explain job applicant behaviors. More specifically, competitive worldviews are proposed as a central person-level variable that explains applicants' faking (Roulin et al., 2016).

Competitive worldviews (CWs) describe a person's tendency to perceive the world as a "competitive jungle characterised by a ruthless, amoral struggle for resources and power in which might is right and winning everything" (Duckitt, Wagner, Du Plessis, & Birum, 2002, p. 92). Previous research has identified CWs as powerful precursors of negative social attitudes and behaviors towards social groups perceived as competitors in the struggle for limited resources (Duckitt, 2001; Leone, Desimoni, & Chirumbolo, 2012; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009). We argue that the influence of CWs goes beyond attitudes toward social groups and extends to job applicant behaviors at hiring, due to the competitive nature of the selection process where several applicants compete for one resource, i.e. the job. More specifically, we suggest that CWs are related to the extent to which job applicants will fake at selection.

This research contributes to the literatures on applicant faking, CWs, and personnel selection in several ways. First, we present three independent studies

that position CWs as key antecedents of applicant faking in employment interviews. These studies demonstrate that CWs are associated with faking (a) above and beyond other personality antecedents discussed in the literature (e.g. conscientiousness, the dark triad of personality, competitiveness), (b) using various measures of faking (i.e. intention to fake, direct self-reports, and a randomised response technique), and (c) in five different countries (i.e. the US, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Greece). Second, the strong relationship between CWs and faking, as revealed for the first time by this research, is in line with recent theorising that highlights the competitive nature of selection processes to explain faking (Roulin et al., 2016). Finally, this research demonstrates that the importance of CWs goes well beyond what has been shown by previous research on intergroup attitudes and extends to individual behaviors in competitive situations in organisational contexts. Therefore, this research opens the door to novel research questions to further explore the impact of CWs on behaviors other than faking.

Competitive Worldviews

People with strong CWs believe that the world is a competitive jungle that is characterised by a ruthless and amoral struggle for scarce resources. They believe that the world is a dog-eat-dog world where only the strongest survive and where one has to be ruthless at times in order to get one's way. The construct of CWs derives from a combination of personality facets (i.e. Machiavellianism and tough-mindedness) and exposure to, and socialisation in, social environments that are characterised by in-group dominance, inequality, and competition (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt & Sibley, 2010; Duckitt et al., 2002). For instance, people low on the personality traits of Agreeableness and Honesty-Humility have stronger CWs (Leone et al., 2012; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009; Van Hiel, Cornelis, & Roets, 2007). CWs are relatively stable (Duckitt, 2006), especially in adult populations (Perry, Sibley, & Duckitt, 2013b). Indeed, CWs are not likely to change over time unless "social situations change dramatically in an apparently enduring fashion" (Duckitt & Fisher, 2003, p. 202). Empirical studies confirm this notion and report substantial correlations between CWs measures taken at five-month ($r = .75$) or one-year ($r = .61$) time intervals (Sibley & Duckitt, 2013; Sibley, Wilson, & Duckitt, 2007).

Typically, individuals with strong CWs are more likely to seek power or dominance over others rather than collaborate. CWs are thus positively related with undesirable attitudes and behaviors, such as derogatory attitudes towards people perceived as competitors for limited resources. For example, individuals with strong CWs score higher on social dominance orientation, i.e. have a stronger desire that their in-group dominate other out-groups, and, indirectly, show more negative attitudes and negative emotional reactions towards minority groups (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002; Matthews & Levin, 2012; Perry,

Sibley, & Duckitt, 2013a; Perry et al., 2013b; Sibley et al., 2007). People with strong CWs also react more readily when the social environment is competitive, for instance when facing an economic crisis (Duckitt, 2001, 2006; Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Sibley & Duckitt, 2013). So CWs are particularly influential when competition with others is salient. For instance, individuals with strong CWs who live in less deprived areas and who thus stand to lose the most from changes in the social hierarchy are strongly motivated to maintain their intergroup dominance by displaying more negative attitudes towards immigrants (Sibley et al., 2013).

We propose that the influence of CWs reaches beyond attitudes towards threatening out-group members and extends to other attitudes and behaviors that are relevant for dealing with threats and competition. More specifically, we suggest that CWs' impact extends to applicant behaviors during organisational selection processes, and posit that job applicants with strong CWs are more likely to engage in undesirable behaviors such as faking, in order to deal with the competition in the selection process (i.e. to outperform other applicants) and increase their chances of obtaining scarce resources (i.e. the job).

Competitive Worldviews and Applicant Faking

Several theoretical accounts of applicant faking have been proposed (Ellingson & McFarland, 2011; Goffin & Boyd, 2009; Griffith, Lee, Peterson, & Zickar, 2011; Levashina & Campion, 2006; Marcus, 2009; McFarland & Ryan, 2000, 2006; Mueller-Hanson, Heggstad, & Thornton, 2006; Snell, Sydell, & Lueke, 1999; Tett & Simonet, 2011). Together, these models cover a broad range of antecedents of faking, including personal characteristics of the applicant such as stable and fundamental personality traits (e.g. conscientiousness, agreeableness), dark traits of personality (e.g. Machiavellianism), cognitive ability or self-monitoring. A few models briefly mention factors related to competition, but do not delineate their impact in more detail.

Competition as a person-level variable is most explicitly brought forward by Tett and colleagues (Tett et al., 2006; Tett & Simonet, 2011) and by Roulin et al. (2016). Tett and colleagues proposed competitiveness as an antecedent of faking, and define competitiveness as a personality trait that is activated by comparisons between the self and others in win–lose situations. Although Tett and Simonet's (2011) definition of competitiveness suggests some overlap with CWs, competitiveness and CWs are two distinct constructs. Competitiveness has been described as a bi-dimensional concept (Houston, Harris, McIntire, & Francis, 2002), with competitive individuals who enjoy competitive situations because they provide an opportunity for self-improvement (Ryckman, Hammer, Kaczor, & Gold, 1996), and those who enjoy competitive situations because they need to compete and win at any cost in order to maintain or enhance feelings of self-worth (i.e. hyper-competitiveness; Ryckman, Hammer,

Kaczor, & Gold, 1990). Although competitiveness has been extensively used to describe attitudes towards sport competitions, it is also associated with unethical decision making (Mudrack, Bloodgood, & Turnley, 2012). Alternatively, individuals high in CWs believe that the world is a ruthless jungle where they have to do whatever it takes to obtain scarce resources (e.g. a job) before others take them away, but may not necessarily enjoy competitions and winning (as individuals high in competitiveness do). Interestingly, we are not aware of research that has empirically examined the relationship between competitiveness and CWs, or between those two factors and applicant faking.

Roulin and colleagues (2016) outlined a model of faking derived from a signaling theory of personnel selection (Bangerter et al., 2012). They describe faking as an adaptive tactic of job applicants when applicants perceive that providing good but honest responses (i.e. signaling their true qualifications to the organisation) is not enough to get hired, because they have to compete with other job seekers (i.e. who also signal their qualities to the hiring organisation). In this model, competition plays a central role. It proposes several facets of competition as predictors of applicants' faking, on the level of the individual, that is, the applicant, as well as on the level of the organisation. Regarding the individual level, the model suggests that applicants with strong CWs are more likely to fake because they perceive the selection process as a competitive struggle, are more concerned about the behavior of their competitors and, ultimately, more motivated to do whatever it takes—including faking—to get the job. As mentioned above, CWs are activated and become particularly influential when competition with others is salient (Sibley & Duckitt, 2013). This corresponds to previous research emphasising the importance of the context for applicant faking, and showing that faking is more frequent in selection situations with a strong motivation to perform (e.g. Ellingson, Sackett, & Connelly, 2007).

Taken together, the above-mentioned arguments suggest a strong positive relationship between applicants' CWs and faking. Testing and establishing this relationship empirically is the main goal of this research, and an important first step to validate the proposition that individual differences in competition explain faking, as suggested by Roulin et al. (2016). More specifically, we hypothesise that applicants with strong CWs will be more likely to engage in faking than applicants with less strong CWs. We tested our hypothesis in three independent studies, and using samples from five different countries, as described in more detail in what follows.

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

We examined the relationship between CWs and applicant faking in three studies. Our central hypothesis was that CWs predict faking, above and beyond other core predictors related to applicant personality and context. We tested

our hypothesis in the context of employment interviews. Theoretically, CWs should be associated with faking in general and independently of the type of selection instrument that is used (Roulin et al., 2016). We chose to focus on employment interviews because we examined our hypothesis in several different cultural contexts. There are important differences between cultures with respect to the frequency of use of selection instruments; yet the employment interview is almost universally applied across cultures and far more frequently than any other selection method both in North America (Huffcutt & Culbertson, 2011) and around the world (Steiner, 2012).

To demonstrate the robustness and external validity of the hypothesised relationship between faking and CWs, we tested it in different samples and cultural contexts, controlling for various individual differences and context factors that were previously identified as correlates of faking, and using different measures of faking. Examining the robustness of the CWs–faking relationship in different cultural contexts is particularly important in light of recent studies that suggest that applicants from different cultures have different attitudes towards faking (Fell, König, & Kammerhoff, 2016) and that faking frequency can be influenced by cultural or socioeconomic factors (König, Wong, & Cen, 2012; Sandal et al., 2014). More specifically, in our studies, we tested the relationship between CWs and faking intentions controlling for individual differences with respect to the dark triad of personality in a sample of job applicants in the US (Study 1). Then, we examined the relationship between CWs and self-reported faking in past employment interviews, controlling for individual differences in competitiveness and facets of conscientiousness, in a sample of job applicants in four different European countries (Study 2). Finally, we compared rates of past faking of people with strong vs. less strong CWs using a response randomisation technique that is less prone to social desirability, in a sample of job applicants in the US (Study 3). Taken together, although the diversity of samples, variables, and measures that we used in each study does not allow for a direct comparison of the results between the three studies, it allows building a strong case for the importance of CWs for applicant faking during job interviews.

STUDY 1

As a first attempt towards examining the relationship between CWs and faking, we examined the link between faking intentions and CWs in a sample of US respondents. Furthermore, because faking has been described as being influenced by some of the “dark traits” of personality (e.g. Machiavellianism or Narcissism; Ellingson & McFarland, 2011; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Tett & Simonet, 2011) and because there is some conceptual overlap between CWs and Machiavellianism (Duckitt, 2001), we wished to show that CWs explain unique variance in faking, beyond these traits. Therefore, Study 1

examined the unique variance in faking intentions that is explained by CWs, above and beyond the dark triad of personality (i.e. Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy; Jonason & Webster, 2010).

Methods

Sample and Procedure. Data were collected from 508 US respondents, who completed an online questionnaire about personnel selection (24 respondents were eliminated because of incomplete data). Mean age was 30.6 ($SD = 10.2$), 38.3 per cent were women, 77.1 per cent were White, 10.5 per cent Asian or Pacific Islander, 7 per cent Black, 3.9 per cent Hispanic, and 1.4 per cent Native Americans. Most respondents had a university or college degree (54.4%) or had some college education (33.9%). The majority of respondents (58.3%) were currently employed, 23.2 per cent were unemployed, and 19.5 per cent were students. Respondents had applied for 27 ($SD = 87.3$) jobs on average, during the past 12 months and the majority of them (57.5%) were still actively looking for a job at the time of the study.

We collected data using Amazon Mechanical Turk, an online data collection system that has several advantages over standard Internet samples (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011; Landers & Behrend, 2015): It is relatively inexpensive, allows collecting high-quality and reliable data, and reaches samples that are significantly more diverse than typical American college samples. Respondents were instructed to imagine that they had been invited for an interview at a company that they would very much like to work for. The goal of this generic scenario was to trigger a strong motivation to perform and succeed (see Ellingson et al., 2007) and to avoid the priming of specific context information likely to shape faking (e.g. interview format or the organisation's attitude toward faking; Levashina & Campion, 2006, 2007). After reading the scenario, respondents indicated to what extent they would be willing to engage in faking behaviors if they were interviewing for that company that day. Finally, they completed the CWs and the three dark-triad-of-personality scales and provided demographic information. Respondents were paid \$0.30 for participating in this 10-minute study.

Measures. *Intent to fake:* We measured intent to fake in future employment interviews with 15 items ($\alpha = .92$) taken from the *slight image creation* and *extensive image creation* sections of the Interview Faking Behavior scale (Levashina & Campion, 2007). Respondents indicated to what extent they would be willing to engage in the described behaviors. Example items included "I would inflate the fit between my values and goals and values and goals of the organisation" or "I would claim work experiences that I do not actually have". Responses were indicated on a 5-point rating scale, with 1 = *to no extent* and 5 = *to a very great extent*.

Competitive Worldviews (CWs): We used the 20-item ($\alpha = .90$) Competitive Jungle Social World View scale (Duckitt et al., 2002). Example items include “it’s a dog-eat-dog world where you have to be ruthless at times” or “winning is not the first thing; it’s the only thing”. Responses were indicated on a 5-point rating scale, with 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Dark Triad of Personality: We measured the dark triad of personality using the 12-item scale by Jonason and Webster (2010). Reliability coefficients were good for all three traits: Machiavellianism ($\alpha = .81$), Narcissism ($\alpha = .81$), and Psychopathy ($\alpha = .81$). Example items included “I tend to manipulate others to get my way” (Machiavellianism), “I tend to want others to admire me” (Narcissism), or “I tend to be unconcerned with the morality of my actions” (Psychopathy). Responses were indicated on a 5-point rating scale, with 1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations are presented in Table 1. Correlations between CWs and the three dark triad traits were moderate to high (i.e. r s ranging from .29 to .60). We examined the relationship between respondents’ CWs and their intent to fake in an interview with regressions (Table 2). Age, gender, education level, and current professional status (i.e. student and employed, using dummy variables) were included as control variables in Step 1, together with the three dark triad personality traits. CWs were included in Step 2. Results showed a positive relationship between all three dark personality traits and intent to fake in Step 1, but only Machiavellianism ($b = .17$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$) and Narcissism ($b = .10$, $SE = .04$, $p < .05$) remained significant in Step 2. Moreover, CWs were significantly related to intent to fake ($b = .48$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$), explaining 7 per cent of unique variance, over and above the control variables and the dark triad of personality.

Although Study 1 examines the relationship between a stable individual difference variable (i.e. CWs) and a behavior in a specific situation (i.e. intention to fake), both variables were collected simultaneously, from the same person, thus raising potential concerns about common method variance. To explore this possibility, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses and compared a one-factor model that encloses all CWs and faking items in one factor, with a two-factor model where CWs and faking items are represented by two separate factors. After allowing some error terms of items within scales to co-vary (for modification indices > 20), fit statistics of the two-factor model were satisfactory (e.g. $\chi^2/df = 2.3$, RMSEA = .051, CFI = .911) and superior to those of the one-factor model (e.g. $\chi^2/df = 5.9$, RMSEA = .098, CFI = .655). These results suggest that the risk of bias due to common method variance in the relationship between CWs and intentions to fake as demonstrated in this study is limited.

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Main Variables (Study 1)

Scale	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Intent to fake	2.29	.79	(.92)									
2. Age	30.62	10.17	-.20**									
3. Gender	.38	.49	-.18**	.06								
4. Student	.19	.40	.12**	-.39**	-.09*							
5. Employed	.77	.42	.17**	.15**	.16**	.27**						
6. Education level	4.47	1.75	-.08**	.22**	.08	-.23**	.09*					
7. Psychopathy	2.18	.90	.39**	-.15**	-.28**	.09	.12**	.01	(.81)			
8. Machiavellianism	2.42	.89	.45**	-.12**	-.21**	.05	.18**	-.05	.61**	(.81)		
9. Narcissism	2.80	.90	.33**	-.23**	-.19**	.14**	.17**	.00	.29**	.50**	(.81)	
10. Competitive worldviews	2.24	.58	.50**	-.19**	-.31**	.14**	.15**	-.03	.60**	.51**	.29**	(.90)

Note: $N = 508$. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$. Gender: 0 = Man; 1 = Woman. Reliability coefficients are presented on the diagonal.

TABLE 2
Multiple Regressions Predicting Intent to Fake in Interviews (Study 1)

Predictors	Step 1	Step 2
Constant	1.47** (.20)	.77** (.21)
Age	-.01* (.00)	-.01 (.00)
Gender	-.06 (.07)	.02 (.07)
Student	.03 (.09)	-.01 (.08)
Employed	.11 (.08)	.11 (.08)
Education	-.02 (.02)	-.02 (.02)
Psychopathy	.15** (.05)	.02 (.05)
Machiavellianism	.24** (.05)	.17** (.05)
Narcissism	.10* (.04)	.10* (.04)
Competitive worldviews		.48** (.07)
<i>F</i>	21.80**	27.12**
<i>R</i> ²	.26	.33

Note: *N* = 508. Gender: 0 = Man; 1 = Woman; Values are unstandardised b-values, with standard errors in parentheses; * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01.

Discussion

As expected, results showed a significant positive relationship between CWs and faking intentions, above and beyond relevant personality traits. Moreover, we found significant relationships between both Machiavellianism and Narcissism and intent to fake that is in line with existing theoretical models (e.g. Griffith et al., 2011; Levashina & Campion, 2006; Tett & Simonet, 2011) and previous empirical findings (Hogue et al., 2013; Levashina & Campion, 2007; Mueller-Hanson et al., 2006). Finally, we observed significant positive correlations between CWs and the dark triad measures (i.e. especially for Narcissism and Machiavellianism). These correlations were expected, as the CWs scale is in part derived from Machiavellianism (Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002). However, importantly, results of this study demonstrate that CWs explain unique variance in faking over and above the dark triad personality traits, including Machiavellianism.

STUDY 2

In Study 2, we collected data from individuals who had recently had a job interview, as applicants, and asked them to recall their behaviors during this interview. We thus aimed to extend the results obtained with faking intentions at interview to self-reported faking in a past interview. We also wanted to test the relationship between CWs and faking in cultural contexts other than the US, to ensure that it is generalisable and externally valid. Therefore, we collected data from recent job applicants in four different European countries. We chose

Germany and Switzerland, i.e. two countries that experienced particularly low unemployment rates at the time of data collection (i.e. 4.9% and 3%, respectively), and Greece and Spain, i.e. two countries that experienced particularly high unemployment rates at the time of data collection (i.e. 27.3% and 24.5%, respectively). The choice of job seekers residing in these four countries provides an economic context that is quite different from the general economic context of participants in Study 1. Moreover, we included individual differences in competitiveness. As explained earlier, previous models have suggested competitiveness as an antecedent of faking (Tett et al., 2006; Tett & Simonet, 2011). Competitiveness is a stable disposition that is activated by comparisons between the self and others in win-lose situations (Houston, Farese, & La Du, 1992; Houston et al., 2002). It is related to achievement striving, a facet of conscientiousness that has been suggested to be related to faking too (Goffin & Boyd, 2009). Although it has been demonstrated that overall conscientiousness is negatively associated with faking (e.g. Mueller-Hanson et al., 2006), Goffin and Boyd (2009) argued that a more pertinent approach is to examine the specific facets of conscientiousness (e.g. dutifulness, deliberation) as predictors of faking. Therefore, we tested the unique variance in faking explained by CWs, above and beyond competitiveness and the six facets of conscientiousness.

Methods

Sample and Procedure. We collected data with the help of Qualtrics online panels (<http://www.qualtrics.com/panel-management/>). Because online samples sometimes show high levels of careless responding with long questionnaires (Huang, Curran, Keeney, Poposki, & DeShon, 2012), we included a number of screening measures to eliminate careless respondents. Individuals who did not have recent interview experience, had no memory of their interview, failed to respond correctly to an attention question (about their country of residence), or “rushed” through the questionnaire (using the industry standard of one-third of the median time to complete the survey) were automatically eliminated. The final sample consisted of 413 respondents, all of whom had participated in at least one employment interview in the last 12 months and lived in Germany ($N = 103$), Switzerland, ($N = 104$), Spain ($N = 102$) or Greece ($N = 104$). Mean age was 30.4 years ($SD = 6.2$), 49.4 per cent of the respondents were women, and 46.7 per cent had a university or college degree. Moreover 60 per cent of the respondents were currently employed (26.7% were unemployed and 13.3 per cent were students). The majority of the respondents (61.7%) were actively looking for a job at the time of the study. They completed the faking scale by basing their responses on their behaviors during their last job interview. Then, they completed the CWs, the competitiveness, and the conscientiousness scales. They were paid about \$10 for participating in this 30-minute study.

Measures. Faking: Self-reported faking was measured with the same 15 items ($\alpha = .94$) from the Interview Faking Behavior scale (Levashina & Campion, 2007) that were used in Study 1, but all items referred to respondents' behaviors during their last job interview.

CWs: We used the same 20-item ($\alpha = .84$) Competitive Jungle Social World View scale (Duckitt et al., 2002) as in Study 1.

Competitiveness: We used the 14-item ($\alpha = .86$) Revised Competitiveness Index (Houston et al., 2002) with a 5-point (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) rating scale. Example of items included "I get satisfaction from competing with others".

Conscientiousness facets: We used the six facets (eight items each, α s = .62–.80) from the NEO-PI-R Conscientiousness scale (Costa & McCrae, 1992), with a 5-point (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*) rating scale. Example items include "I pride myself on my sound judgment" (competence), "I keep my belongings neat and clean" (order), "I adhere strictly to my ethical principles" (dutifulness), "I work hard to accomplish my goals" (achievement striving), "I am a productive person who always gets the job done" (self-discipline), or "I think things through before coming to a decision" (deliberation).

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations for the full sample of Study 2 are presented in Table 3, and descriptive results for each of the four countries are presented in Table 4. In the full sample, correlations between CWs and competitiveness or the six facets of conscientiousness were moderate (i.e. r s between $-.05$ and $-.41$). The correlation between CWs and faking was $.46$. Regarding the main variables, the following country differences were observed: Faking scores were significantly higher in Germany (95% CI = 1.83–2.18) and Spain (95% CI = 1.89–2.21) than in Switzerland (95% CI = 1.52–1.78) and Greece (95% CI = 1.57–1.81). CW scores did not differ significantly between countries.

We examined the relationship between respondents' CWs and self-reported faking in the most recent interview with regressions, with the total sample and then for each of the four countries (Table 5). Age, gender, education level, and current professional status (i.e. employed, using a dummy variable) were included as control variables in Step 1, together with the six conscientiousness facets and competitiveness. CWs were included in Step 2. Overall, results showed a significant relationship of faking with competence, order, and dutifulness in Step 1, but only the relationship with order remained significant in Step 2 ($b = -.18$, $SE = .08$, $p < .05$). Competitiveness was not associated with faking. CWs were significantly related to faking ($b = .52$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$), explaining 9 per cent of variance, over and above the control variables,

TABLE 3
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Main Variables (Study 2)

Scale	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
1. Self-reported faking	1-5	1.84	.77	(.94)												
2. Age	-	30.35	6.18	-.09												
3. Gender	0/1	.49	.50	.11*	.14**											
4. Employed	0/1	.46	.50	-.12*	.12*	.09										
5. Education	1-7	5.15	2.13	-.04	.04	.01	.09									
6. Competence	1-5	3.64	.51	-.36**	.10**	-.10*	.06	.05	(.68)							
7. Order	1-5	3.40	.52	-.29**	.05	-.11*	.01	.01	.45*	(.62)						
8. Dutifulness	1-5	3.87	.57	-.35**	.15**	-.10*	-.07	.03	.62**	.48**	(.75)					
9. Achievement striving	1-5	3.52	.57	-.24**	.10*	-.03	-.06	.02	.53**	.47**	.59**	(.72)				
10. Self-discipline	1-5	3.59	.63	-.30**	.18**	-.01	.04	-.02	.56**	.52**	.63**	.60**	(.80)			
11. Deliberation	1-5	3.21	.52	-.04	.05	.02	-.01	.20*	.20**	.28**	.29**	.26**	(.66)			
12. Competitiveness	1-5	2.91	.63	.03	-.00	.18**	-.00	.02	.17**	.07	-.08	.15**	.06	-.10*	(.86)	
13. Competitive worldviews	1-5	2.39	.52	.46**	-.06	.12*	-.03	.11*	-.41**	-.21**	-.40**	-.23**	-.25**	-.05	.18**	(.84)

Note: N = 206. * p < .05; ** p < .01. Gender: 0 = Man; 1 = Woman. Reliability coefficients are presented on the diagonal.

TABLE 4
Descriptive Results across Cultures (Study 2)

	<i>Mean (SD)</i>			
	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>	<i>Spain</i>	<i>Greece</i>
Self-reported faking	2.01 (.88)	1.65 (.67)	2.05 (.81)	1.69 (.62)
Competence	3.69 (.57)	3.63 (.52)	3.50 (.46)	3.74 (.46)
Order	3.40 (.56)	3.39 (.48)	3.27 (.46)	3.55 (.56)
Dutifulness	2.83 (.54)	3.72 (.58)	3.83 (.62)	4.09 (.47)
Achievement striving	3.45 (.61)	3.41 (.53)	3.56 (.57)	3.67 (.52)
Self-discipline	3.54 (.64)	3.56 (.65)	3.54 (.63)	3.72 (.59)
Deliberation	3.19 (.58)	3.13 (.50)	3.27 (.51)	3.27 (.46)
Competitiveness	3.00 (.67)	2.93 (.63)	2.92 (.59)	2.83 (.61)
Competitive worldviews	2.45 (.51)	2.29 (.53)	2.46 (.55)	2.37 (.44)

Note: $N = 103$ (Germany), 104 (Switzerland), 102 (Spain), and 104 (Greece).

competitiveness, and the six facets of conscientiousness. Importantly, the significant relationship between CWs and faking was observed in all four countries.

Similarly to Study 1, we explored the possibility of bias due to common method variance by conducting confirmatory factor analyses, comparing a one-factor model that encompasses all CWs and faking items into one factor, with a two-factor model where CWs and faking items represent two separate factors. After including co-variances between error terms of items within scales (for modification indices > 20), fit statistics of the two-factor model were satisfactory (e.g. $\chi^2/df = 2.3$, RMSEA = .057, CFI = .904) and superior to the fit statistics of the one-factor model (e.g. $\chi^2/df = 5.7$, RMSEA = .106, CFI = .617). Thus, it is unlikely that the significant relationship between CWs and faking as unraveled in Study 2 is due to common method variance.

Discussion

Results of Study 2 complement the findings from Study 1. They confirm the explanatory power of CWs for faking by demonstrating that CWs are associated with past faking in recent job interviews (and not only with intentions to fake, as demonstrated in Study 1). Moreover, results show that the relationship between CWs and faking was strong and significant in all four countries. Thus, this link that was already observed in Study 1 holds true for job seekers living in different countries that not only differ tremendously with respect to various cultural aspects but also with respect to economic factors, most notably unemployment. This result suggests that the relationship between CWs and faking is not substantially altered by economic or cultural factors. Finally, the results

TABLE 5
Multiple Regressions Predicting Self-Reported Faking in Last Interview (Study 2)

Predictors	Full sample		Germany		Switzerland		Spain		Greece	
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2	Step 1	Step 2
Constant	4.04** (.38)	2.23** (.44)	5.15** (.79)	2.81** (.93)	3.04** (.67)	1.60** (.76)	4.55** (.88)	2.26* (1.09)	3.55** (.84)	1.99* (.96)
Age	-.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	-.00 (.01)	-.02 (.01)	-.02 (.01)
Gender	.09 (.07)	.08 (.07)	.03 (.16)	.00 (.15)	.17 (.14)	.13 (.14)	.10 (.16)	.09 (.16)	-.01 (.13)	-.05 (.13)
Education	.02 (.02)	.01 (.02)	.07 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.01 (.04)	-.01 (.04)	.01 (.03)	.01 (.03)	-.01 (.03)	-.03 (.03)
Employed	-.18* (.07)	-.16* (.07)	-.42* (.19)	-.42* (.18)	-.36* (.15)	-.34* (.15)	-.01 (.15)	.07 (.15)	-.06 (.13)	-.05 (.13)
Competence	-.31** (.10)	-.13 (.09)	-.13 (.21)	.14 (.20)	-.28 (.17)	-.16 (.17)	-.67* (.26)	-.45 (.25)	-.30 (.17)	-.17 (.17)
Order	-.20* (.08)	-.18* (.08)	-.36 (.19)	-.37* (.18)	.06 (.16)	.03 (.15)	-.27 (.19)	-.13 (.19)	-.09 (.14)	-.08 (.14)
Dutifulness	-.23* (.10)	-.12 (.09)	-.36 (.25)	-.15 (.24)	-.10 (.17)	.05 (.16)	-.39* (.19)	-.36* (.17)	-.11 (.20)	-.03 (.19)
Achievement striving	.01 (.09)	.01 (.08)	-.02 (.18)	-.11 (.17)	.04 (.16)	.06 (.16)	-.05 (.17)	-.01 (.17)	-.01 (.20)	-.02 (.19)
Self-discipline	-.03 (.08)	-.06 (.07)	-.03 (.19)	-.11 (.17)	-.21 (.13)	-.29* (.13)	.29 (.19)	.30 (.18)	.11 (.18)	.13 (.17)
Deliberation	.14 (.07)	.10 (.07)	.17 (.15)	.09 (.14)	.14 (.13)	.09 (.13)	.24 (.17)	.22 (.16)	-.03 (.15)	-.02 (.15)
Competitiveness	.07 (.06)	-.02 (.06)	-.08 (.13)	-.15 (.12)	.05 (.13)	-.02 (.13)	.14 (.13)	.03 (.13)	.14 (.11)	.02 (.11)
Competitive worldviews		.52** (.07)		.70** (.18)		.44** (.13)		.51** (.16)		.47** (.16)
F	9.22**	13.55**	3.30**	4.86**	2.93**	4.00**	3.89**	4.81**	1.13	1.82*
R ²	.20	.29	.29	.39	.26	.35	.32	.39	.12	.19

Note: N = 413, 104, 102, and 104, respectively. Gender: 0 = Man; 1 = Woman; Values are unstandardised b-values, with standard errors in parentheses; * p < .05; ** p < .01.

demonstrate that CWs are significantly related to faking above and beyond variables described as potential antecedents of faking in earlier research, namely competitiveness and facets of conscientiousness (Goffin & Boyd, 2009; Tett et al., 2006; Tett & Simonet, 2011).

Interestingly, CWs and competitiveness were not strongly correlated ($r = .18$), confirming that they are two different concepts. The finding that only individual differences in CWs but not in competitiveness were related to faking further corroborates this conceptual distinctiveness. Mean levels of CWs did not differ between countries, suggesting that CWs are at least not directly related to country-level unemployment. For instance, Greek applicants (who were facing the highest unemployment rate at the time) and Swiss applicants (who were facing the lowest unemployment rate) displayed similar levels of CWs. CWs scores in the four European countries were also similar to those obtained from US respondents in Study 1.

Of the six conscientiousness facets, order was the one that had the strongest relationship with faking, at the level of the full sample. Moreover, different facets of conscientiousness emerged as being (negatively) associated with faking in the four countries. For example, faking was significantly related to order in Germany, self-discipline in Switzerland, dutifulness in Spain, but to none of the facets in Greece. Taken together, these patterns confirm the predictions made earlier by Goffin and Boyd (2009), namely that only some facets of conscientiousness should be associated with faking. However, they also highlight the need to examine these relationships by taking cultural differences into account.

STUDY 3

Studies 1 and 2 relied on self-reports of faking. Because faking is an undesirable behavior, these self-reports may have been biased by social desirability, leading to an underestimation of the true frequency of faking behaviors. Therefore, in Study 3, we investigated the relationship between CWs and applicant self-reports of past faking using the Randomised Response Technique (RRT). This method allows assessing socially undesirable behavior under perfect anonymity, on the level of a group or sample, and thus generates more truthful responses to questions on faking. The RRT has been successfully used in previous research on faking (Donovan, Dwight, & Hurtz, 2003; König, Hafsteins-son, Jansen, & Stadelmann, 2011; König et al., 2012).

Methods

Sample and Procedure. We collected data from 612 US respondents, who completed an online questionnaire about their previous job application, using Amazon Mechanical Turk. We used similar precautions as in Studies 1 and 2

to identify and eliminate careless respondents, including questions about the time of their last interview, recollection of the interview, and compliance with the RRT instructions. This resulted in a final sample of 488 respondents, who had participated in at least one job interview during the past 12 months. Mean age was 30.2 years ($SD = 10.2$), 50.8 per cent were women, 76 per cent were White, 8.8 per cent Asian or Pacific Islander, 8.4 per cent Black, 6.5 per cent Hispanic, and 0.4 per cent Native-American. Most respondents had a university or college degree (51.9%) or had some college education (34.8%). About a third (38.3%) of the respondents were currently employed, 40.8 per cent were unemployed, and 20.9 per cent were students. Respondents were asked to report their faking behaviors, basing their responses on their behaviors during their last job interview. Then, they completed measures of CW and demographic information. They were paid \$0.40 for participating in a 10-minute study.

Measures. Faking: We measured faking with the 14-item true/false scale and the RRT from König et al. (2011, 2012). An example item was “when applying for the job, I exaggerated my work experience to make myself look more impressive than I really am” (see Table 6 for a complete list of the items). Response options were binary, “true” versus “false”. Respondents were instructed to roll a die before answering each item, thus constituting the randomisation device. They could either use a real die or an online die. If the die showed 1 or 2, respondents were instructed to answer “true” to the question, independently of their actual behavior during the interview. If the die showed 3, 4, 5, or 6, respondents were instructed to answer truthfully, i.e. to report truthfully whether or not they engaged in the described faking behavior. Through this procedure, the RRT ensures perfect anonymity to respondents because at the individual level, the researcher cannot know if a respondent’s “true” response for a given behavior was the result of the die showing 1 or 2 or if the respondent reported truly having engaged in the behavior. On the flip side, the RRT provides only faking frequencies at the sample level (or at the group level, when comparing groups). It does not provide individual-level data, as explained in more detail in what follows.

To obtain overall faking frequencies for the sample, the RRT requires computing frequencies that have been corrected through eliminating responses due to the randomisation device. Within the procedure described above, the probability that a question is answered with “true” solely because of the die is 33 per cent. To obtain “correct” frequencies for each faking item, 33 per cent of all responses that were presumably caused by the die were removed from the “true” responses. Frequencies were thus based on the number of the remaining “true” responses in comparison with all responses. For example, 292 respondents responded “true” to the item asking whether they exaggerated positive attributes during the interview. Removing 33 per cent of all responses (i.e. 33%

TABLE 6
 Frequency of Faking Behaviors (in percent) for Applicants Low vs. High in
 Competitive Worldviews (Study 3)

<i>Item</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Competitive worldviews</i>	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
1. During my last application, I overemphasised or exaggerated my positive attributes (e.g. characteristics or traits such as hardworking, efficient, thorough, etc.).	40	29	50**
2. I fabricated or made up information about myself when applying for the job so as to maximise the chances of me getting hired for the job.	10	6	14**
3. When applying for the job, I exaggerated my work experience to make myself look more impressive than I really am.	14	10	18*
4. When applying for the job, I claimed to have experiences that I didn't actually have.	1	0	9**
5. When applying for the job, I claimed to have knowledge that I did not have.	3	0	6**
6. When applying for the job, I exaggerated my past work or performance evaluations to make myself look like a better employee.	17	12	21**
7. When applying for the job, I exaggerated my skills in my favor.	26	25	27
8. When applying for the job, I exaggerated qualities or characteristics of myself such as trustworthiness and reliability.	17	17	18
9. When applying for the job, I expressed opinions that were not true.	7	3	10**
10. When applying for the job, I tried to present myself as more agreeable (trusting, empathetic, cooperative) than I really am.	30	24	35**
11. When applying for the job, I tended to de-emphasise or "play down" what some might consider negative attributes.	47	52	43*
12. When giving references, I selected individuals whom I knew would portray me in a more positive way than I actually deserve.	43	44	43
13. When applying for the job, I pretended to be more interested in the job than I really was.	39	37	41
14. When applying for the job, I handed in fake certificates or documents.	0	0	0

Note: $N = 488$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$ (chi-Square tests). Competitive worldviews: Low = CWs scores < 2.25 , High = CWs score ≥ 2.25 . Following conventions, negative frequency data are reported as 0%.

of 488 = 162 responses, see above) led to 130 “true” responses that were presumably *not* caused by the die. This frequency can now be compared to the number of all responses minus 162 ($488 - 162 = 326$) meaning that 40 per cent (130/326) of all respondents can be assumed to indeed having exaggerated their positive attributes.

Competitive worldviews (CWs): We used the same 20-item ($\alpha = .89$) Competitive Jungle Social World View scale (Duckitt et al., 2002) as in earlier studies. As explained above, when using the RRT, faking frequencies have to be calculated at the group level. We therefore classified respondents into two groups: “low CWs” (for scores below 2.25) and “high CWs” (for scores of 2.25 or above), based on a median split. The “high” scores of 2.25 and above may still appear relatively low but note that this median not only closely corresponds to the median and mean scores observed in Studies 1 and 2 but also to mean scores obtained in other studies (e.g. Duckitt, 2001; Duckitt et al., 2002).

Results

We examined the relationship between CWs and applicant self-reported faking in past interviews by comparing the frequencies of the 14 faking behaviors for applicants with “low” vs. “high” levels of CWs (Table 6). Overall, results were in line with our main hypothesis. For 11 of the 14 faking items, we observed higher frequencies of faking for applicants in the high CWs compared to the low CWs group. Chi-square tests revealed significant differences for eight of these 11 items. Note that for one item, the difference was in the opposite direction of what we hypothesised, i.e. applicants in the high CWs group scored lower than applicants in the low CWs group. Possibly, this is due to the way the item is phrased, i.e. “I tended to de-emphasise or ‘play down’ what some might consider negative attributes”. Respondents may have been confused by the complex phrasing of this item and/or may have overlooked the part specifying a focus on negative attributes.

Discussion

Results of Study 3 showed that CWs were related to faking in past selection encounters, as revealed by significant differences in self-reported faking between applicants with strong versus less strong CWs. Such differences were observed for more than half of the 14 faking behaviors that were assessed in this study. Taken together, this pattern corroborates results of Study 2 but using a measure of faking that protects respondent anonymity, and thus is less prone to bias induced by social desirability. Note, however, that the results of Studies 2 and 3 cannot be compared directly because the RRT yields estimated faking frequencies on a group level (vs. faking reports on the individual level, as obtained in Study 2).

Before turning to the general discussion of our findings, we would like to point out that the amount of faking behavior reported in Study 3 was slightly lower than that obtained previously with US college students, using the same RRT (Donovan et al., 2003; König et al., 2011). For instance, the average frequency of faking across all items was about 20 per cent in the present study vs. 28 per cent in Donovan et al. Although not large, these differences may be due to applicants' experience and age (i.e. 28 years old in our sample vs. 19–20 years old in Donovan et al.). It has been argued that older or more experienced applicants have a richer array of job experiences on which they build their responses, while students or young graduates may need to fake more to compensate for their lack of experience (Roulin, Bangerter, & Levashina, 2014). This implies that faking frequencies obtained from student samples may not generalise to applicants in general.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Contribution to Theory

This research demonstrates that CWs (Duckitt et al., 2002) are strongly and reliably associated with applicant faking in employment interviews. In three independent studies, CWs were significantly associated with both faking intentions and past faking, above and beyond other relevant antecedents related to applicant personality or context, using both self-reports of faking and measures that are less prone to the influence of social desirability. Importantly, the CWs–faking relationship was noticeably stronger than the relationship between faking and numerous stable personality traits discussed in earlier research, such as facets of conscientiousness (Goffin & Boyd, 2009), Machiavellianism (e.g. Levashina & Campion, 2007), Narcissism (e.g. Griffith et al., 2011), or competitiveness (e.g. Tett & Simonet, 2011). Moreover, CWs were strongly associated with faking in samples of job applicants living in five different countries, i.e. the US, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and Greece. These countries differ markedly in cultural values, including attitudes toward faking, language, and economic aspects (e.g. unemployment). Yet, there was more variance in CWs within each country than between those countries, confirming that CWs are largely individual-level stable traits that are relatively independent of or at least not directly shaped by macro-level factors. Furthermore, the fact that the CWs–faking relationship emerged in all five countries suggests that it taps into a more basic psychological process, presumably a process that helps applicants deal with the competitive nature of personnel selection (Roulin et al., 2016). Altogether, this research makes a strong case that CWs play an important role in explaining applicant faking.

Research in social and political psychology has demonstrated that CWs are powerful precursors of undesirable intergroup attitudes and behaviors, such as

prejudice and discrimination (Duckitt et al., 2002; Sibley & Duckitt, 2009). This research shows that the impact of CWs goes well beyond negative attitudes towards social outgroups but extends to how job seekers behave in a competitive context, i.e. during the employment interview. This opens the door to novel research questions. For example, it suggests that CWs might be related to other undesirable behaviors at work as well, in situations that are characterised by competition. For example, a large body of research examines precursors of workplace aggression against colleagues. Possibly, people with strong CWs are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors if they believe that these behaviors could give them a competitive advantage over their colleagues (e.g. Salin, 2003). Furthermore, CWs may be associated with behaviors in other domains that are characterised by competition, e.g. educational settings. In line with this argument, it has been shown that students adhering to (competitive) values of self-enhancement are more motivated to outperform others, which in turn leads to more cheating (Pulfrey & Butera, 2013).

The present research also represents a first validation of some of the propositions made by recent theorising that highlights the role of competition in explaining the dynamics involved in personnel selection (Bangerter et al., 2012; Roulin et al., 2016). More specifically, Roulin et al. postulated that CWs are related to faking because applicants with strong CWs more readily perceive the selection procedure as a ruthless, competitive struggle that they want to win even if it means using socially undesirable behaviors. The findings of the present studies validate the proposition that CWs are positively related to faking. What remains to be shown, empirically, is the mechanism that underlies this relationship. For example, Roulin et al. (2016) proposed that applicants' perceived competition for the job and their motivation to fake mediates the relationship between CWs and faking. Moreover, the relationship between CWs and faking may be moderated by other factors, for example by stable attitudes towards faking (e.g. derived from applicants' values) or by context factors (e.g. organisational culture). These questions are fruitful areas for future research.

Our findings also suggest that different facets of competition may have different relationships with undesirable behaviors, such as faking. Indeed, competition can take different forms and can be understood as a situational variable, a cognitive variable, a trait, a motive, or an attitude (Stanne, Johnson, & Johnson, 1999). In this research, we focused on trait-like forms for competition, and found that CWs (Duckitt et al., 2002) and competitiveness (Houston et al., 1992) were only moderately correlated ($r = .18$). Moreover, in all countries included in this research, CWs were related to faking, but competitiveness was not. More research is necessary to determine the role of competition resulting from situational factors (e.g. actual pressure of the job market, competitive organisational culture) or the joint impact of situational factors (e.g. unemployment rate) and individual differences (e.g. CWs) on faking. We believe that individual differences (e.g. CWs) yield a stronger impact on faking behaviors

because they are more proximal factors whereas situational factors such as job market factors are more distal.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although the research presented here makes an important contribution to the literature, it is necessary to acknowledge its limitations. One limitation is the fact that numerous situational factors influence faking, and we only incorporated some of them in our research. For example, we did not consider or control for the type of job or organisation, or the actual number of applicants for the job, which may influence faking during the interview. Hence, future research should replicate our results in a more controlled environment or assessing more context variables. For instance, earlier research has highlighted that applicants' opportunity to fake, and thus faking, can be influenced by the type or format of the interview (Levashina & Campion, 2006, 2007; Roulin et al., 2016). Future research could examine the combined and possibly interactive effects of CWs and interview format, and thus possibly unravel under which conditions the impact of CWs on faking can be reduced.

We examined and found a strong relationship between CWs and faking in employment interviews. Thus, the question arises whether this result is generalisable to faking in other types of selection methods. Two aspects suggest that it is. First, there are strong theoretical arguments that CWs increase faking in situations that are characterised by strong competition. Hence, they should give rise to faking, independently of the specific selection instrument that is used, as long as the selection situation is competitive. Second, the relationship between stable traits and faking has been shown to be quite robust across selection instruments. For example, Machiavellianism and faking are positively related both for personality tests (Mueller-Hanson et al., 2006) and for job interviews (Hogue et al., 2013). In sum, we would expect CWs to be associated with applicant faking in other selection instruments, such as personality tests or biodata inventories. Yet, this link remains to be empirically proven by future research.

Although our three studies examined the relationship between relatively broad stable traits (e.g. CWs and personality) and behavioral intentions or past behaviors in a specific situation (i.e. faking during the job interview), our data are cross-sectional and results should therefore not be interpreted as strictly causal. Moreover, they may be prone to issues associated with common method variance. However, results of confirmatory factor analyses suggest that this risk is limited. Moreover, bias related to common method variance is often caused by social desirability associated with variables measured together (Spector, 2006). And past studies suggest that both CWs (e.g. Duckitt, 2001; Matthews & Levin, 2012) and interview faking (e.g. Levashina & Campion, 2007; Roulin et al., 2014) are not strongly associated with measures of social desirability. Taken together, these elements suggest that the relationship

between CWs and faking as unraveled in this research is not significantly biased by common method variance. That being said, future research should test the CWs–faking relationships in a longitudinal design and/or use faking measures that do not rely on self-reports.

Finally, the present research focuses on the direct relationship between CWs and faking. Further, research could examine more complex relationships, including moderations or mediations that involve CWs and other situational factors (Roulin et al., 2016). For instance, we would argue that CWs and situational factors interact to predict faking; for example, a strongly competitive situation is likely to lead to faking behaviors particularly for people with strong CWs. Alternatively, people with strong CWs may perceive the competition for a job to be stronger and thus be more willing to fake to increase their own chances of getting the job.

Practical Implications

Organisations often worry about the impact of faking in their selection process (Stewart et al., 2010). At the same time, they extensively rely on selection instruments that are vulnerable to faking, such as employment interviews (e.g. Steiner, 2012). Our findings therefore have important implications for organisations. The seemingly logical solution to the faking issue would be to find ways to identify fakers during job interviews and confront them or remove them entirely from the selection process. However, recent research suggests that interviewers are not able to reliably detect when applicants fake (Roulin, Bangerter, & Levashina, 2015). Hence, any attempts by recruiters to identify and then eliminate fakers or to discount faking behaviors when evaluating applicants' suitability are doomed to fail.

Our findings suggest an alternative route to tackle the faking issue. CWs are mostly activated when individuals are facing competitive situations (Duckitt & Fisher, 2003; Sibley & Duckitt, 2013). In other words, high-CWs applicants are more likely to fake when the competition is highly salient. Although the selection context by itself is likely to trigger some perceptions of competition, organisations can design the selection process and communicate with applicants in ways that make this competition more or less salient. For instance, organisations should be careful not to emphasise the competitive nature of their selection process when providing information to applicants during or before the interview or test. The way organisations describe their selection process on their corporate website or job advertisements is equally important. For example, organisations should avoid statements such as “only the best will make the cut” or “many people want to join organisation, but we only select the very best”. Rather, they should advertise and provide applicants with information that downplays competition and contradicts CWs (e.g. highlight that collaboration, cooperation, honesty, and respect are valued by the

organisation). Moreover, to further limit faking by applicants with CWs, they could avoid situations where multiple applicants for the same position are gathered in one location (e.g. to take a test or participate in initial screening interviews), for instance by using internet-based testing or conducting screening interviews over the phone.

Conclusion

Competition is an inevitable ingredient of personnel selection where several applicants compete with each other to get a job. This research suggests that faking is a strategy to deal with this situation, especially for people who believe that the world is a competitive jungle where one has to be ruthless in order to survive.

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