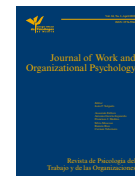




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## Fairness Reactions to the Employment Interview

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### ABSTRACT

The current research explores applicants' reactions to the employment interview and how these are associated with core self-evaluations and proactivity along with perceptions of the interviewer and interview's justice perceptions of post-interview outcomes (behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness). We also explored the role of perceived organizational support (POS) in these relationships. We employ a cross-sectional approach, with the participation of 238 actual job applicants, using a survey methodology. We demonstrated the important role of core self-evaluations in fairness perceptions of the interview, along with the significant role of some interview characteristics, more importantly informativeness and personableness. Finally, applicants' perceptions of the employer were also strongly associated with interview's justice perceptions and post-interview outcomes. This is one of the first and very few studies exploring this topic in a non-English culture (in Greece), with actual job applicants, not students.

### Las reacciones de equidad a la entrevista de trabajo

### RESUMEN

La presente investigación explora las reacciones de los solicitantes a la entrevista de empleo y cómo dichas reacciones se asocian a las autoevaluaciones fundamentales y a la proactividad, junto con las percepciones del entrevistador y las percepciones de justicia de la entrevista de los resultados post-entrevista (intenciones conductuales, atractivo del puesto y atractivo de la organización). También exploramos el rol del apoyo organizacional percibido (POS) en estas interrelaciones. Empleamos un enfoque transversal, con la participación de 238 solicitantes reales del puesto, usando una metodología de encuestas. Demostramos el importante rol de las autoevaluaciones fundamentales en las percepciones de justicia de la entrevista, junto con el rol significativo de algunas características de la entrevista, de modo particularmente importante la capacidad informativa y la amabilidad. Finalmente, las percepciones de los solicitantes sobre el empleador estuvieron también fuertemente asociadas con las percepciones de justicia de la entrevista y con los resultados post-entrevista. Este es uno de los primeros y escasos estudios que exploran este tema en una cultura no inglesa (en Grecia), con solicitantes reales del puesto y no con estudiantes.

The employment or selection interview is the most common and typical way of selecting employees for any organization and position anywhere in the world. [Levashina, Hartwell, Morgeson, and Campion \(2014\)](#) suggest that it is rare or even unthinkable to recruit someone without some type of interview. On the other hand, an invitation for an interview is also the first step to job search success from an applicant's point of view. Therefore, it is logical that the selection interview has attracted and continues to attract increased interest, both from practitioners and researchers.

A number of studies have explored the major issues related to the employment interview, focusing mainly on the structure, the construct validity and the factors that influence the interview process (e.g., [Levashina, et al., 2014](#); [Macan, 2009](#); [Mccarthy, Van](#)

[Iddekinge, & Campion, 2010](#)). However, the way job applicants are treated during the interview and the aspects of interviewer's behavior that influence applicant reactions and decision making have not received the attention one would expect. Moreover, limited research has explored the role of applicants' individual characteristics in their reactions to various selection methods and especially in the employment interview. The aim of the current study is to explore how applicants' personality (Core-Self Evaluations and Proactivity), their perceptions of the interviewer (interviewer's competence, personableness, informativeness), and their perception of interview's justice influence job and organizational attractiveness, and applicants' future behavioral intentions. Also we explore how applicants' perceptions of their

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future employer's organizational support (Perceived Organizational Support) influences these relationships.

### The Employment Interview

It is now widely accepted in staffing and hiring research and practice that the method sends a signal. Job applicants assess and evaluate the information they receive during the selection process and then act accordingly (Bangerter, Roulin, & Konig, 2012). This is especially the case for the most widely used selection method, the employment interview. Job applicants evaluate the signals sent to them by the interviewer(s), the information they are given before, during, and after the completion of the interview in order to take an informed decision. Bangerter et al. (2012) claim that the selection interview is an institutionalized aspect of the personnel selection process, i.e., it is taken for granted that it will always be a part of the selection process (p. 733).

The employment interview entails a significant number of advantages, making it a very attractive selection method. It provides applicants the opportunity to meet face-to-face with the recruiter/assessor, has high perceived job-relatedness, and provides job candidates with the opportunity to emphasize their individual qualities that differentiate them from other applicants (i.e., opportunity to perform). From an applicant reactions' perspective, Hausknecht, Day, and Thomas (2004) suggested that job applicants perceive interviews and work samples more favorably, compared to other selection methods, because "there is typically a close relationship between the content of the selection tool and the duties of the job" (p. 647). Nikolaou and Judge (2007) claimed that the existence of a positive relationship between an interviewer's personal qualities and behavior, such as warmth, sincerity, empathy, and good listening skills, and job applicant-related variables, such as job offer expectancy, perceived probability of receiving and accepting an offer, and overall company impressions, probably explain interview's high acceptance between job candidates.

Since the beginning of the current century, a number of qualitative and quantitative reviews and meta-analyses have discussed the issues associated with the selection interview as an effective recruitment and selection tool. In the most recent of them, Levashina, et al. (2014) explored issues related to the employment interview structure, focusing on eight main topics, including the development, assessment, construct validity, and the reactions to structure. Huffcutt, Culbertson, and Weyhrauch (2013) focused on the reliability of the structured interview, concluding that highly-structured panel interviews seem to have a higher inter-rater reliability than separate interviews conducted separately by different interviewers.

The aforementioned meta-analytic and narrative reviews demonstrate the breadth of the research carried out on the topic of the employment interview. As mentioned earlier, a major reason for the extensive usage of the employment interview in hiring and staffing practices is the positive reactions demonstrated by job applicants towards the selection interview. Therefore, we will now turn our focus to the issue of applicant reactions.

### Applicant Reactions

Within the broader area of employee selection and assessment, applicant reactions research has become an important topic of study. It involves the assessment of candidates' perceptions and responses towards the different selection methods, along with their impact on the selection process and organizational attractiveness. Applicants' reactions may have an impact on the validity of the selection process, the decisions applicants make throughout the process, and their post-hire attitudes, behaviors, and behavioral intentions, such as

recommending the organization, job offer acceptance, pursuing legal action intentions, or purchasing the company's products, etc. (Gilliland & Steiner, 2012).

There are economic, legal, and psychological reasons for organizations to pay attention to how candidates react to the selection process. Firstly, candidates may form a negative opinion of the organization and may communicate their perception to other people. Consequently, it is possible that this behavior will discourage potentially strong candidates from applying, with direct implications for organizational image, which in turn may affect their consumer behavior (Bauer, Mccarthy, Anderson, Truxillo, & Salgado, 2012; Hulsheger & Anderson, 2009). Secondly, it is possible that applicants who encounter the selection procedure as invasive withdraw from the selection process. This is more likely to happen for highly qualified candidates with possibly competing job offers. Therefore, organizations may lose top employees to their competition (Bauer et al., 2012). Thirdly, negative reactions may affect the attitudes, performance, and work behaviors of candidates once they are hired, since many organizations also use standardized selection procedures for employee promotion (Ford, Truxillo, & Bauer, 2009; McCarthy, Hrbluik, & Jelley, 2009). Current employees' negative reactions to the selection methods used for promotion purposes is an under-researched topic in personnel psychology, with only a few recent exceptions (e.g., García-Izquierdo, Moscoso, & Ramos-Villagrasa, 2012).

Besides negative effects on employee performance, engagement, morale, turnover intentions, and counterproductive behaviors (Bauer et al., 2012), inappropriate selection procedures may cause candidates to file complaints or take legal action. Not only this can be costly, but it can also severely harm an organizations' reputation (Bauer et al., 2012). Negative experiences during the selection process have detrimental effects on candidates' welfare (Ford et al., 2009). This is a concern not only for the long-term health of applicants, but it is also at odds with the goals of socially responsible organizations (Bauer et al., 2012).

A number of narrative reviews have recently appeared dealing with this topic (Gilliland & Steiner, 2012; Hausknecht, 2013; Nikolaou, Bauer, & Truxillo, 2015). All three of them emphasize Gilliland's organizational justice framework as the most important theoretical framework exploring 10 procedural rules that influence applicant reactions towards the different selection methods. These were grouped into three categories: formal characteristics (job relatedness, opportunity to perform, reconsideration opportunity, and consistency), explanation (feedback, selection information, and honesty) and interpersonal treatment (interpersonal effectiveness, two-way communication, and propriety of questions). In their meta-analysis, (Hausknecht et al., 2004) revealed that interviews, work samples, résumés, and references were perceived relatively favorably. Psychometric tests (i.e., cognitive ability and personality tests) and biodata received moderately favorable ratings, whereas personal contacts, honesty tests, and graphology were perceived the least favorably (p. 669). Similar, or almost identical, results were obtained in a number of studies conducted in different parts of the world (Anderson, Ahmed, & Costa, 2012; Hoang, Truxillo, Erdogan, & Bauer, 2012; Ispas, Ilie, Iliescu, Johnson, & Harris, 2010; Nikolaou & Judge, 2007; Snyder & Shahani-Denning, 2012). The latter results were also obtained in one of the most relevant meta-analysis on this topic, exploring the reaction generalization versus the situational specificity hypothesis (Anderson, Salgado, & Hulsheger, 2010). This meta-analysis confirmed that applicants' perceptions are quite similar across countries, with a few exceptions, revealing a three-tier clustering of favorability perceptions – most preferred (work samples, interviews), favorably evaluated (résumés, cognitive tests, references, biodata, personality inventories), and least preferred (honesty tests, personal contacts, graphology).

The most interesting and useful aspect of applicant reactions' research, especially from a practitioner's perspective, is the impact reactions might have on applicants' subsequent attitudes, behaviors,

personal beliefs, and/or even the selection results and outcomes themselves. [Truxillo and Bauer \(2011\)](#), and more recently [McCarthy et al. \(2017\)](#), summarized the empirical literature on the relationship between applicant reactions and a number of different outcomes. Similarly to [Gilliland and Steiner \(2012\)](#), they suggested that applicant perceptions seem to have a much stronger association with applicants' attitudes, as opposed to their actual behaviors. However, [McCarthy et al. \(2017\)](#) have been more positive about the impact that applicant reactions might have on actual work-related outcomes, such as job performance.

### Personality and Applicant Reactions

Another issue that has received relatively limited interest in the literature is the role of personality as a potential predictor of applicant reactions. Today, a small number of studies has shown relatively small effect sizes. [Truxillo, Bauer, Campion, and Paronto \(2006\)](#) explored the relationship between the Five-Factor model of personality measured before a written test and applicants' post-test fairness perceptions, perceptions of themselves, and perceptions of the hiring organization using a sample of actual law enforcement applicants ( $N = 120$ ). Personality accounted for significant variance in self-perceptions and perceptions of the hiring organization beyond that accounted for by fairness perceptions. Neuroticism and agreeableness were the most consistent predictors of applicant perceptions, with neuroticism demonstrating negative and agreeableness positive correlations with applicant reactions. [Nikolaou and Judge \(2007\)](#), in a study conducted in Greece, found weak positive associations between core self-evaluations and fairness reactions across different popular selection methods. More recently, [Honkaniemi, Feldt, Metsapelto, and Tolvanen \(2013\)](#) explored in their study the role of personality types in a real-life selection setting. Although published research using personality types in selection research is scarce, [Honkaniemi et al. \(2013\)](#) showed that personality types explained applicants' fairness perceptions, when controlling for gender, but they were not associated with face validity perceptions or predictive validity perceptions.

Similarly to core self-evaluations we would expect that the personality characteristic of proactivity would be associated with candidates' fairness reactions of the selection interview. Previous research in the job search literature has demonstrated the important role of proactivity in the successful job search process (e.g., [Van Hove, Van Hooft, & Lievens, 2009](#); [Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000](#)). Job candidates high in core self-evaluations and/or proactivity will demonstrate increased levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy, they will go prepared about the company and the job to an interview, and therefore they will generally perform better during the interview (or believe they do so); as a result, they will perceive the procedure and the outcome of the interview more positively. [Truxillo, et al. \(2006\)](#) demonstrated that neuroticism, an aspect of core self-evaluations, was negatively associated with social fairness. Social fairness is focused on the fairness of interpersonal treatment, including the consistency of administration, openness of the staff, treatment by the staff, two-way communication during the process, and propriety of questions, which are all important aspects of any employment interview process. Moreover, they showed that personality accounted for significant incremental variance in applicants' performance perceptions and perceptions of the organization beyond that explained by justice perceptions. Therefore, we make the following hypotheses:

*H1:* Job applicants' core self-evaluations and proactivity will be positively associated with interview's justice perceptions.

*H2:* Job applicants' core self-evaluations and proactivity will account for significant incremental variance in applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness and organizational attractiveness beyond interview's justice perceptions.

### Applicant Reactions to the Employment Interview

Since the focus of our study is to further explore applicants' attitudes towards the employment interview specifically, it is interesting to consider why job applicants exhibit positive attitudes towards the selection interview. This is the case despite the contradictory research evidence regarding interview's moderate to low predictive validity and high possibility of unfair discrimination. Another major advantage of the employment interview is its perceived job-relatedness (face validity), and the opportunity it provides to candidates to emphasize their individual qualities that differentiate them from other applicants (i.e., opportunity to perform) ([Hausknecht, 2013](#)). The candidates feel that, during the less structured interview especially, they have increased opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Recruiters especially can influence how job applicants perceive the firm and their intentions to join the firm. Applicants perceive recruiters as representing the character of the entire company. Research has shown that recruiters exhibiting positive characteristics, such as being warm, friendly, and helpful during the interview can influence applicants' perceptions ([Carless & Imber, 2007](#); [Goltz & Giannantonio, 1995](#)). Meta-analytic findings have demonstrated that recruiters' characteristics are significantly associated with job pursuit intentions and overall impressions of the company and the job ([Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005](#)). In other words, applicants who perceive their interviewer favorably have a high inclination to pursue the job by, for example, submitting an application, attending a second interview, or remaining in the applicant pool. Also, in the same meta-analysis, all recruiter characteristics, such as personableness, trustworthiness, competence, and informativeness were associated with overall impressions of the organization ([Chapman et al., 2005](#)). Applicants who view the recruiters as friendly tend to develop favorable attitudes toward the firm and form positive reactions about the organization ([Turban & Dougherty, 1992](#)).

[Nikolaou \(2011\)](#) demonstrated that interviewers' personal characteristics (i.e., personableness, competence, and informativeness), as perceived by the candidates during the interview are related to their post-interview attitudes and intentions (i.e., job attractiveness). This was especially the case for informativeness and for personableness, demonstrating that candidates who perceive their interviewers as informative and "nice" individuals are more likely to form positive perceptions about them and their company. However, an issue to consider is why interviewer's personal characteristics influence applicants' job attractiveness and post-interview intentions. Is it enough to assume that just because the interviewers are personable and informative the applicants are keener to accept a job offer or recommend the company to other candidates? [Larsen and Phillips \(2002\)](#) first and then [Carless and Imber \(2007\)](#) proposed that the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) could be used in order to explain the indirect effects of interviewers' behavior on applicants post-interview intentions. The ELM describes the basic processes involved in persuasive communication. It distinguishes two types of processes in communication – peripheral and central processing. [Larsen and Phillips \(2002\)](#) and [Carless and Imber \(2007\)](#) suggested that job applicants at the initial stages of the selection process are more likely to engage in peripheral processing (e.g., interviewer characteristics), since they probably have limited information about the position and the organization, as opposed to the latter stages of the process where it is more likely to engage in central processing (e.g., job and organizational attributes). Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

*H3:* Perceptions of the interviewer will be positively related to applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness.

*H4:* Perceptions of the interviewer will account for significant incremental variance in applicants' behavioral intentions, job

attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness beyond interview's justice perceptions.

### Perceived Organizational Support and Applicant Reactions

One final issue we would like to explore in the current research is the impact on applicants' reactions of the perceptions candidates develop about the organization, as a supportive, caring employer. More and more companies nowadays, through their corporate social responsibility programs, recruitment campaigns, or participation in competitions, such as *The Most Admired Companies* or *The Best Workplaces*, etc. are interested in publicizing a positive image as an employer, both for marketing and for recruitment purposes. In order to explore this issue, we employed the concept of perceived organizational support (POS).

POS is based on the assumption that if managers are concerned with their employees' commitment to the organization, then employees in turn are focused on the organization's commitment to them (Eisenberger, Jones, Aselage, & Sucharski, 2004). For employees, the organization serves as an important source of socio-emotional resources, such as respect and caring, and tangible benefits, such as wages and medical benefits (Eisenberger et al., 2004); therefore, it is desirable from their part to work for a caring and respecting organization. High perceived organizational support would meet needs for approval esteem and social identity, and produce the expectation that superior performance and extra role performance will be recognized and rewarded by the organization (Eisenberger, Cummings, Armeli, & Lynch, 1997).

The Social Exchange Theory also suggests that employees who perceive organizational actions as supportive towards them will reciprocate with positive attitudes and behavior (Hannah & Iverson, 2004; Shore & Wayne, 1993). In this context, job applicants who receive favorable treatment from recruiters, as earlier discussed, will give back to the organization with positive attitudes and actions toward the organization. Based on signaling (Bangerter et al., 2012) and social exchange theories (Blau, 1964), positive recruiter attitudes might have an impact on future employee attitudes and behaviors. We support that this effect will go beyond the potential effect of how fair the applicants consider the interview.

Fairness is often discussed as an important predictor of POS (Eisenberger et al., 2004). Therefore, how job applicants are treated during the selection process and especially during the interview and/or the positive characteristics shown by the interviewer might be perceived as an indicator of the support they will also receive in the future as employees in this organization, along the lines of signaling theory, as well (Bangerter et al., 2012). Subsequently, applicants who consider that they have been fairly treated during the employment interview are more likely to reciprocate in the form of giving back to the organization.

Therefore, we make the following hypotheses:

*H5:* Interview's justice perceptions will be positively associated with perceived organizational support.

*H6:* Perceived organizational support will account for significant incremental variance in applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness beyond interview's justice perceptions.

## Method

### Sample and Procedure

Our study was conducted in Greece. We approached recent graduates from the authors' university situated in Athens, using various means of communication (e.g., alumni networks, social media, etc.). As a result, it is impossible to estimate the exact response rate. The only requirement for participation was that they had to have

taken part in at least one employment interview during the last three months and recall this interview when completing the questionnaire. Our sample consisted of 238 job applicants, who applied in for a number of different positions/companies. Participants were asked to evaluate their most recent (< than 3 months) interview experience. The majority of the participants were females (58%) with a mean age of 26.9 years ( $SD = 4.90$ ). They were also asked to indicate the stage of the selection process where the interview took place. Participants responded on a five-point scale anchors ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*, unless otherwise indicated.

## Measures

**Core self-evaluations.** CSE was measured with the scale developed by Judge, Erez, Bono, and Thoresen (2003). The CSE is a 12-item questionnaire which is meant to assess the intersection of the four core traits: self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and neuroticism. Example items of the scale include "I am confident I get the success I deserve in life", "When I try I generally succeed", and "I am capable of coping with most of my problems". The coefficient alpha for CSE was .80

**Proactivity.** This was measured with a 10-items scale used in Seibert, Crant, and Kraimer (1999), based on Bateman and Crant's (1993) original measure. Sample items include "I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life" and "I am always looking for better ways to do things". The coefficient alpha was .79.

**Perceptions of the interviewer.** This was measured using a 16-items scale adopted from earlier research and used by Nikolaou (2011). The measure assesses three types of interviewer characteristics, namely personableness (5 items,  $\alpha = .80$ ; e.g., "I would describe the interviewer as a warm personality"), competence (5 items,  $\alpha = .77$ ; e.g., "The interviewer asked interesting and job-related questions"), and informativeness (6 items,  $\alpha = .78$ ; e.g., "The interviewer discussed about the career opportunities within the company"). High scores indicate positive perceptions of the interviewer.

**Interview's justice perceptions.** This was measured using the 4-item scale developed by Smither, Reilly, Millsap, Pearlman, and Stoffey (1993), which assesses candidates' perceptions of a selection method's distributive and procedural justice. Sample items include "I felt good about the way the interview was conducted and administered" and "I deserved the interview results that I received on the examination". An overall score was calculated with an  $\alpha = .86$ . A high score indicates positive justice perceptions of the interview.

**Perceived organizational support.** The future employer's POS was measured with the 8-item scale developed by Eisenberger, et al. (1997), appropriately adopted to focus on the organization as a future potential employer, using a seven-point scale anchors ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. Example items include "I believe that the organization will really care about my well-being" and "I believe that the organization will be willing to help me if I need a special favor". The coefficient alpha for the scale was .81.

**Organizational attractiveness.** This was measured with the 15-item scale developed by Highhouse, Lievens, and Sinar (2003). Example items of the scale include "For me this company would be a good place to work", "I would accept a job offer from this company", and "Employees are probably proud to say they work at this company". The coefficient alpha for this scale was  $\alpha = .95$ .

**Job attractiveness.** This was measured with a 2-item scale adopted from Harris and Fink (1987). An example item include, "Overall to what extent you find attractive such a job?" The coefficient alpha for job attractiveness was  $\alpha = .87$ .

**Applicants' behavioral intentions.** This was measured with 2 items used in Nikolaou (2011), assessing the possibility of accepting a job offer and recommending the company to other candidates. The coefficient alpha for this scale was  $\alpha = .70$ .

**Table 1.** Inter-correlation Matrix of the Study's Variables

	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. CSE	3.52	0.53	.80										
2. Proactivity	3.58	0.50	.68	.42**									
3. Personableness	3.76	0.81	.80	.31**	.16*								
4. Competence	3.75	0.67	.77	.31**	.27**	.58**							
5. Informativeness	3.39	0.72	.78	.26**	.23**	.39**	.64**						
6. Interview's justice perceptions	3.51	0.82	.86	.30**	.17**	.67**	.66**	.50**					
7. Organizational attractiveness	3.65	0.79	.95	.24**	.14*	.43**	.47**	.43**	.43**				
8. Perceived organizational support	4.23	0.91	.81	.37**	.29**	.45**	.48**	.37**	.48**	.59**			
9. Job attractiveness	3.64	1.03	.87	.27**	.21**	.24**	.27**	.27**	.20**	.68**	.51**		
10. Behavioral intentions	3.79	0.99	.70	.22**	.16*	.35**	.36**	.37**	.35**	.75**	.50**	.62**	
11. Alternative job opportunities	3.50	1.12	.78	.13*	.09	.05	.04	-.02	-.03	.03	.05	.05	.11

Note.  $N = 238$ .  
\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Alternative job opportunities.** They were measured with two items adopted from Liden and Parsons (1986). An example item include “At this time, do you think that you can find another job during the next three months?” Participants had to indicate their response on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *very unlikely* to 5 = *very likely*. The alpha for this scale was  $\alpha = .78$ .

**Results**

Table 1 presents the inter-correlations matrix along with descriptive statistics and alphas of the main study variables. Subsequently, we conducted a number of hierarchical regression analyses in order to explore our hypotheses.

Table 1 demonstrates that CSE and proactivity correlate positively with interview's justice perceptions at a statistically significant level. However, in order to explore H1 we conducted an hierarchical regression analysis, with CSE and proactivity as the independent variables and interview's justice perceptions as the dependent variable, presented in Table 2,  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F(2, 235) = 11.67$ ,  $p < .00$ . CSE demonstrated a positive statistically significant relationship with interview's justice perceptions ( $\beta = .27$ ,  $t = 3.93$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, this was not the case for proactivity ( $\beta = .06$ ,  $t = 0.89$ ,  $p = ns$ ). Thus, H1 is partially accepted.

**Table 2.** Hierarchical Regressions with CSE and Proactivity Predicting Interview's Justice Perceptions

Variable	Interview's justice perceptions	
	$R^2$	$\beta$
	.09	
Core self-evaluations (CSE)		.27**
Proactivity		.06

Note.  $N = 238$ . Betas are from the final equation.  
\*\* $p < .01$ .

In order to explore H2, we created three regression equations with applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and

organizational attractiveness as the dependent variables. These analyses are shown in Table 3. There was a significant change in  $R^2$ , for job attractiveness,  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(2, 234) = 6.57$ ,  $p < .01$ , but not for organizational attractiveness or behavioral intentions. Specifically, CSE was positively related to job attractiveness,  $\beta = .19$ ,  $t = 2.74$ ,  $p < .05$ , providing partial support to H2.

H3 dealt with the relationship between perceptions of the interviewer and applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness. As shown in Table 1, all correlations were positive. We further explored these relationships through a series of multiple regression analyses, controlling for alternative job opportunities, since we would expect that high alternative job opportunities would probably have an impact on these relationships. These results are presented in Table 4. In all three cases there was a significant change in  $R^2$  for behavioral intentions,  $\Delta R^2 = .19$ ,  $F(3, 233) = 18.39$ ,  $p < .00$ , job attractiveness,  $\Delta R^2 = .09$ ,  $F(3, 233) = 8.38$ ,  $p < .00$ , and organizational attractiveness,  $\Delta R^2 = .28$ ,  $F(3, 233) = 30.80$ ,  $p < .00$ . Informativeness demonstrated the most consistent association with all three outcomes, followed by personableness for behavioral intentions and organizational attractiveness, and finally for competence but only for organizational attractiveness. These results partially support H3 regarding the important role of job applicants' perceptions of the interviewer.

In order to explore H4, we created three regression equations with applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness as the dependent variables, controlling for interview's justice perceptions, similarly to H3. These analyses are shown in Table 5. Similarly to the previous hypothesis, there was a significant change in  $R^2$  for all three outcomes, with similar patterns of associations for the three types of interviewer's perceptions, therefore partially supporting H4.

Our final set of hypotheses dealt with the role of perceived organizational support on applicants' perceptions during the employment interview. H5 explores the relationship between interview's justice perceptions and perceived organizational support. The hypothesis is confirmed, as shown in Table 1 ( $r = .48$ ,  $p < .01$ ), suggesting thus that

**Table 3.** Hierarchical Regressions with CSE and Proactivity Predicting Applicants' Behavioral Intentions, Job Attractiveness and Organizational Attractiveness after Controlling for Interview's Justice Perceptions

Variable	Behavioral intentions			Job attractiveness			Organizational attractiveness		
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Step 1	.12**			.04*			.18**		
Interview's justice perceptions			.31**			.13			.39**
Step 2	.14	.02		.09*	.05*		.20	.02	
Core self-evaluations (CSE)			.11			.19*			.11
Proactivity			.06			.10			.03

Note.  $N = 238$ . Betas are from the final equation.  
\* $p < .051$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

**Table 4.** Hierarchical Regressions with Perceptions of the Interviewer Predicting Applicants' Behavioral Intentions, Job Attractiveness and Organizational Attractiveness Controlling for Alternative Job Opportunities

Variable	Behavioral intentions			Job attractiveness			Organizational attractiveness		
	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Step 1	.01			.01			.00		.02
Alternative job opportunities			.10			.05			
Step 2	.20**	.19**		.10**	.09**		.28**	.28**	
Personableness			.20*			.12			.23*
Competence			.10			.09			.19*
Informativeness			.23*			.17*			.22*

Note. N = 238. Betas are from the final equation.  
\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01.

**Table 5.** Hierarchical Regressions with Perceptions of the Interviewer Predicting Applicants' Behavioral Intentions, Job Attractiveness and Organizational Attractiveness after Controlling for Interview's Justice Perceptions

Variable	Behavioral intentions			Job attractiveness			Organizational attractiveness		
	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Step 1	.12***			.04**			.18***		
Interview's justice perceptions			.07			-.06			.08
Step 2	.19***	.07**		.10**	.06**		.28***	.10***	
Personableness			.18*			.15			.19*
Competence			.08			.11			.17*
Informativeness			.21**			.17*			.21**

Note. N = 238. Betas are from the final equation.  
\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

there is a positive relationship between how fair applicants perceive the interview and how supportive they consider the organization. Similarly to H4, in order to explore H6, we created three regression equations with applicants' behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness as the dependent variables, controlling for interview's justice perceptions. These analyses are shown in Table 6. It is worth-noting here that perceived organizational support demonstrated strong positive associations with all three outcomes, beyond the effect of interview's justice perceptions, demonstrating the important role of applicants' perceptions of the support the organization offers to employees, therefore fully supporting H6.

### Discussion

The employment interview is an important aspect of every employee selection procedure. Therefore, personnel psychology researchers and human resource professionals need to be aware of how applicants perceive it as a process, how they react to it, how they perceive the interviewer(s), and what are candidates' post-interview attitudes and behaviors. Although it is very common to say that no single interview is like any other, previous research has shown that there are specific aspects of the interview and characteristics of the interviewer(s) (Harris & Fink, 1987; Nikolaou, 2011) which have a positive impact on applicants' perceptions of the selection interview.

A first outcome of our study was the role of personality characteristics, such as core self-evaluations (CSE) and proactivity, in applicants' perceptions of the interview's fairness, interview's justice perceptions, and post-interview outcomes of our study. Only CSE but not proactivity demonstrated a positive association with applicants' perceptions; CSE was also associated with job attractiveness, controlling for justice perceptions. Although these findings should be replicated in other studies, especially in other countries as well, it seems that the personality constellation of CSE can be useful in explaining how applicants perceive and evaluate the interview, the interviewer(s), and the post-interview attitudes and behaviors. Candidates high in CSE seem to form positive reactions to the interview and the interviewer, probably as a result of the positive image of themselves. CSE entails the appraisals people make of the external world and how these are affected by their desires with respect to these objects and also by the assumptions people hold about themselves, other people, and the world (Judge, Locke, & Durham, 1997). Since CSE describes the basic conclusions or bottom-line self-evaluations held by individuals, it makes sense why it is positively related with fairness reactions to the employment interview, since it involves increased interpersonal interaction with the interviewers (Nikolaou & Judge, 2007).

Our next hypothesis dealt with the relationship between candidates' perceptions of the interviewer(s) and applicants' post-interview

**Table 6.** Hierarchical Regressions with Perceived Organizational Support Predicting Applicants' Behavioral Intentions, Job Attractiveness, and Organizational Attractiveness after Controlling for Interview's Justice Perceptions

Variable	Behavioral intentions			Job attractiveness			Organizational attractiveness		
	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β	R <sup>2</sup>	ΔR <sup>2</sup>	β
Step 1	.12***			.04**			.18***		
Interview's justice perceptions			.14*			-.06			.19**
Step 2	.27***	.15***		.26***	.22***		.38***	.20***	
Perceived organizational support			.43***			.54***			.50***

Note. N = 238. Betas are from the final equation.  
\*p < .05, \*\*p < .01, \*\*\*p < .001.

behavioral intentions, job attractiveness, and organizational attractiveness. In all three cases, the overall impact of applicants' perceptions of the interviewers' personal characteristics (namely personableness, competence, and informativeness) was statistically significant, above and beyond the effect of alternative job opportunities. Especially, informativeness demonstrated the most consistent relationships, with all three outcomes and personableness was also positively associated with candidates' behavioral intentions and organizational attractiveness, but not job attractiveness. Finally, competence was only associated with organizational attractiveness. Identical results were obtained when controlling for interview's justice perceptions.

These results demonstrate the important role of applicants' perceptions of their assessors' interviewing characteristics. This is especially the case for informativeness, indicating how significant it is for candidates that interviewers are open to responding to candidates' questions and providing information on the job and the company, realistically and with clarity. The findings reinforce further the important role of techniques, often used or should be used in the employment interview, such as the realistic job preview (Premack & Wanous, 1985; Wanous, 1973). Candidates appreciate the interviews and the companies they represent when they are informative and approachable during the selection process, and especially during the interview. Similar results were obtained by Nikolaou (2011), indicating the consistency of these two constructs in predicting applicants' perceptions of the interviewer(s).

Finally, building on the previous hypotheses, we explored the role of perceived organizational support (POS), as perceived by the candidates during the interview and its impact on their post-interview attitudes and behaviors. Initially, POS was positively associated with interview's justice perceptions, as expected, indicating that applicants who perceive the interview as a fair process tend also to perceive the company as a caring and considerate employer. Moreover, POS was also positively, strongly associated with all three post-interview outcomes (behavioral intentions, job attractiveness and organizational attractiveness), even when controlling for interview's justice perceptions. Companies that are perceived as caring and demonstrating interest to their employees are more likely to lead job candidates to the formation of positive post-interview attitudes and behaviors, because candidates will perceive this as a sign of how current employees are treated in this company.

### Research/Practice Implications

These results have a number of implications both for research and practice of the employment interview. From a research perspective, along with Nikolaou (2011), this was one of the few attempts to explore the applicants' perspective in the employment interview with actual job applicants and not college students. Unfortunately, this was not a matched sample, i.e., taking the perspective of both sides following the same interview. Although we are mostly interested in candidates' perception/reactions and not the interviewers', this is an important limitation of the current work and also a suggestion for future research. Moreover, this is probably one of the first attempts, as far as we know, to explore the role of perceived organizational support in an interview context. How candidates perceive the company as a potential employer is a crucial issue, associated with future intentions, especially for highly qualified candidates. This is even more important today in the era of social networking websites, where candidates can use these websites to generate a positive or a negative word of mouth about employers and their selection process (Nikolaou et al., 2015).

From a practical point of view, we provided evidence of the importance of interviewer's personal characteristics, especially informativeness and personableness, on applicants' post-interview intentions. The interviewer needs to be informative and personable

during the interview, in order to increase the chance that the applicant will leave the room with a positive perception of the job and the company as well, and thus increase the possibility of accepting a job offer or creating a positive word of mouth. Also, another significant practical implication of this research is the important role of POS in the interview context. Although the research design of this study does not allow the exploration of POS' direct effects, because these perceptions might have been formed before the interview takes place, the fact that how candidates are treated during the interview has an impact on POS is an important outcome for practitioners. Building a company image as a caring and considerate employer is not only an issue of how companies treat current employees, but also how they treat job applicants in the recruitment and selection process.

### Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Nevertheless, a number of limitations should also be mentioned. First, the lack of a matched sample, as earlier described. This would reduce substantially any memory or perceptual biases from participants' responses. Moreover, data was obtained using an one-shot questionnaire methodology, in a cross-sectional research design and it is often argued that common-method variance rather than causal links may explain some of the relationships identified. Spector (2006), reviewing the effects of shared method variance on organizational research, concluded that it is largely mythical reaching the status of urban legend. However, we believe that for this kind of research it is impossible to employ any other method of data collection, apart from self-report measures, especially because we are mostly interested in candidates' own perceptions. It would be helpful, though, if data collection was taking place immediately after the employment interview, in order to eliminate any memory effects or if some of these measures, such as the outcome measures, were taken a few weeks after the interview.

Another limitation, and also a suggestion for future research, is the assessment of perceived organizational support (POS). In our research, applicants assessed POS along with other measures, but we can not be certain that the perceptions they have formed about the employer are affected by the current interview or not. Future research could appropriately manipulate candidates' perceptions of the employer before/after the interview and explore how these are associated with applicant reactions to the interview.

### Conclusion

The current research aimed to explore further job applicants' perceptions of and reactions to the employment interview. The interview, as a selection method is not a simple selection tool. People who act as interviewers should be well-trained and aware of the impact they have, not only on applicants' professional life, through their evaluations, but also on their employer, through their decisions and the perceptions which successful and unsuccessful candidates form about the interviewers and the company through the interview process.

### Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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