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The Fundamental Recruitment Error: Candidate-Recruiter Discrepancy in Their Relative Valuation of Innate Talent vs. Hard Work

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Abstract. Innate talent and orientation toward hard work are highly important personal attributes with respect to workers' productive capabilities. In this research, we identify a discrepancy between job candidates and recruiters in their relative valuation of these two attributes. Although innate talent is valued relatively more by job candidates than recruiters, the opposite is true for orientation toward hard work. We propose that the discrepancy is rooted in a misalignment of the fundamental motivations of the two parties in the job market. In seven studies (four preregistered), which include randomized trial experiments and quasi-experiments and use real life recruiters and job seekers (across a total of 112 industries) as participants, we provide evidence of the current effect and its underlying mechanism. Studies 1A–1C demonstrate the negative consequence of the discrepancy on job market efficiency, showing that it can lead candidates to adopt impression management strategies that lower their chance of getting the job. Studies 2A and 2B show that full-time workers consider career potential to be associated with both innate talent and hard work but position performance to be more strongly associated with hard work than innate talent. Finally, Studies 3A and 3B indicate that candidates are relatively more career-focused, whereas recruiters are relatively more position focused and that this difference in their relative focus mediates the current discrepancy. Implications of the present research for both job candidates and recruiters are discussed.

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Keywords: recruitment • discrepancy • innate talent • hard work • job market

Introduction

Getting the right match between job candidates and recruiters is *the* most essential goal in an efficient job market. Recruiters evaluate job candidates based on their preferences or valuations about the candidates' characteristics, which concern not only job-specific knowledge, skills, and abilities but also the candidates' personalities and values more generally (Huffcutt et al. 2001). Much evidence indicates that conformity to recruiters' preferences can confer critical advantages on job candidates over their peers throughout the recruiting process (Dunnette 1966, Chatman 1989, Gilmore and Ferris 1989, Rynes and Gerhart 1990, Cable and Judge 1997, Kristof-Brown 2000, Higgins and Judge 2004, Rivera 2012, Carnahan and Greenwood 2018). Consequently, it is crucial that job candidates present an image that focuses on attributes that are valued by

recruiters, and they often do so by carefully calibrating their self-positioning or -presentation strategies (Von Baeyer et al. 1981, Glick et al. 1988, Kristof-Brown et al. 2002, Kang et al. 2016). At the same time, these presentational efforts facilitate recruiters' identification of better matched job candidates and thereby reduce the uncertainty and costs of the recruiting firms (Spence 1973, Weiss 1995, Altonji and Pierret 2001).

Although predicting what recruiters value seems to be straightforward, it nevertheless proves to be error-prone in many circumstances. As implied in our previous discussion, failure in this task reduces job market efficiency and is detrimental to both job candidates and recruiters (Janoff-Bulman and Wade 1996, Rudman 1998, Merluzzi and Phillips 2016, Di Stasio 2017, Galperin et al. 2020). In this research, we identify a misalignment between job candidates and recruiters with regard to their respective

fundamental motivation in the job market, and we show that the mismatch can lead to a discrepancy in their relative valuation of certain attributes that are of high importance in the workplace. We situate the current investigation in the potential tradeoff between innate talent and hard work. The two qualities are regarded by many as the most fundamental sources from which achievement in any domain emanates (Weber 1958, Howe et al. 1998, Amabile 2001, Lubinski et al. 2006, Duckworth et al. 2007). Literature has revealed a variety of factors that can influence recruiter evaluations in addition to job-specific skills, including, for example, candidates' educational credentials (Rivera 2011), industrial trajectory (Leung 2014), social network (Fernandez et al. 2000), race (Kang et al. 2016), gender (Carnahan and Greenwood 2018), and physical appearance (Lee et al. 2015). Notwithstanding the heterogeneity in personnel selection criteria across fields and situations, innate talent and orientation toward hard work often occupy central positions in the consideration set of corporate gatekeepers (Behling 1998, Tsay and Banaji 2011, Tsay 2016, Brown et al. 2018).

Although possessing high natural talent does not imply lowered commitment to hard work or vice versa, people's lay beliefs about achievement have often pitted these two attributes against each other (Dweck and Leggett 1988, Juvonen and Murdock 1995, Siegle et al. 2010, Tsay and Banaji 2011, Lockhart et al. 2013). For example, people believe that talented individuals can often "excel with ease and grace" (Thorne and Pellant 2006). Moreover, literature has had a long debate over the relative prominence of these two qualities in the acquisition of top performance and attainment (Ericsson et al. 1993, Ericsson and Charness 1994, Howe et al. 1998, Amabile 2001, Duckworth et al. 2007, Macnamara et al. 2014, Ruthsatz et al. 2014). Therefore, although the two attributes could be independent in the overall pool of job candidates, personnel selection processes often result in smaller sets of choices that pose a tradeoff between "naturals" and "strivers"—with some top-listed candidates demonstrating relatively higher innate talent and others displaying a relatively higher orientation toward hard work (Tsay and Banaji 2011, Tsay 2016, Brown et al. 2018).

Despite this tradeoff and the high importance of these two attributes to workers' productive capabilities, we know surprisingly little about managers' relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work in recruitment. On a related point, little is known about the relative valuation of these two qualities by job candidates and the extent to which the relative valuations by the two parties align. Yet a potential mismatch can have detrimental effects on job market efficiency. For example, misaligned valuations about these attributes can lead job candidates to adopt impression management strategies that lower their chance of being selected by recruiters of

suitable jobs, adding noises to the process of personnel evaluation and selection. These potential problems impede the efficient allocation of workers to their best matched positions and hence have adverse effects on the productivity of the workforce. Therefore, investigations into the potential mismatch would contribute to an advanced understanding of and offer important implications for decisions in the recruitment context.

The present research is motivated by these issues. We propose that recruiters in general show a strong preference for hard work over innate talent in their evaluation and selection of job candidates. Job candidates, however, tend to value innate talent to a relatively higher degree and therefore err when predicting recruiters' valuations of the two attributes. We further propose that this discrepancy in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work between job candidates and recruiters is rooted in a misalignment of their fundamental motivations in the job market. We argue that job candidates are career-minded (as opposed to position-minded) and that this orientation causes concerns about their career potential to take relatively higher priority in their consideration. In contrast, we argue that recruiters are relatively position driven and that this objective leads them to focus primarily on assessing job candidates' performance in the current position. We term this phenomenon *the fundamental recruitment error*. We elaborate our theoretical development of the current propositions in the following section.

Theoretical Development

Fundamental Motivations of Job Candidates and Recruiters

Although most job candidates could only target their applications at specific job positions, we propose that their fundamental motivation in the job market is not to fill any particular open position but rather to enter and advance in the relevant career fields. Modern capitalism has effectively placed the burden of career management on individual workers rather than organizations (Hall 2002, Sullivan and Baruch 2009). For the vast majority of people who are looking for a job, job hunting has more to do with their future career prospects than the present. For example, a study by Ng et al. (2008, p. 346) reveals that Master of Business Administration (MBA) students place a strong emphasis on the development of their personal careers and that they "aspired to careers, and not jobs or callings." In addition, many people engage in costly preparations for their career plans before they enter the job market (e.g., by completing a certain degree of education or by receiving specific trainings). Therefore, for a majority of job candidates, what truly motivates their decision to apply for a job is their desire to enter and develop in the relevant career field rather than the conditions or requirements of the open positions.

Our conceptualization suggests that job candidates' choices and aspirations related to their own careers are the fundamental motive dictating their decisions and actions in the job market (Vigoda-Gadot and Grimland 2008, Jones et al. 2014, Koppman 2016, Galperin et al. 2020). Therefore, the open positions that job candidates apply for are in most cases not an end but a means for them to advance beyond these positions and develop in their career field. To this extent, a key consideration of people when they apply for jobs would be their career potential in the relevant field, which denotes the possibility that they can progress beyond their current role and achieve further growth and development to "become something more than what they currently are" (Silzer and Church 2009, p. 379). Therefore, although demonstrating capabilities that fulfill the requirements of the open positions is undoubtedly important in job applications, we propose that driven by their career orientation, job candidates also attach considerable importance to attesting to their career potential during the recruitment process.

Moreover, job candidates' self-conception or -assessment may also lead them to focus relatively more on their career potential. Previous studies have shown that future-oriented considerations, including intentions, plans, goals, and potential, constitute a substantial part in people's self-conception (Markus 1983, Markus and Nurius 1986, Buehler et al. 1994, Kruger and Gilovich 2004, Koehler and Poon 2006, Williams and Gilovich 2008, Helzer and Dunning 2012, Williams et al. 2012). This line of research suggests that people base their self-identity largely on who they strive to be in the future and that they believe their future potential is critical to an accurate understanding of who they are (Williams and Gilovich 2008, Williams et al. 2012). Furthermore, people are inclined to think that they are currently far from fulfilling their full potential and only their best possible performance is diagnostic of their true identity (Williams and Gilovich 2008, Williams et al. 2012). These beliefs could cause job candidates to place a relatively greater weight on career potential in their self-evaluation and hence presentation of themselves in job applications (Baumeister 1982, Leary and Kowalski 1990).

In contrast, we propose that the fundamental motivation of recruiters is precisely the filling of vacant positions because their tasks essentially start with the opening of job slots (Dunnette 1966, Barron et al. 1985, Cook et al. 1992, Bidwell and Keller 2014, Keller 2018, Galperin et al. 2020). The task objective of recruiters requires that they identify and select job candidates who can best fulfill the requirements of the vacant jobs; as a result, they would focus primarily on assessing the performance of candidates in the current positions. Consistent with our proposition, findings from prior research in personnel selection indicate that recruiters base their recommendations and hiring decisions largely on their

evaluation of the fit between job candidates and the open job positions (Kinicki et al. 1990, Bretz et al. 1993, Kristof-Brown 2000).

Moreover, recruiters are usually not burdened by the responsibility of identifying or recruiting individuals who possess the greatest potential to advance or grow in their career field. In a similar vein, they are seldom held accountable for the performance of their recruits across different positions or the career-wise achievement of these employees. These aspects of how recruiters' job performance is evaluated could lead them to focus relatively little on job candidates' career potential during recruitment even though doing so entails risks of conflicting with the firms' long-term development or goals (Bills 1992, Galperin et al. 2020). Supporting our claims, research on the Peter principle reveals that when firms evaluate candidates for promotion to managerial positions, they often prioritize current performance and select individuals who excel at their current job positions at the expense of promoting the best potential managers (Peter and Hull 1969, Benson et al. 2019).

Therefore, our theoretical arguments in the current section postulate a misalignment of the fundamental motivations of job candidates and recruiters. Specifically, we argue that job candidates are essentially applying for careers and less so for specific job positions. This motivation causes job candidates to focus relatively more on addressing their career potential in recruitment than recruiters. In contrast, the essential goal of recruiters is to fill vacant job positions, and this motive leads them to focus strongly on assessing the candidates' performance in the current positions. We further propose that this mismatch can lead to a discrepancy between job candidates and recruiters in their relative valuation of innate talent vs. hard work in recruitment. We elaborate on this proposition in the next section.

Candidate-Recruiter Discrepancy in Their Relative Valuation of Innate Talent vs. Hard Work

There has been a lack of clarity regarding the definition and scope of the term "talent" in management and adjacent fields (Lewis and Heckman 2006, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013). Most perspectives view talent as a form of inborn and domain-specific human capital, whereas others adopt the term to refer to concepts such as personnel, commitment, or realized outputs in the workplace (Renzulli 1978, Howe et al. 1998, Simonton 2001, Dries 2013, Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013, Meyers et al. 2013). The term "talent" is also associated with concepts such as intelligence or general mental ability (GMA), which is widely conceptualized and measured as a multi-dimensional construct that encompasses inborn potential, task-related abilities or skills, and motivational factors as well (Spearman 1904, Renzulli 1978, Hunter 1986, Carroll 1992, Ree et al. 1994). It is beyond the scope of the present research to give a comprehensive review or discussion

of the concept of talent. Instead, our conceptualization follows an intuitive approach that focuses on the innate aspect of talent or related concepts. We refer to innate talent as people's natural gifts and innate aptitudes, as opposed to abilities or expertise acquired through extended hard work or deliberate practice (Ericsson and Charness 1994, Amabile 2001, Hambrick and Meinz 2011, Tsay and Banaji 2011, Brown et al. 2018, Leung et al. 2020).

Despite the complexity surrounding the concept, extant perspectives have consistently associated individuals' innate talent with high levels of career potential (Silzer and Church 2009, 2010; Tansley 2011; Gallardo-Gallardo et al. 2013; Meyers et al. 2013). A substantial number of empirical findings indicate that innate talent is one of the most important predictors of people's attainment in their careers. Using longitudinal data that track the career trajectories of profoundly gifted individuals over decades, Lubinski and colleagues have repeatedly shown that those with high innate talent or aptitude are associated with high levels of career potential (Lubinski et al. 2001, 2006, 2014; Robertson et al. 2010; Makel et al. 2016). For example, this stream of research finds that precocious and gifted individuals are far more likely than their peers to become tenured professors of elite universities, distinguished judges and attorneys, and top executives of prestigious organizations (Kell et al. 2013, Bernstein et al. 2019). Further supporting the link between career potential and innate talent, results of past studies suggest that deliberate practice or hard work cannot account for differences in performance across elite individuals beyond innate talent in domains such as music and sports (Ruthsatz et al. 2008, Mosing et al. 2014, Macnamara et al. 2016).

However, although innate talent contributes uniquely to people's career potential, it may take only a peripheral role in predicting workers' performance or output level in their current job positions. For example, research has shown that innate talent does not add much to workers' performance in general job positions when their orientation toward hard work is controlled (Barrick and Mount 1991, Behling 1998, Avis et al. 2002). Studies by Schmidt and Hunter indicate that intelligence or GMA affects workers' performance mainly through the indirect effects of learning and acquisition of job knowledge and that these effects persist to predict future performance beyond current job positions (Schmidt and Hunter 1992, 1998). The direct effect of intelligence or GMA on current job performance independent of job knowledge, however, is much smaller (Hunter 1986, Schmidt et al. 1986, Schmidt and Hunter 1998). Therefore, these findings suggest that innate talent is predominantly associated with career potential and trajectory (via learning) but that the link between innate talent and current position performance is much more elusive.

Besides innate talent, orientation toward hard work has been widely recognized as another key determinant

of workers' career potential and attainment (Ericsson et al. 1993; Ericsson and Charness 1994; Duckworth et al. 2007, 2019). For one thing, orientation toward hard work is associated with a handful of closely related personal attributes that are indispensable to an individual's long-term excellence in the workplace (Furnham 1984; Barrick et al. 1993; Duckworth et al. 2007, 2019; Carter et al. 2014), such as conscientiousness (McCrae and Costa 1987, Barrick and Mount 1991, Goldberg 1993), grit (Duckworth et al. 2007), and endorsement of the Protestant work ethic (Mirels and Garrett 1971, Jones 1997). Second, hard work and deliberate practice constitute the primary means by which people can circumvent inborn or external constraints to attain high levels of expertise and performance, and therefore are important factors to consider when predicting the ceiling of workers' career potential and achievement (Ericsson et al. 1993, Ericsson and Charness 1994, Duckworth et al. 2011).

Moreover, orientation toward hard work also takes prominence over other personal attributes in determining workers' performance in their current job positions. Findings from several strands of research have provided support to the link between current position performance and hard work. Persistent effort or hard work is a prominent predictor of workers' output level (Merrins and Garrett 1975, Greenberg 1977) and is a crucial antecedent to the accomplishment of tasks in most job positions (Barrick and Mount 1991, Barrick et al. 1993, Duckworth et al. 2019). Endorsement of hard work is associated with better fulfillment of job duties and responsibilities via workers' perseverance, sense of purpose, and efficiency (Digman 1990, Barrick and Mount 1991, Mount et al. 1999). Finally, workers with a higher orientation toward hard work conform more closely to an ideal worker image that requires total dedication to their positions (Acker 1990, Bailyn 2006, Williams et al. 2013, Ranganathan 2018) because they tend to possess stronger internal work motivation and higher commitment to their jobs (Blood 1969, Wanous 1974, Aldag and Brief 1975, Kidron 1978).

In conclusion, we argue that career potential hinges on both innate talent and hard work, whereas current position performance depends on hard work to a greater degree than on innate talent. Following our discussions in the previous section, recruiters tend to focus primarily on current position performance, whereas job candidates have a relatively stronger focus on their careers. Therefore, we propose that recruiters would mostly value the quality of hard work while giving relatively little importance to innate talent in candidate evaluation and selection. Job candidates would also have a high regard for hard work as necessitated by their career orientation. However, the same orientation would lead them to have a relatively higher valuation of innate talent than recruiters, driven by the motivation to adequately address their

career potential. To summarize, we propose that job candidates value innate talent to a relatively higher degree than recruiters, while recruiters have a relatively higher valuation of hard work than job candidates. In the following part of this paper, we present a series of studies that test the validity of our propositions and examine the implications of the proposed discrepancy.

Overview of Studies

To ensure that the findings of our studies are ecologically valid and provide meaningful implications to the field, all the studies reported in this paper were conducted with relevant samples of participants across a wide array of industries, including real life recruiting managers, human resource (HR) professionals, full-time corporate employees and workers, people who were currently actively looking for a job, and college students who were soon to enter the job market. Moreover, in addition to randomized trial experiments, we conducted quasi-experiments (Study 1A and Study 3A) in which recruiters and potential job seekers were in their respective roles in real life. Testing the current effect in such a setting is important and meaningful because it resembles the natural context in which the phenomenon takes place.

In Studies 1A–1C, we use a choice paradigm and demonstrate evidence of the fundamental recruitment error by comparing the relative preference for innate talent versus hard work by job candidates and recruiters. We then provide evidence supporting our proposed mechanism underlying the effect with a series of pre-registered studies. In Studies 2A and 2B, we present evidence of our proposed relationships between the two personnel evaluation dimensions (i.e., career potential and current position performance) and the two candidate attributes (i.e., innate talent and orientation toward hard work). In Studies 3A and 3B, we investigate the current effect using a different paradigm and show that job candidates and recruiters have a relatively different focus in recruitment, as our propositions suggest. Moreover, results of these two studies indicate that those different focuses mediate the candidate-recruiter discrepancy in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work. Data and materials of the current studies are available via https://osf.io/zjemc/?view_only=6d97f25cb3b34618808c4cefaaa7295b. The present research received institutional review board review and approval.

Study 1

In Study 1, participants in the candidate condition were asked to choose between two reference letters to submit in their job application. One letter praised their innate talent, and the other praised their hard work. Participants in the recruiter condition were asked to choose between two candidates to offer a job. One candidate

was relatively more talented, and the other was relatively more hardworking. We measured participants' choice between innate talent and hard work in the current studies using scenarios involving reference letters because they are a commonly adopted and valid tool in personnel selection (Schmidt and Hunter 1998). Study 1A is a quasi-experiment in which we assigned full-time corporate employees to the candidate condition and HR professionals to the recruiter condition. Next, we conducted two randomized trial experiments (Studies 1B and 1C) to address the internal validity of the results of Study 1A. Participants of Study 1B were HR professionals, and participants of Study 1C were college students who were soon to be job seekers. We targeted a sample size of about 50 participants per cell in the current studies and made adjustments based on the availability of participants.

Method

Study 1A. Participants in Study 1A were full-time corporate employees and HR professionals working in major cities in China. To recruit non-HR corporate employees, we sent a survey invitation to identified corporate employees via WeChat (a commonly used mobile communication application in China) and encouraged them to share the invitation with their colleagues. To recruit HR professionals, we posted the survey invitation in HR professional communication groups on WeChat. The invitation included a short introduction and a link to a five-minute online survey. In the recruiter condition, participants were asked to confirm their profession on the first page of the survey and those who reported not working in the HR profession were led to exit the survey. Forty non-HR corporate employees (20 males) and 39 HR professionals (21 males) completed the study. Participants' occupations spanned 22 industries¹ (see Table A1 in the online appendix for details).

All participants first answered a warm-up question. Those in the candidate condition (recruiter condition) read that innate talent and hard work are two independent qualities that are highly relevant to job applications (recruitment) and were asked to rate the extent to which they thought job candidates (recruiters) should pay attention to each of these two qualities in job applications (recruitment). They indicated their opinion by providing a number from 1 (not at all) to 10 (very much) for each quality. On the next page, participants in the candidate condition imagined that they were applying for a job in another company in their industry; that job was the same as their current job. They were required to submit one reference letter and had a choice between two equally strong letters from credible sources (i.e., referees) in the field. We described the reference letters in this way to emphasize the importance of these letters in the current context. Participants imagined that one referee wrote that they were very talented but not outstanding

in terms of hard work, while the other referee wrote that they were very hardworking but not outstanding in terms of innate talent. They were asked to choose the letter that they preferred to submit. Participants in the recruiter condition imagined that they were recruiting a new employee for their department. They were told that there were two candidates who were similar in almost all aspects, and both had a strong reference letter from a credible source in the field. However, the referee of one candidate wrote that the candidate was very talented but not outstanding in terms of hard work, whereas the referee of the other candidate wrote that the candidate was very hardworking but not outstanding in terms of innate talent. They were asked to choose to which candidate they preferred to offer the job. Participants' choice in the two conditions constitute our major variable of interest.

Next, participants answered some questions about their current job and work experience and indicated their gender, age, and level of education (see Table A3 in the online appendix for a descriptive summary of these variables in Studies 1A and 1B). They also indicated the city in which they currently worked and were asked to provide the full address of their company to receive a small gift for completing the survey. This procedure helped to validate the reported identity of the participants. Fifty-seven participants (72%) provided their company's name and address.

Study 1B. Participants in Study 1B were 96 HR professionals (27 males) working in major cities in China and they took part in the study via the same channel as in Study 1A (those who had participated in Study 1A were not invited). They were randomly assigned to either the candidate or the recruiter condition. The procedure and measures in the current study were largely similar to those in Study 1A. Seventy-two of the participants (75%) provided their company's name and address to receive a gift. Participants' occupations spanned 27 industries (see Table A2 in the online appendix for details).

Study 1C. Participants in Study 1C were 94 college students (25 males; $M_{age} = 20.76$, $SD_{age} = 1.20$) at a major university in Hong Kong. Eighty-six percent were in their third or fourth year of study. They took part in a laboratory study in exchange for a monetary reward and were randomly assigned to either the candidate or the recruiter condition. Those in the candidate condition were told that the study was about job application, and they were to imagine applying for a job in a large company. They were asked to write their answers to two questions that were raised in the interview: "Why do you love this job?" and "What would be your ideal working environment for the job?" Participants in the recruiter condition were told that the study was about recruitment and imagined that they were senior managers in a large

company and were interviewing some job candidates. They were asked to write their expected ideal answers to the aforementioned two questions. We included these questions to help participants better immerse themselves in their respective roles. Four different job titles (accountant, insurance salesperson, fashion designer, and software developer) were used in our scenarios and were presented in random order to participants.

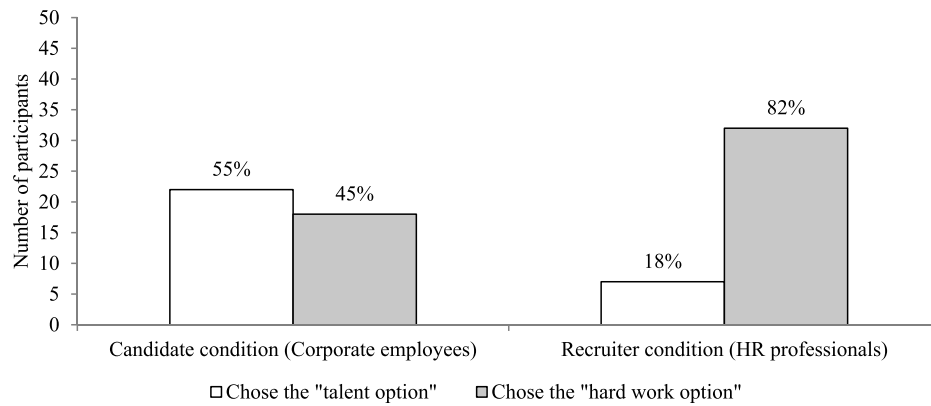
After participants answered the role-immersing questions, they were presented with the choice question about reference letters (or candidates) that was largely similar to those in Studies 1A and 1B. Once participants indicated their choice, they answered two exploratory questions about the extent to which they considered innate talent and hard work, respectively, a personal quality of theirs relative to other students in the university. Finally, participants reported their year of study, gender, and age.

Results

In Study 1A, 55% (22 of 40) of the corporate employees chose to submit the reference letter that emphasized their innate talent rather than the one that emphasized their hard work. In contrast, only 18% (7 of 39) of the HR professionals chose to offer the job to the relatively more talented candidate rather than the relatively more hardworking candidate ($\chi^2(1) = 11.67$, $p = 0.001$; Figure 1). We further analyzed participants' choice in a logistic regression model with their condition, the scale of their current company, their current position rank, years of work experience, level of education, age, and gender as regressors. The results of our model show that the coefficient estimate of participants' condition remains significant ($b = 1.74$, $Wald(1) = 5.39$, $p = 0.020$), whereas none of the coefficient estimates of the other variables reaches statistical significance ($p > 0.230$).

The results of Study 1B were similar to those of Study 1A: 44% (21 of 48) of the participants in the candidate condition chose to submit the reference letter that emphasized their innate talent, whereas only 21% (10 of 48) of those in the recruiter condition chose to offer the job to the relatively more talented candidate ($\chi^2(1) = 5.77$, $p = 0.016$; Figure 2). We ran a similar logistic regression as that in Study 1A and included two additional regressors in the model: participants' years of HR work experience and the number of people they have interviewed. The coefficient estimate of participants' condition again remains significant ($b = 1.12$, $Wald(1) = 4.64$, $p = 0.031$). None of the coefficient estimates of the other variables reaches statistical significance ($p > 0.180$), except that of participants' current position rank ($b = 0.72$, $Wald(1) = 4.90$, $p = 0.027$). The latter result suggests that after controlling for all the other variables, participants' probability of choosing the respective "talent option" increased as their current position rank became higher.

Figure 1. Results of Study 1A



As supplemental analyses, we also looked into participants' responses to the warm-up question in Studies 1A and 1B. In Study 1A, the level of attention that corporate employees thought job candidates should pay to innate talent ($M = 6.93, SD = 2.25$) was marginally higher than what HR professionals thought recruiters should pay to the same attribute ($M = 6.05, SD = 1.78; F(1, 77) = 3.67, p = 0.059, \text{Cohen's } d = 0.43$). The level of attention that corporate employees thought job candidates should pay to hard work ($M = 7.90, SD = 1.75$) was similar to what HR professionals thought recruiters should pay to that attribute ($M = 7.69, SD = 1.24; F < 1$). In Study 1B, HR professionals in the two conditions indicated that job candidates and recruiters should pay an equal level of attention to both innate talent ($M_{\text{Candidate}} = 5.94, SD_{\text{Candidate}} = 2.27$ versus $M_{\text{Recruiter}} = 5.96, SD_{\text{Recruiter}} = 1.83; F < 1$) and hard work ($M_{\text{Candidate}} = 7.65, SD_{\text{Candidate}} = 1.76$ versus $M_{\text{Recruiter}} = 7.40, SD_{\text{Recruiter}} = 1.72; F < 1$).

Finally, the results of Study 1C replicated those of the previous two studies: 68% (34 of 50) of the participants in the candidate condition chose to submit the reference letter that emphasized their innate talent, whereas 39% (17 of 44) of the participants in the recruiter condition

chose to offer the job to the relatively more talented candidate ($\chi^2(1) = 8.13, p = 0.004$; Figure 3). No other variables were found to have any significant effect on participants' choice.

Discussion

Across Studies 1A–1C, we provide consistent evidence of the proposed discrepancy between job candidates and recruiters in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work. Our findings suggest that the current mismatch could be rather consequential with respect to job market efficiency: When facing a tradeoff, a substantial proportion of job candidates preferred to submit a reference letter that highlighted their innate talent rather than hard work, whereas significantly fewer recruiters actually preferred to hire a candidate who was described as being relatively talented over one who was described as being relatively hardworking. These results suggest that the misaligned valuations could lead job candidates to adopt suboptimal strategies that lower their chances of getting suitable jobs.

These studies also provide evidence of the current effect's validity in the field and its relevance to both

Figure 2. Results of Study 1B

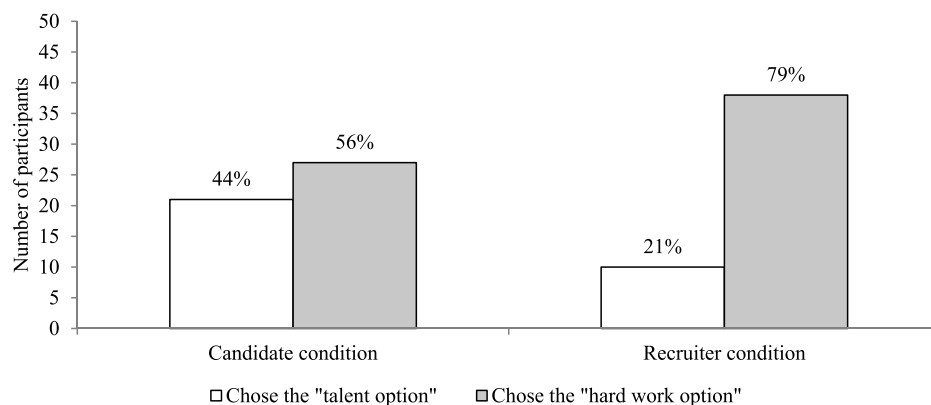
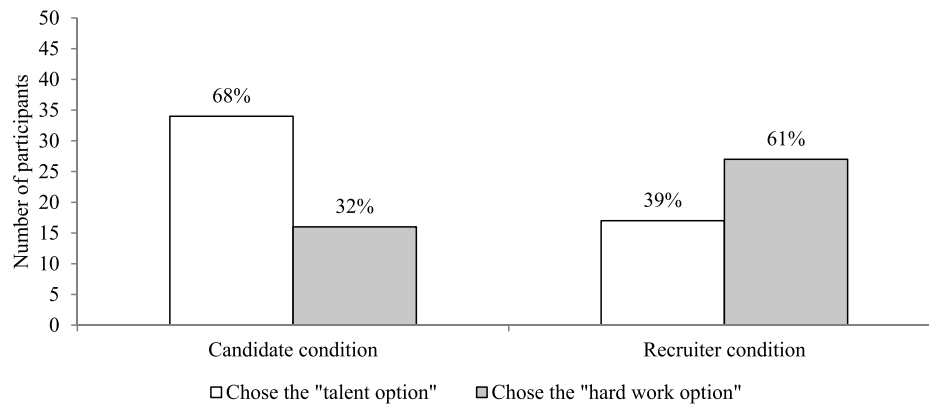


Figure 3. Results of Study 1C

job candidates and recruiters. In Study 1A, corporate employees and HR professionals made decisions that are likely to correspond closely to those they face in their real industry experience. In Study 1B, we randomly assigned half of the HR professional participants to take the perspective of job candidates—It is perfectly natural and normal for them to also apply for jobs, and therefore we were able to provide evidence of the current results' internal validity without compromising the ecological validity of the effect. In Study 1C, we present further evidence of our effect by testing it among a sample of college students, the majority of whom were in or soon to enter the market for jobs or intern positions. Furthermore, the results of Studies 1A and 1B suggest that the current effect is robust after controlling for several job-related variables and persists among experienced professionals working in a wide range of industries.

A possible concern about these studies is the lack of mundane realism in certain aspects of their settings. For example, on many occasions job candidates may not have access to the content of their reference letters, and the constraint of submitting only one reference letter may also seem uncommon. However, the advantage of adopting the choice paradigm is that it poses a clear tradeoff between innate talent and hard work and thus allows us to examine the current effect without the influence of any unintended confounding factor. Moreover, we believe that the choice paradigm is appropriate for examining recruiters' preference because the essential task in recruitment is about making choices among candidates. Last, the supplemental results regarding the warm-up question in Studies 1A and 1B suggest that non-HR corporate employees (candidate condition in Study 1A) and HR professionals (recruiter condition in Study 1A and both conditions in Study 1B) attach similar importance to hard work, whereas the former tend to give relatively greater importance to innate talent than do the latter. These results are therefore consistent with our propositions.

Study 2

The goal of Study 2 is to examine our proposed relationships between the two personnel evaluation dimensions (i.e., career potential and current position performance) and the two candidate attributes (i.e., innate talent and orientation toward hard work). In Study 2A, we asked participants to freely list personal attributes that they thought were important for career potential and current position performance, respectively. In Study 2B, we provided participants a list of personal characteristics and asked them to sort the items according to their relative importance for career potential versus current position performance. Participants in Study 2 were full-time workers residing in the United States. They took part in the current studies via the online platform Prolific. Each participant recruited from this platform took part in only one of the studies reported in this paper. We preregistered Study 2A at https://aspredicted.org/2T4_GGY and Study 2B at https://aspredicted.org/1D4_3KZ.

Method

Study 2A. Two hundred full-time workers (117 males) took part in this study. Their occupations spanned 52 industries (see Table A4 in the online appendix for details). Participants read that career potential and current position performance are two important dimensions in personnel evaluation and that we were interested in knowing their opinion regarding what characteristics are required for workers to excel in each of these dimensions. They were then asked to freely list three characteristics that they considered important for workers to have high career potential in their fields and to list three characteristics that were important for workers to have high performance in their current job positions, respectively. The order of these two questions was counterbalanced among participants.

Two raters who were blind about our proposition gave their ratings of the perceived relation of the listed characteristics with workers' innate talent and orientation

toward hard work, respectively, using a four-point scale (zero, unrelated/independent; one, possibly related; two, moderately related; three, strongly related). The two raters assessed each of the listed characteristics in our data set independently. Discrepancies between the raters were reconciled through discussion.

Study 2B. Two hundred one full-time workers (110 males) took part in this study. Their occupations spanned 56 industries (see Table A5 in the online appendix for details). One participant reported being unemployed at the time of this study. Participants read the same cover story as in Study 2A. On the next page, they were given a list of ten characteristics chosen from participants' answers in Study 2A. Among these characteristics, three were considered talent related because they had high ratings of perceived relation with innate talent; three others were deemed hard work related because they had high ratings of perceived relation with orientation toward hard work. We also included four filler items in the list to make the contrast between the two types of characteristics less salient and thereby reduce any possible demand effect (see Table 1, Panel A, for more information regarding the characteristics). Participants were asked to sort these characteristics into two categories by selecting the five items they considered relatively more important for workers to have high career potential, and the five items they considered relatively more important for workers to have high performance in their current job positions. The items were presented to participants in random order. Each item could be placed in one group only.

At the end of the studies, participants of both Studies 2A and 2B answered some questions about their job experience and demographic information. These questions were largely similar to those in Study 1A. Please see Table A6 in the online appendix for a descriptive summary of these variables.

Results

In Study 2A, we calculated four average scores for each participant (Table 2) and focused on comparisons among these average scores. Specifically, for the three characteristics that participants listed for having high career potential/current position performance, we averaged the ratings of the perceived relation of these characteristics with innate talent and orientation toward hard

Table 1. Characteristic Terms Used in the Current Studies

Panel A: Study 2B		
<i>Talent-related</i>	<i>Hard work-related</i>	<i>Filler items</i>
Intelligence	Hardworking	Ambitious
Smart	Dedication	Confidence
Talent	Conscientiousness	Responsibility
		Punctuality
Panel B: Studies 3A and 3B		
<i>Talent-related</i>	<i>Hard work-related</i>	
Having great innate talent	Hardworking	
Genetically endowed	Persevering	
Gifted	Driven	
Ingenious	Conscientious	

Notes. In Panel A, talent-related characteristics received a rating of three in terms of perceived relation with innate talent and a rating of zero in terms of perceived relation with orientation toward hard work. Hard work-related characteristics received a rating of zero in terms of perceived relation with innate talent and a rating of three in terms of perceived relation with orientation toward hard work. Filler characteristics received ratings of zero in both dimensions. The first two filler items were chosen from characteristics that were listed by participants in Study 2A as being important for having high career potential and the last two filler items were chosen from those that were listed as being important for having high current position performance. Items in both Panel A and Panel B were chosen such that each item is relatively distinct from the others within the same panel.

work, respectively. The results in Table 2 suggest that orientation toward hard work was seen as equally relevant for workers to have high career potential and high performance in their current job positions (Wilcoxon signed-rank test $Z = -0.08, p = 0.934$). However, innate talent was considered more relevant with regard to workers' career potential than to their current position performance (Wilcoxon signed-rank test $Z = -3.23, p = 0.001$). Alternatively, these results suggest that hard work and innate talent were considered equally important in predicting workers' career potential (Wilcoxon signed-rank test $Z = -0.11, p = 0.909$), whereas hard work was perceived as a more important determinant of workers' current position performance than innate talent (Wilcoxon signed-rank test $Z = -2.69, p = 0.007$).

In Study 2B, both talent-related characteristics and hard work-related characteristics were unevenly distributed across the two categories (Table 3). The results in Table 3 indicate that on average, participants categorized more talent-related characteristics as being relatively more important for career potential than for

Table 2. Results of Study 2A

Characteristics	Average rating of the perceived relation of the characteristics	
	With innate talent	With orientation toward hard work
For having high career potential	0.51 ^a (0.54)	0.52 (0.56)
For having high current position performance	0.37 ^{a,b} (0.52)	0.52 ^b (0.58)

Notes. Numbers indicate means and numbers in parentheses indicate the standard deviations of the means. Differences between means with a same superscript are statistically significant.

Table 3. Results of Study 2B

Categories	Average number of characteristics in the categories	
	Talent-related characteristics	Hard work-related characteristics
Important for career potential	1.79 (0.88)	1.16 (0.77)
Important for current position performance	1.21 (0.88)	1.84 (0.77)

Notes. Numbers indicate means and numbers in parentheses indicate the standard deviations of the means. The two means in each column add up to three. The means are significantly different in each row and column.

current position performance ($t(200) = 4.68, p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.33$). In contrast, they categorized more hard work-related characteristics as being relatively more important for current position performance than for career potential ($t(200) = -6.16, p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.43$). These results also indicate that in the category for career potential, the number of talent-related characteristics was significantly larger than that of hard work-related characteristics, whereas the opposite was true in the category for current position performance ($t(200) = 5.82, p < 0.001$, Cohen's $d = 0.41$).

Discussion

The results of Study 2 provide evidence supporting our propositions regarding the relative strength of the link between career potential and innate talent and that between current position performance and hard work. Findings from Study 2A indicate that full-time workers thought that having high career potential requires innate talent and hard work to about an equal extent, whereas they thought that having high performance in a current job position depends substantially more on hard work than on innate talent. Although we had expected in our preregistration that orientation toward hard work would be considered relatively more important for current position performance than for career potential, the results of Study 2A indicate that our participants considered the attribute to be equally important for the two dimensions. Nevertheless, by adopting a different elicitation method, the results of Study 2B suggest that when facing a trade-off, participants considered innate talent to be more closely linked to career potential than to current position performance, while they considered hard work to be more closely linked to current position performance than to career potential.

Study 3

Study 2 provides initial evidence of our proposed mechanism underlying the current effect by showing the difference in people's relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work for different evaluation dimensions. In Study 3, we provide more direct evidence of our mechanism by examining the mediating role of differential focus on those evaluation dimensions by job candidates and recruiters. Specifically, we propose that job candidates have a relatively stronger focus on career

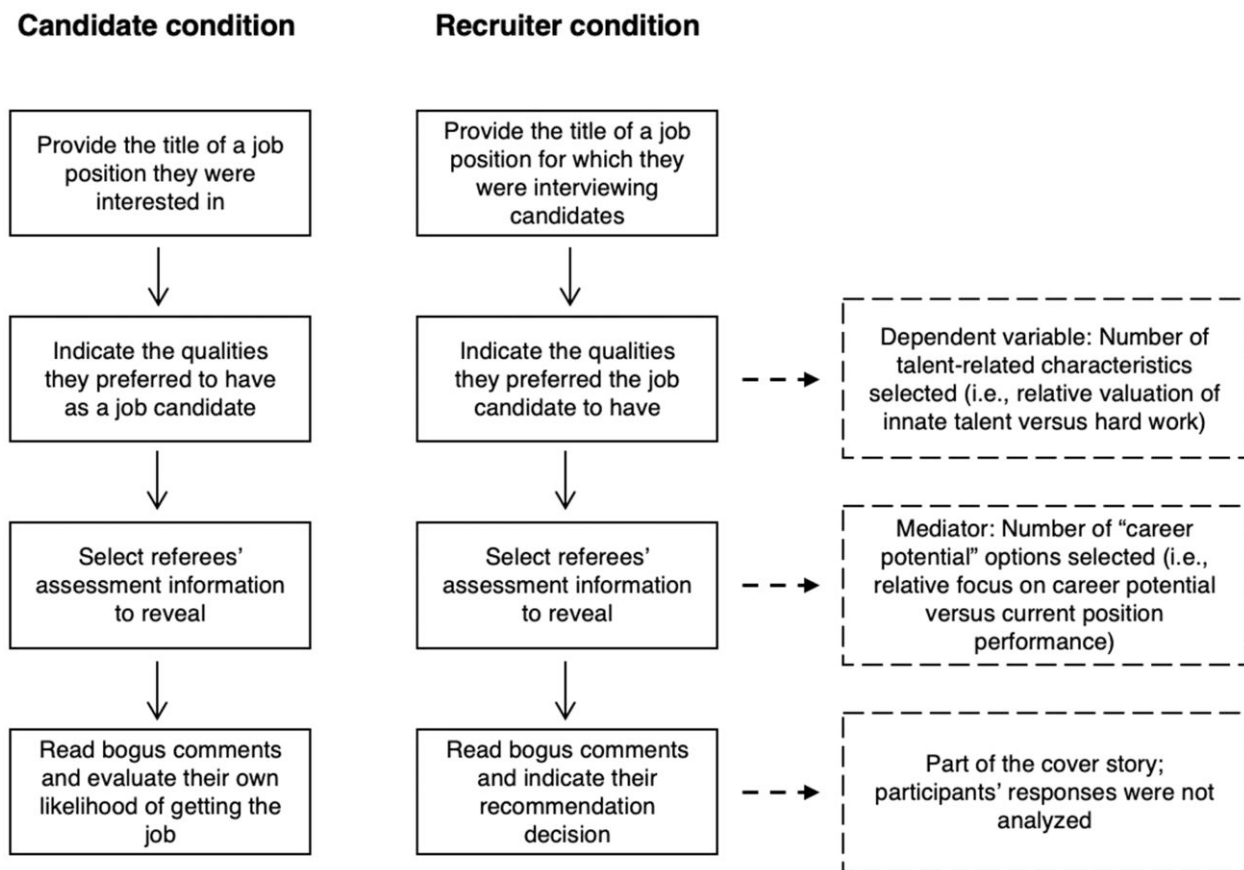
potential while recruiters have a relatively stronger focus on current position performance, and that the relative difference in their focus mediates the candidate-recruiter discrepancy in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work. Moreover, in the present study, we investigate the current discrepancy using a different paradigm from that adopted in Study 1. Study 3A adopts a quasi-experiment design in which we assigned participants who were currently actively looking for a job to the candidate condition and participants who had hiring experience to the recruiter condition. Study 3B is an experiment in which we randomly assigned participants with hiring experience to the two conditions. Participants in Study 3 were located in the United States and took part in the study via Prolific. We preregistered Study 3A at https://aspredicted.org/CFT_6F3 and Study 3B at https://aspredicted.org/VKL_8Y6.

Method

Study 3A. A total of 403 participants took part in Study 3A. We used the filter function on Prolific to recruit 201 individuals (54 males) who were currently actively looking for a job and 202 individuals (42 males) who had hiring experience. Participants' occupations spanned 77 industries (see Table A7 in the online appendix for details). Thirty-five participants (31 in the candidate condition and 4 in the recruiter condition) reported being unemployed at the time of the study.

Figure 4 provides an overview of the procedure in Study 3A. In the candidate condition, participants first thought about a job position for which they were interested in applying or had recently applied and wrote down the title of the position. They were told that in this study they would imagine an experience of applying for that job position. Specifically, they would read several pieces of assessment about them by some referees and would be required to evaluate their own likelihood of getting hired for that job position under the given profile. On the next page, they were asked to first indicate the qualities that they preferred to have as a job candidate before they read the referees' assessment. They were presented with eight characteristics (Table 1, Panel B) in random order and asked to select four. In a pretest we conducted (described later), half of the characteristics in the list were categorized as talent related and the other half were categorized as hard work related. The

Figure 4. Overview of Procedure in Study 3A



number of talent-related characteristics that participants selected (ranging from zero to four) served as our index of their relative valuation of innate talent (versus hard work).

After participants had indicated their answer, they were told that we had extracted several pieces of information from the assessment made by three credible referees and that the information could be sorted into two general categories—one consisting of the referees' assessment that is informative about their career potential in the field and the other consisting of the referees' assessment that is informative about their expected performance in the job position. They were given eight masked options, each representing a piece of assessment that was available for perusal. Four of the options were labeled "career potential," and the other four were labeled "expected position performance" (see Figure A1 in the online appendix for a sample question). These options were presented to participants in random order. We told the participants that we could reveal half of the assessment information to them and that they could evaluate their likelihood of getting hired for the job based on the revealed information. Participants then selected the four options that they would most like to

view. The number of options labeled "career potential" that participants selected (ranging from zero to four) served as our index of their relative focus on career potential (versus current position performance).

As part of our cover story, participants were shown four pieces of bogus comments about them on the next page. These comments were ambivalent such that it would be difficult to tell whether the comments were about participants' career potential or expected position performance (e.g., "The candidate is a responsible person, but I do not see a lot of passion from the candidate"). Participants evaluated their likelihood of getting hired for the job position after reading the comments. Their response to this item was irrelevant to our hypothesis and was thus not analyzed.

The procedure and measures in the recruiter condition were similar to those in the candidate condition. Participants first thought about and wrote down the title of a job position for which they were or had been interviewing candidates. They were told that their task in the current study was to evaluate a fictitious job candidate for that position. Before they were given information about the candidate, they were asked to indicate the qualities that they preferred the candidate to have by selecting four

items from the same list of characteristics used in the candidate condition. Next, participants selected four pieces of referee assessment information from eight masked options. Again, half of the options were labeled “career potential” and the other half were labeled “expected position performance.” On the next page, participants read the same set of bogus comments about the candidate and indicated their recommendation decision.

Study 3B. Four hundred three individuals (222 males) who had hiring experience took part in Study 3B and were randomly assigned to either the candidate or the recruiter condition. Participants’ occupations spanned 71 industries (see Table A9 in the online appendix for details). Eleven participants (five in the candidate condition and six in the recruiter condition) reported being unemployed at the time of this study.

The design and procedure of Study 3B were largely similar to those of Study 3A. Participants in the candidate condition imagined applying for a job similar to their current one in another company in their industry, and those in the recruiter condition imagined evaluating a job candidate for their current department. At the end of both Studies 3A and 3B, participants answered a similar set of questions regarding their job experience and demographic information as those in the previous studies. Please see Table A10 in the online appendix for a descriptive summary of these variables.

Pretest. Ninety-nine full-time workers (63 males) in the United States took part in the pretest via Prolific. They gave their ratings of the perceived relation of some worker characteristics with innate talent and orientation toward hard work, respectively, using a four-point scale (zero, unrelated/independent; one, slightly related; two, moderately related; three, significantly related). The four talent-related characteristics used in the main studies were rated as being more closely related to innate talent than to orientation toward hard work ($p < 0.001$). The four hard work-related characteristics used in the main studies were rated as being more closely related to orientation toward hard work than to innate talent ($p < 0.01$).

Results

In Study 3A, participants in the candidate condition on average selected 1.07 ($SD = 0.86$) talent-related characteristics as the qualities that they preferred to have as a job candidate. In contrast, those in the recruiter condition on average selected only 0.65 ($SD = 0.79$) talent-related characteristics as the qualities that they preferred the job candidate to have. The difference between the two means is significant ($F(1, 401) = 26.78, p < 0.001$, Cohen’s $d = 0.51$), therefore providing further evidence supporting the current discrepancy. Moreover, participants in the candidate condition on average selected more pieces of assessment information about career potential ($M =$

1.83, $SD = 0.81$) to make their evaluation than did those in the recruiter condition ($M = 1.56, SD = 0.97; F(1, 401) = 8.62, p = 0.004$, Cohen’s $d = 0.30$), indicating that job candidates and recruiters have a relatively different focus in recruitment. The results of a bootstrapping analysis (Hayes 2013) show that the discrepancy in the relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work between participants in the two conditions is marginally mediated by their relatively different focus on career potential versus current position performance: with 5,000 bootstrap samples, the indirect effect was estimated to be 0.0218 (boot $SE = 0.0168$, with a 90% bias-corrected confidence interval (CI) (0.0015, 0.0581) excluding zero). Finally, to address the concern that the present effects might be induced by differences in the job positions that participants considered, we classified the industry sectors to which the job positions belong and found no significant difference in their distribution across the two conditions (please see Table A8 in the online appendix for more information).

The results of Study 3B were consistent with those of Study 3A: Participants in the candidate condition on average selected more talent-related characteristics ($M = 1.13, SD = 0.83$) than did those in the recruiter condition ($M = 0.83, SD = 0.79; F(1, 401) = 13.50, p < 0.001$, Cohen’s $d = 0.37$). The former also on average selected more pieces of assessment information about career potential ($M = 1.73, SD = 0.87$) than did the latter ($M = 1.53, SD = 0.99; F(1, 401) = 4.58, p = 0.033$, Cohen’s $d = 0.21$). The results of a bootstrapping analysis again confirm that the relative difference in participants’ focus on career potential versus current position performance mediates the effect of conditions on participants’ relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work: With 5,000 bootstrap samples, the indirect effect was estimated to be 0.0155 (boot $SE = 0.0123$, with a 95% bias-corrected CI (0.0001, 0.0519) excluding zero).

Discussion

In Study 3, we provide further evidence of the current effect using a different paradigm from that in Study 1. More importantly, our findings suggest that job candidates have a relatively stronger focus on career potential, whereas recruiters have a relatively stronger focus on current position performance, and that the relative difference in their focus with regard to these two dimensions mediates the discrepancy in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work. Therefore, the results of Studies 2 and 3 combined provide evidence that supports our hypothesis about the mechanism underlying the fundamental recruitment error.

General Discussion

Discrepancies between job candidates and recruiters in their valuations of personal attributes can decrease job

market efficiency and put both parties at a disadvantage. Our research investigates such a mismatch of two highly important personal qualities with respect to workers' productive capabilities. We provide evidence of our findings' ecological validity in the real world and their generalizability across fields by using real life recruiters and job seekers as our research participants. Our participants were from both Western and Eastern cultures, and overall, their occupations spanned 112 different industries. Study 3 shows that the current discrepancy stems from a misalignment between job candidates and recruiters in their relative focus on career potential versus position performance. Study 2 indicates that full-time workers believe that high career potential requires both innate talent and hard work, whereas satisfactory position performance is driven largely by hard work rather than innate talent. Findings from these studies therefore provide evidence regarding the mechanism underlying the candidate-recruiter discrepancy in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work. Furthermore, findings from Study 1 indicate that the discrepancy can lead job candidates to adopt impression management strategies that actually lower their chances of getting the right match with recruiters, thereby showcasing plausible consequences of the current effect on job market efficiency.

Our research has important implications for both job candidates and recruiters. One suggestion that could be derived directly from the current findings is that job candidates should pay (even) more effort to demonstrate their orientation toward hard work. For example, when writing a personal statement or cover letter for job applications, they should emphasize and provide evidence for their personality traits associated with a high orientation toward hard work (e.g., conscientiousness or perseverance). Alternatively, they could highlight these qualities in particular in their resumes through, for example, descriptions of their experiences in previous jobs or studies. Similar strategies could also be adopted at a verbal level in job interviews and other applicable contexts.

The literature has documented many other misalignments between job candidates and recruiters with respect to their preferences or valuations and the adverse consequences of these discrepancies for candidates (Kang et al. 2016, Merluzzi and Phillips 2016). For example, female candidates might value showing their competitiveness during recruitment but doing so could negatively affect their employability (Glick et al. 1988, Rudman 1998). Job candidates usually consider their high education credentials to be desirable in the job market, but those very features may serve as negative signals to recruiters about the candidates' commitment to their firms (Bills 1992, Di Stasio 2017, Galperin et al. 2020). Furthermore, recent research indicates that job

candidates underestimate the value of expressing their intrinsic motivations in recruitment (Woolley and Fishbach 2018), which may lead them to inadequately address their devotion to the open position. Our research sheds additional light on these issues by investigating the deeper reasons and mechanisms underneath these gaps. We suggest that candidate-recruiter discrepancies could be essentially due to a misalignment between the two parties in their fundamental motivations in the job market. At a deeper level, our research suggests that job candidates would have a higher chance of success in the job market if they were to adopt a stronger focus on the target job position to guide their decisions and strategies.

Our research also provides meaningful implications for recruiters. We suggest that the fundamental recruitment error is rooted in the current approach of how recruiters fulfill their tasks and how their jobs are evaluated. The position-focused approach or mindset of recruiters could cause firms to suffer negative consequences in the long term, such as having high turnover, low morale, and lack of innovation. To mitigate these potential negativities and bring the best value to firms, recruiters may need to take a proactive role in closing the current gap: they should pay more attention to candidates' career aspirations, value candidates' career potential in their evaluations, and attract those who are more intrinsically aligned with the career field. Correspondingly, firms and employers should make a transition to reward HR professionals and hiring managers who excel in recruiting employees who not only are capable of fulfilling the duties of the open job position but also exhibit good potential to develop and contribute in the long run.

Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations of the present research, and further investigations are warranted. For example, we argued in the Introduction of the paper that innate talent and orientation toward hard work are essentially independent of each other. However, one concern of Study 1 might be that the scenarios we used seemed to position these two attributes as opposing points. The primary reason that we adopted those descriptions was to avoid any potential association between the two attributes by participants and thus to create a clear tradeoff in our empirical test. Future studies could test the current effect by simply describing the job candidates as either hard workers or innately talented persons. In addition, to add to the external validity of the present findings, future studies could replicate the current effect by manipulating candidates' resumes, which recruiters might more frequently use in evaluating job applicants.

Findings of the current studies suggest that innate talent might be systematically underappreciated in the job market. However, we acknowledge that the importance

of recruiting talent is stressed in some circumstances (Stross 1996, Rao and Drazin 2002, Gardner 2005, Rivera 2011, Eckardt et al. 2018). For example, job candidates with profound talent in a career field are often eagerly sought after by firms in certain elite professions or firms that are recruiting high level professionals (Behling 1998, Lubinski et al. 2014, Brown et al. 2018). More generally, building on the current mechanism, we propose that recruiters' overwhelming preference for hard work should be attenuated and thus the current gap may become smaller when recruitment is initiated not merely from the objective of filling certain open job positions but from the goal of finding someone who could accomplish critical tasks (Groysberg and Lee 2009, Acharya and Pollock 2013, Eckardt et al. 2018). Further research is needed to study the scopes of the current effect and the different implications for job market.

Finally, although the current studies provide evidence supporting our proposed mechanism underlying the present discrepancy, other factors might also contribute to the observed gap between candidates and recruiters in their relative valuation of innate talent versus hard work. For example, there could be systematic differences in personality traits (e.g., perseverance) between job candidates and recruiters, and these differences might in part underlie the current gap. The results of our randomized trial experiments help to alleviate these concerns. Nevertheless, investigations into how individual characteristics influence the current candidate-recruiter discrepancy remain an important research question. In addition, job candidates might perceive innate talent to be less observable than orientation toward hard work and therefore think they need to put relatively more effort into signaling the attribute to recruiters. Alternatively, they might value innate talent because they consider it to be a unique attribute that sets them apart from others (Juvenon and Murdock 1995, Tsay and Banaji 2011, Lockhart et al. 2013). Conversely, recruiters might perceive innate talent to be a less stable or verifiable trait than orientation toward hard work, or they might view innate talent as a signal of lack of hard work—but not the other way around. Future studies could investigate the influences of these possible factors on candidate-recruiter gaps.

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Endnote

¹ For all studies, we used the 2017 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to classify the reported industries at the industry group (four-digit) or sector (two-digit) level, depending on the specificity of participants' reports. Two coders first classified the reported industries independently. Discrepancies between the coders were reconciled through discussion.

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