

Job Applicants Favor Video Interviewing in the Candidate-Selection Process

Nicole L. Toldi

Arnold Bennett, a British novelist, once said, "any change, even a change for the better, is always accompanied by drawbacks and discomforts." So it is no surprise that redefining the talent-acquisition process by replacing telephone interviews with video interviewing is causing uneasiness for employers. Organizations are not only unsure of the advantages and disadvantages of this new technology for themselves, but they are also uncertain about it for their job applicants. Videos during the interviewing process help save an employer's time and money while reducing travel. Instead of engaging in a face-to-face interview, managers can conduct the interview over video cameras, webcams, or other related video technology. Some employers have introduced videos into the talent-acquisition process by using videoconferencing. However, one of the newer technologies involving video in the interview process is known as video interviewing.

When technology changes a process, it is natural for employers to question those changes, especially when those modifications could have an effect on the organization. The purpose of this article is to answer some of the questions employers might have about job candidates' reactions to video interviewing. The article also highlights the candidates' perspectives on various aspects of video interviewing, such as whether video interviewing is a fair selection tool or an

effective communication tool. Implications for these areas will be presented, followed by suggestions for organizations using video interviewing.

The information regarding candidates' opinions of video interviewing is based on responses to a survey of job candidates who completed a nonlive video interview using HireVue's video interviewing process between February 1, 2010, and March 29, 2010. The sample was mixed due to the variety of applicant backgrounds and companies. A recruitment e-mail and flyer were sent to approximately 385 job candidates. The final sample size for this study was 73, resulting in a response rate of 19.0 percent.¹

VIDEO INTERVIEWING

Although the interview process has remained relatively unchanged over the years (i.e., phone and face-to-face interviews), the use of video has not. Due to technological improvements, video usage has significantly increased within the last 20 years. Since the introduction of the first videotape recorder in 1956, the quality of video recorders and players has improved while the cost has decreased. This has made watching and creating videos easier for the average individual. The creation of digital video discs (DVDs) in the late 1990s replaced video home standard (VHS) technology from the 1970s because

DVDs provide a higher-quality picture. Webcams also became popular during this time and serve as a video camera for the Internet. Webcams allow computer users to turn their computer into a videophone or videoconferencing station. Individuals can now use their webcams to Skype or conduct a webinar; use Flip cameras to record their own videos and post them on YouTube; or use their iPhones for FaceTime video calling with their family and friends.

Video interviewing and videoconferencing are two video advancements used in the interview process. When deciding between the two, it is important to understand each technology. Video interviewing and videoconferencing are similar, but they have several very important differences. Videoconferencing is streamed in real time so it is a "live" interview. It occurs between two locations

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that simultaneously connect as well as interact in a two-way video and audio transmission. During a videoconference, the interviewee and interviewer(s) are in separate locations but they are able to communicate synchronously over expensive videoconferencing equipment. Videoconferencing allows both parties to meet in a mock face-to-face setting where information is exchanged by both parties. However, some information (e.g., eye contact, the handshake, and other body cues) may be restricted or missing due to technological barriers.

Video interviewing, or virtual interviewing as it is also known, can occur in either a live or nonlive environment.² Live environments use two-way video and audio communication similar to videoconferencing but different technology (webcams and personal computers instead of expensive videoconferencing equipment) is used to conduct the interview.

Nonlive environments stream audio and video only one way. During a nonlive video interview, the interviewee has no interaction with an interviewer. Some see this as a disadvantage because there is no face-to-face contact as in the live video interview or videoconferencing.³ A nonlive video interview is basically a recording of a candidate answering interview questions. The candidate is only able to give information due to the asynchronous nature of a nonlive video interview. They are unable to ask the interviewer questions and receive other information from the employer. The interview is recorded at one point in time and is reviewed by the interviewer(s) at another point in time. Nonlive video interviewing is typically used as an initial assessment in the talent-acquisition process.

Research on nonlive video interviewing is important for a variety of reasons. First of all, very little is known about using communication media to conduct interviews.⁴ Specifically, research on the use of videos (webcams) in the selection process is lagging. Employers assume that technology can replace aspects of the selection process without any consequences; this may or may not be true. Second, applicants' reactions to the selection process are valuable to organizations because of the effects perceptions can have in the organization when applicants become employees.⁵ Third, studies using actual job applicants have also been lagging behind. Participants in lab settings may have

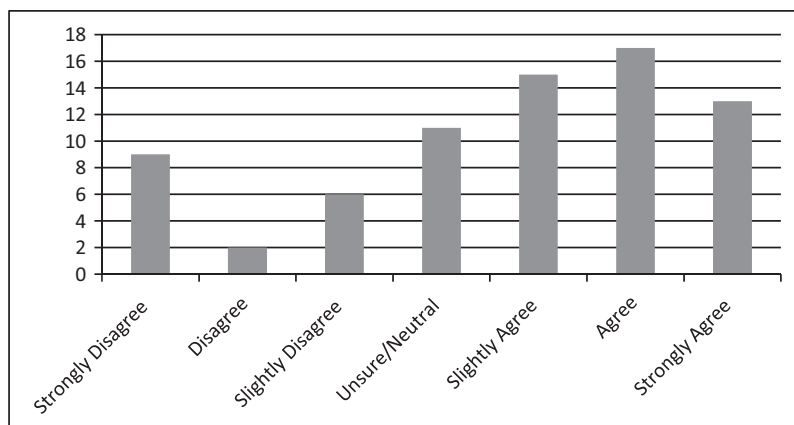


Exhibit 1. *Candidates' Responses to Whether Video Interviewing Is Very Innovative and Forward-Thinking*

relatively little at stake compared with real applicants who may have different reactions due to their career and job choices.⁶ Fourth, because video interviewing is a new selection tool, research is nascent in this area, so it is important for exploratory research to be conducted in order to begin to understand the use of video interviewing as a selection tool.

APPLICANT REACTIONS

For an employer, a question that may come to mind when deciding whether to use video interviewing is "What types, or ranges, of reactions are being experienced by applicants?" The term *applicant reactions* refers to research that examines an individual's opinion, stance, or thoughts about a process.⁷ In this case, it specifically refers to an individual's reaction to video interviewing. Applicant reactions may vary due to different factors. For example, some applicants may be more nervous during a video interview than during a face-to-face interview.⁸ It is important for an employer to understand these reactions because of how they can affect decisions.

Several important implications for HR were identified during this video interviewing study. First, candidates generally favor the use of video interviewing in the selection process. As a result, employers can expect that applicants who are evaluated using video interviews should have positive behavioral intentions. That is, they should recommend organizations using video interviewing to others, accept offers if one is made, reapply to the organization if rejected, and remain in the applicant pool for other organizations that are also using video interviewing in their selection process.⁹ The favorability of video interviewing should continue to increase as video interviewing becomes more widely used.¹⁰ Two applicants favoring video interviewing commented:

I like the idea of the video interview and definitely see the benefit.

At first I was a bit nervous, but by the first 30 seconds into the 1st question, I was at ease.

Second, most applicants (61.64 percent of those surveyed) felt video interviewing was innovative and forward-thinking (see Exhibit 1).

Video interviewing is a new, more efficient way to conduct initial assessments during the selection process. It is a way for employers to go outside the box and change a process that has been in place for decades. Video interviewing changes the selection process to keep pace with the other technological changes society has seen in the past few years. A couple of applicants commented:

I think the webcam interviews are a very innovative and creative way to give employers the opportunity to see the personality of applicants.

The webcam is a great tool to use.

Procedural Fairness

One reaction an applicant can have during the selection process involves procedural justice. Procedural justice is concerned with the

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fairness of procedures used by an organization to make a decision.¹¹ In this case, it is concerned with the fairness that organizations use to make their hiring decisions. Individuals believe that video interviewing is marked with favoring conditions. It is free from bias, dishonesty, and injustice. The first hypothesis was: *The perception of video interviewing as procedurally fair is positively related to the overall favorability of video interviewing.* After conducting a correlation, a positive relationship¹² was found to exist between procedural fairness and the overall favorability of video interviewing. These results provide preliminary support for Hypothesis 1. Additional support for Hypothesis 1 was found

after completing a hierarchical multiple regression when a *significant* relationship (i.e., the relationship is unlikely to have occurred by chance) was found to exist between overall favorability of video interviewing as a selection tool and procedural fairness.¹³ These results were expected.

Applicants felt that video interviewing was procedurally¹⁴ fair for several reasons. First, the majority of candidates (65.75 percent) felt that video interviewing saved them time since they didn't have to travel to the interview. The majority of candidates (52.05 percent) also felt video interviewing was fair because they didn't have to take time off from work. Third, candidates also liked the schedule flexibility that was provided to them by video interviewing (69.86 percent) (see Exhibits 2–4). During the survey, several candidates commented about these areas. They stated:

I loved this experience. It was a huge time saver for me personally. . . . I would think this is a great tool for hiring managers to narrow down candidates quickly, review the interviews again if necessary, and seriously cut down on travel time (i.e., recruiting cycle time) and money. I loved it!

I thought the video format was fine—even helpful and effective in meeting candidates for an initial screening without the cost of international travel.

Fourth, candidates who felt that video interviewing is procedurally fair may have felt the process is objective.¹⁵ All applicants were asked the exact same set of questions, and there was no way for the interview itself to be influenced by the interviewer. In phone and face-to-face interviews, interviewers can sometimes influence the responses or get off

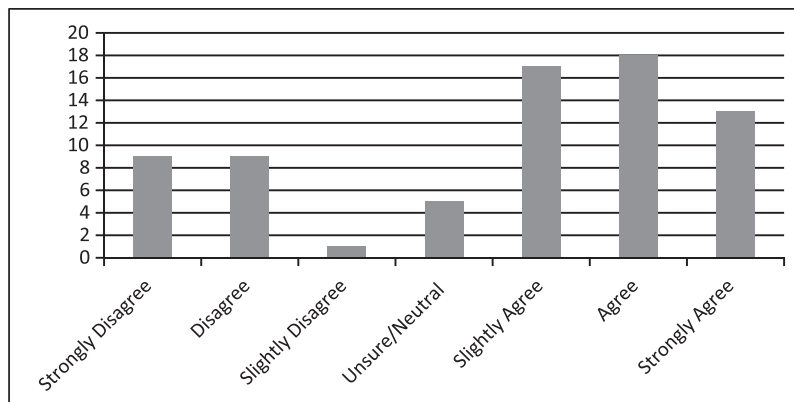


Exhibit 2. Responses to the Comment That Video Interviewing Saved Time and Travel

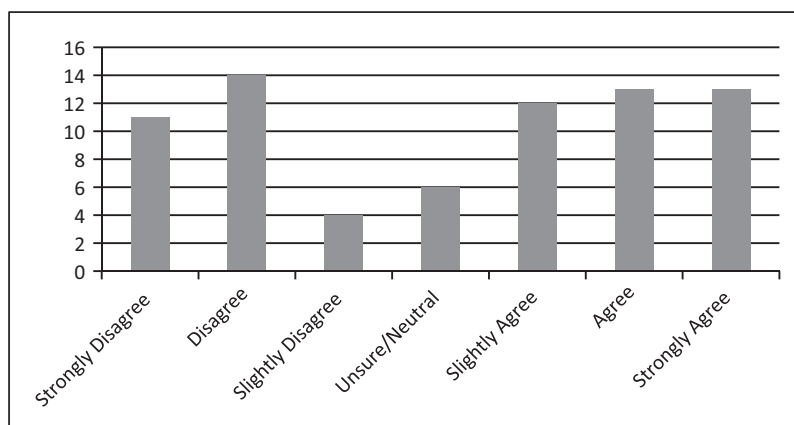


Exhibit 3. Responses to Whether Video Interviewing Was Easier Because It Did Not Require Time Off from Work

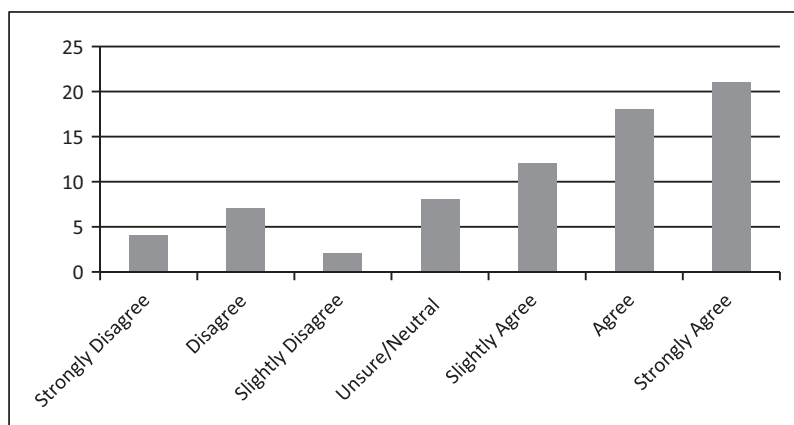


Exhibit 4. Most Survey Respondents Liked the Schedule Flexibility That Was Provided by the Video Interview

track in a direction that is not appropriate for the interview (e.g., talking about football or the interviewer's alma mater). Job applicants who thought the process was fair will most likely want to complete a video interview in the future because they believe that employers are able to select the best possible candidate from the applicant pool in a procedurally fair way. These candidates will favor organizations that use this tool.

Ability to Communicate Information

Applicants may also have a reaction over how well they can communicate information about themselves during the video interview.

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Communication plays an important role in the interview process. The goal of an interviewee is for both sides to communicate and gather as much information as needed to determine whether the applicant will fit in the position and organization. Applicants verbally communicate that they meet the job requirements and possess the competencies needed for success once employed. Interviewees want to stand out compared with other candidates and demonstrate that their past behaviors will continue into the future.¹⁶ Depending on the job, candidates may also want to communicate certain aspects of their personality. The bottom line is that applicants want the interviewer to learn more about them than what is stated in their résumés. Applicants also ask the employer questions in

order to find out whether the organization will be a good fit for them.

The second hypothesis of the study was: *The ability to communicate information is positively related to the overall favorability of video interviewing.* A positive relationship¹⁷ was found between the ability to communicate information and the overall favorability of video interviewing in the selection process when a correlation was conducted. Preliminary support has been provided for Hypothesis 2. A significant relationship between ability to communicate and overall favorability¹⁸ was found after conducting a hierarchical multiple regression, thus supporting Hypothesis 2.

These results show that candidates felt they had the opportunity to communicate their abilities through video interviewing. It may have been easy for candidates to communicate information about themselves to the interviewer because the type of interview questions that candidates responded to during the video interview were no different from those they would respond to during a normal telephone interview. Applicants were not restricted in their ability to communicate their interest in the job and the organization; their knowledge, skills, and abilities; and any other additional information they wanted to communicate to the interviewer, so they favored video interviewing. One job applicant responded:

I really thought I was not going to be able to show my personality in a webcam interview but I found that was not the case and I was able to be ME and it was much easier than I thought it was going to be. I love the technology.

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

In order for organizations to keep applicants' reactions to video interviewing favorable,

there are proactive steps an employer can take to ensure that their applicants maintain positive behavioral intentions. First, recruiters need to make sure that applicants have the context surrounding the video-interviewing process. Applicants need to fully understand not only how video interviewing works from a technical perspective, but also how it fits into the selection process. Applicants who are unsure of how the video fits into the selection process may be apprehensive to use it. Recruiters should make it clear to candidates that video interviewing is being used in place of the traditional phone interview. The questions for the initial assessment will not change, just the way the questions are answered. Additionally, it is important to help candidates understand that video interviewing allows multiple people in the hiring decision process to review their interviews, reducing the need for multiple interactions during the initial stages of the interview process. The more informed a candidate is about the process and how the information gained in the video interview will be used, the more comfortable they will become with the change in the selection process.

Second, it is important for recruiters to survey candidates using this process in order to get their feedback. Since the process is new, applicants may be able to provide valuable feedback to organizations using video interviewing. For example, during the survey for this research, it was found that even though most applicants favored the use of video interviewing in the selection process, there are still individuals who are unfamiliar with using webcams. Organizations using video interviewing need to make sure that candidates feel comfortable with the entire video-interviewing process. Candidates who are nervous or unfamiliar with webcams may

drop out of the interview process unless they are provided support while learning to use the technology.

Third, it is important for applicants to see how video interviewing can benefit them as a selection tool. Candidates conducting a video interview are able to do so on their own time. They don't have to wait for a phone call or take time out of their busy work schedules. Applicants can conduct an interview when it is the most convenient for them during a certain time frame. This allows applicants to conduct the interview when they feel they are the most prepared. Ultimately, candidates also benefit by having more than one manager review their interviews. Phone interviews are traditionally done by only one person, although a panel can be used to conduct a phone interview (which can be very

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confusing for the applicant). Instead of just one manager forming an opinion or perception of a candidate, video interviewing allows candidates to be reviewed by multiple managers, improving the quality of the candidate's evaluation. Video interviewing also benefits candidates because managers can review their responses more than once, allowing for a more thorough and objective assessment. By reviewing interviews several times, managers may pick up on information they may have missed during a one-time phone interview.

Providing information on video interviewing for candidates can be done in several ways. First, recruiters could create information for

their career websites (e.g., promotional video, downloadable pdf files) that would provide more information on the process. The better informed applicants are about video interviewing, the more comfortable they should feel with it. Second, employers could provide ways for candidates to practice a video interview before they take one in order to familiarize themselves with the process. Recruiters could do this by directing candidates to utilize the software included with many webcams. Candidates who practice recording responses will be able to see how they would look and sound in a video interview.

CONCLUSION

As video interviewing is used more and more in the selection process, it is increasingly important for organizations to understand the reactions applicants are having to it as a selection tool. Candidate reactions can have lasting effects on an organization's employment brand, so companies need to understand the experiences their applicants are having throughout the talent-acquisition process. Because video interviewing is a new selection tool, it is important to set context with candidates about why the organization has chosen to use the process and how it will benefit both parties. Job applicants need to be educated on the video-interviewing process to help ease their hesitation with the change to the talent-acquisition process. As this research has uncovered, when candidates feel a process is procedurally fair and the process gives them the ability to communicate information, they will favor its use. In turn, when they favor a selection method such as video interviewing, it reflects positively on the employer's brand. Initial reactions to video interviewing are positive, so

employers should continue to embrace this technology in their selection process.

NOTES

1. For more information about this study, such as descriptive statistics, methodology, limitations, and a complete bibliography, see Toldi, Nicole L. (2010). *Job Applicant Reactions to the Use of Video Interviewing as a Selection Tool* (Master's thesis, Pennsylvania State University). Retrieved from <http://etda.libraries.psu.edu/theses/approved/WorldWideIndex/ETD-5076/index.html>.
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12. The positive relationship is expressed statistically as $r = 0.89$; $p < 0.01$. A positive relationship means that when procedural fairness was rated high by those surveyed, overall favorability of video interviewing was also rated high. As procedural fairness increases, overall favorability of video interviewing also increases. Since r was 0.89 for this test, it means that there is a strong relationship between the two variables. If r was between 0.3 and 0.6, the relationship would be moderate, and 0.3 or less would be weak. However, just because these variables have a positive correlation, it does not mean that one variable causes the other. It simply means that the two variables have a relationship with each other.
13. This significant relationship is expressed statistically as $\beta = 0.64$; $p < 0.01$.
14. In conducting this research, I used a set of questions that were designed to test procedural fairness, and I compared those with the questions I had created looking at the areas of convenience and flexibility.
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16. Silvester, J., & Anderson, N. (2003). Technology and discourse: A comparison of face-to-face and telephone employment interviews. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 11, 206-214.
17. Expressed statistically as $r = 0.83$; $p < 0.01$. This positive relationship shows that as the ability to communicate information increases, the overall favorability of video interviewing also increases. This means that these two variables have a relationship with each other. Since $r = 0.83$, it means that the strength of the relationship is also strong.
18. Expressed statistically as $\beta = 0.31$; $p < 0.01$.

Nicole L. Toldi holds an MS in human resources and employment relations and a BS in management and in marketing. She is currently an HR specialist for the Department of the Navy. She is a member of the Society for Human Resource Management and will soon obtain PHR certification. She may be contacted at nicole.toldi@gmail.com.

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