

# TRUTH OR DECEPTION: THE IMPACT OF VIDEOCONFERENCING FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

Carlos Ferrán-Urdaneta  
John Storck  
Boston University

## Abstract

During the experiment, 28 “interviewers” each interviewed two different “applicants,” where one was deceptive and the other told the truth. Half of the interviews were done face-to-face and half using desktop video-conferencing equipment. When forced to compare and choose who was more honest between the two applicants, interviewers were accurate in their choice. A significant direct effect of medium on detection of deception was not found. However, communication medium affected perceived eye contact and mental workload, both of which were found to significantly affect detection accuracy. This study will be of interest to companies beginning to use videoconferencing for job interviews and to scholars engaged in research on person perception in the video context.

**Keywords:** Experimental research, psychology, telecommunications, videoconferencing, job interviews, person perception.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A considerable part of human interaction takes place between two people. In many situations, people question the credibility of statements that another person makes or the accuracy of their impression of another person. Previous studies have shown that, in general, people are capable of discriminating between those who are lying and those who are telling the truth (DePaulo et al. 1980, 1985; Toris and DePaulo 1985; Zuckerman et al. 1982). Human lie detectors are far from being perfect, but they are usually able to notice that something is not right (DePaulo et al. 1980; Knapp and Comadena 1979; Kraut 1978; Toris and DePaulo 1985).

One business situation where the problem of accurate impression formation is commonplace is the hiring process. In such a situation, interviewers generally do not know the applicant beforehand; the two people are relative strangers at the beginning of the interview. Interviewers select applicants on the basis of their experience (as indicated on a resume) and their personality (as assessed in the interview). During the interview, the applicant tries to present himself or herself in the most attractive way possible, while the interviewer tries to determine the applicant’s potential and fit with the organizational culture. In most cases, applicants will behave and answer questions in a manner they believe will be most acceptable to the interviewer. The interviewer can check the legitimacy of the resume, but their personality assessment of the applicant is much more subjective.

Complicating the recruiting process is the fact that in order to find the best and most appropriate applicant in today’s global business world, recruiters have to carry out a global search, considering applicants who are living in different cities and countries. In these cases, applicants (or interviewers) have to travel to distant places in order to do the interview, or use communications technology such as videoconferencing.

The accuracy of person perception is often investigated using a task that asks people to role play a personality consonant with their own or dissonant from their own, which is thus analogous to “telling the truth” or “lying.” This study is a partial follow-up of one such investigation (Toris and DePaulo 1985). It extends previous organizational behavior research into the realm of mediated communication, drawing on theory and experimental protocols from social psychology to examine the effects of using modern communication technology in a common business situation. Mock job interviews were held with both interviewers and applicants as subjects. Applicants were asked to be deceptive or truthful about their personality, while interviewers were asked to assess how honest and sincere they perceived the applicant to be. In order to evaluate the impact of using videoconferencing for distance interviewing, the study compared video interviewing with face-to-face interviewing. The objectives were twofold: to answer the question of how good interviewers are at detecting deception<sup>1</sup> and whether detection is affected by the communication medium used.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

The impression formation process involves conscious and unconscious search for many different cues. Some of these cues are verbal, but most are non-verbal. It is believed that eye contact, unanticipated behavior, tone of voice, speed of speech, interpersonal distance, and suspicion are some of the important cues that affect detection of deception, but no clear behavioral profile has emerged for deception in general (Buller et al. 1994). Detection of deception also depends on social beliefs. In Western culture, individuals tend to interpret messages as truthful rather than deceptive (Zuckerman et al. 1984). Previous studies have shown that interviewers more precisely detect subjects that are telling the truth than those that are being deceptive (Burgoon et al. 1994).

In general it would seem that expert and suspicious interviewers would be better at detecting deception. Still, Burgoon et al. found in their experiments that novices were more accurate than experts and that suspicion impaired accuracy for experts (but not for novices). They also found that the effect of suspicion on detection was affected by the closeness of the relationship between the subjects. People accurately perceived suspicion and were more sensitive to suspicion communicated by friends (Buller et al. 1991). This also implied that the process of decoding suspicion might be similar to that of detecting deceit.

### **2.1 Communication Medium Effect**

It could be argued that videoconferencing filters out some cues while it makes other cues more salient. If the filtered cues are less important than the salient cues for the detection process, then detection performance might be improved in the video medium compared with the face-to-face medium. On the other hand, if filtered cues are more important, then person perception would be less accurate in the video medium. Previous studies have shown that non-verbal cues are very important in the detection process; furthermore, it is through unintended actions that people “leak out” their desire to deceive (DePaulo 1994). Thus, if video interviewing is found to be less effective than face-to-face interviewing, it could be argued that the filtered cues are indeed important in detecting deception.

This study focuses on three kinds of cues that are believed to be affected by the videoconferencing medium: perceived eye contact, mental workload, and self awareness. There are other cues that may affect detection and may also be affected by the medium, but these three are currently thought to be most relevant.

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<sup>1</sup>It could also be interpreted as how good the applicants are at telling lies.

## **2.2 Eye Contact**

Eye contact is believed to be an important factor for detecting if a person is lying or not (Burns and Kintz 1976). Bond et al. (1990) found that people who avoid eye contact were judged to be deceptive, while those who did not avoid it were thought to be truthful. This effect was even more pronounced when the interaction took place between strangers, and particularly when the interaction occurred in a job interview setting (Millar and Millar 1995). Burgoon et al. (1985) found that subjects were more likely to hire and rate as credible and attractive those applicants who maintained a normal or high degree of eye gaze than those who averted eye gaze.

Detecting deception is not a one step process but a complex set of interactions. Both parties to an interaction are continuously adjusting to each other, trying to ensure that they obtain the most accurate perception of the other, and, at the same time, offering the most appropriate image to the other. The techniques used by an applicant may change during an interview, depending on, for example, the perception of the applicant as to the suspiciousness of the interviewer. Furthermore, an applicant will try to behave in a way that is normally expected of a truthful person. Accordingly, but contrary to popular opinion, deceivers have been found to maintain higher levels of eye contact than truthful people (Sitton and Griffin 1981). It has been found that the acceptable and expected level of eye contact varies from one culture to another. Therefore, detection of deception is easier between members of the same culture (Bond et al. 1990).

## **2.3 Mental Workload**

In general, people are used to some type of timesharing of their mental processing capacity most of the time. Nevertheless, there are limits. Whenever human information processing needs exceed processing capacity, overall performance is reduced (Welford 1978). Many tasks do not require that much attention anyway, and others only require attention at specific points in time. So timesharing is a very practical and common behavior. When demand exceeds capacity, other types of behavior are required. In most cases, the individual reduces the number of cues that are processed for each task. If the cues that are not processed are essential, then performance is reduced, but if they are not, then the final results may be the same (Welford 1978).

Although most researchers agree that mental workload is an important, relevant, and measurable construct, there still is much disagreement about its nature and its definition. The most commonly found and accepted measures of mental workload are subjective measures. The main problem found with subjective measures is high between-subjects variability. But since mental workload is human-centered rather than task-centered, this problem cannot be easily overcome. Furthermore, the subjective belief of an individual regarding his/her own personal workload (regardless of its preciseness) also influences the individual's performance (Hart and Staveland 1988). For example, the fact that the person believes that one task is less demanding than the other may affect the outcome of the former. People may be less efficient or careful when performing a less demanding task (Cennamo et al. 1991).

When a job interview takes place in the video medium, both the interviewer and the applicant are asked to manage the interview and the technology at the same time. Some of the mental capacity of the interviewer (and of the applicant too<sup>2</sup>) will go into working with the technology and less attention will be placed on the interview itself (Storck 1995). The more sophisticated, advanced, and automated the technology, the less its demands on the interviewer. But in any case, managing the technology and looking at a screen instead of just observing a real person face-to-face will require some additional cognitive processing. Over and above these factors, users of video must

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<sup>2</sup>Most of these factors apply to both the applicant and the interviewer. The total effect on detection may vary in each case but this study will only examine the interviewer's side and will leave the applicant's side for future research.

make a switch from three-dimensional processing to two-dimensional. Although accustomed to this from experience with television and movies, this switch increases mental workload.

## **2.4 Self Awareness**

People are not normally very self-aware. Most of the time they concentrate their attention on what is going on around them and not on themselves. Previous research has shown that a camera in general and videoconferencing in particular increases self awareness (Storck 1995). There are three main reasons for this: first, a camera reminds people that somebody is observing them; second, they are concerned that their actions and presentation may be recorded and shown to others over and over again; and third, because usually there is a screen (or window within a screen) with their own image, the visibility of their own behavior increases.

If a person is more self-aware than normal, he or she is executing an additional task. As noted in the previous section, this additional task will require some additional processing power and it will take some attention away from other tasks being performed simultaneously.

## **2.5 Proposed Model**

In replicating Toris and DePaulo, this study tests if interviewers are capable of differentiating between truthful and deceptive applicants. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

H1: Interviewers are capable of detecting whether an applicant is telling the truth or lying.

As explained before, videoconferencing helps two (or more) distant persons to easily, rapidly, and relatively inexpensively come together to solve a specific task, but it also filters out some cues. At the same time, it adds several additional tasks to the participants' mental workload. For this reason it would be expected that:

H2: Videoconferencing decreases the ability of an interviewer to form an accurate impression of a job applicant.

Nevertheless, as argued in this paper, the effect of videoconferencing is not a direct effect, but rather a mediated effect on the detection of deception. It is only through the increased self awareness, increased mental workload, and decreased eye contact that the videoconference reduces the impression formation ability of the interviewer (see Figure 1).

Due to the additional tasks involved in a videoconference, it could be said that:

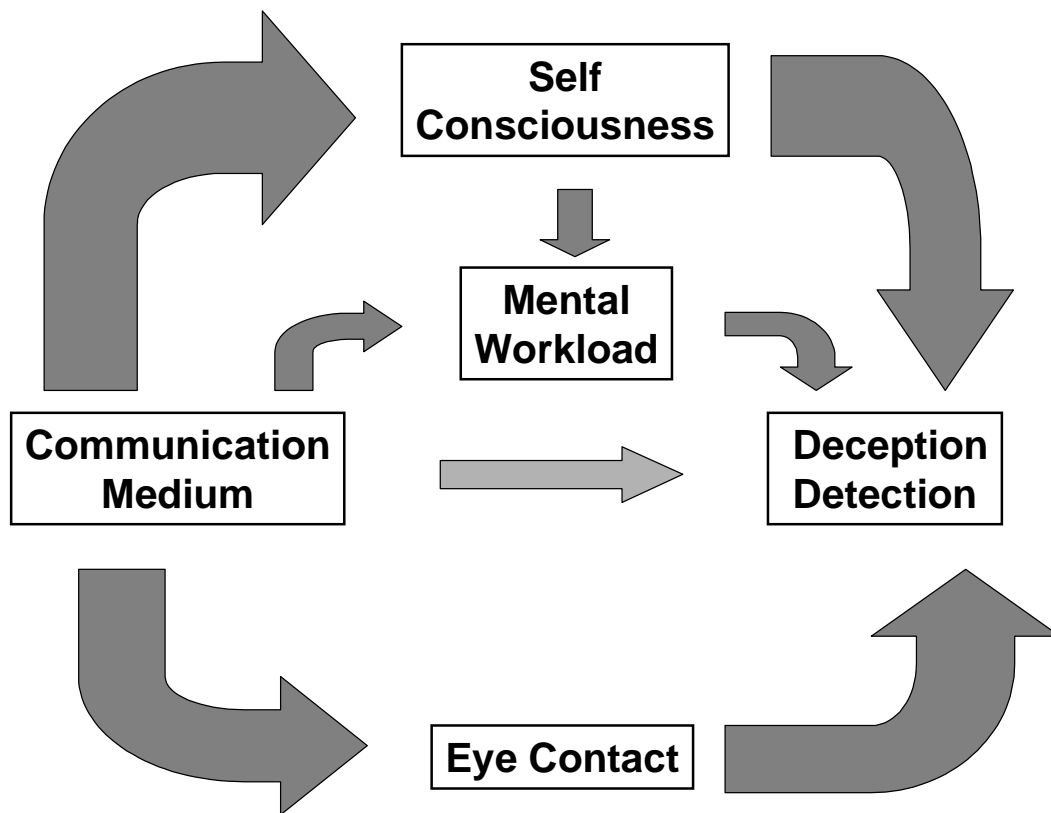
H3: Videoconferencing increases the mental workload of an interviewer.

In addition, due to the limited processing capacity of humans, it would be expected that in turn:

H4: Increased mental workload decreases accuracy of impression formation.

At the same time, videoconferencing increases the self awareness of the interviewer. This would be due to the camera pointing at the person and the window showing the self-image. Therefore:

H5: Videoconferencing increases the self awareness of the interviewer.



**Figure 1.**

Furthermore, because of the added task of being self-aware, it could also be argued that:

H6: Increased self awareness increases mental workload.

Moreover, because being more self-aware means that one is more concentrated on oneself and less on the other party:

H7: Increased self awareness decreases accuracy of impression formation.

Most current videoconferencing installations offer limited picture resolution. The size of the image for desktop video is usually smaller than the life-size image. Finally, the positioning of the camera on top of or to one side of the screen implies that gaze directed toward the image on the screen will appear to the remote person as looking away from the camera. For these reasons, it is believed that:

H8: Videoconferencing reduces eye contact.

And since some of the cues important to accurate impression formation are thought to be read through gaze and eye contact, it would be reasonable to expect that:

H9: Reduced eye contact reduces accuracy of impression formation.

### **3. METHOD**

The experiment consisted of a two (communication medium) by two (deception or truthfulness) by two (order) between-subjects factorial design. Each experimental session consisted of four students, two in the role of job applicants and two in the role of interviewers. Subjects engaged in two interviews; one under each condition. The order of the conditions was assigned at random. All subjects were advised to consider each interview as different and independent of the other. Interviewers were randomly assigned to one communication medium (face-to-face or videoconferencing). Applicants used both communication media (one in each of the two interviews). The applicants were told to be deceptive or not (see below for details), while the interviewers had no idea that they might be deceived (i.e., they were not made suspicious regarding the truthfulness of the applicants).

The subjects were 65 first semester MBA students from a large eastern university. They were recruited from a core course and offered: (1) a chance to practice job interviews, (2) a chance to experience videoconferencing technology, and (3) one chance in ten of winning a \$100 dollar gift certificate. No course credit was offered for participating in the study. Subjects were informed that the study would take about one hour of their time. When interested, students were offered the opportunity to participate in one of several scheduled sessions. Only gender (in order to control for the cross-gender effect, each group was of the same gender) and section (in order to control for previous knowledge, each participant originated from a different section) information was used to form the groups. Students themselves signed-up for a session without prior knowledge of who were the other participants. Students were given an initial survey before the session took place and they were asked to fill it out before attending the session.

The initial survey included a standard scale used to assess introversion/extroversion personality characteristics (Eysenck and Eysenck 1969). At the beginning of the session, the experimenter processed the initial survey instrument. The two students with the most extreme results in the scale were assigned the role of job applicant.<sup>3</sup> The other two were asked to take the interviewer's role.

Applicants were asked to present themselves as introverts in one interview and extroverts in the other. This deception manipulation meant that they were behaving as they normally do in one of the interviews (truthful) and in the opposite way in the other (deceptive). Neither the applicants nor the interviewers were given any specifics regarding the position that was being applied for.<sup>4</sup> Subjects were told that the purpose of the interview was to determine personality "fit" with the job and organizational culture. Interviewers were never given any information that could make them suspicious of the applicant.

At the end of each interview, both applicants and interviewers were given questionnaires regarding the interview in which they had just been engaged. At the end of the study they were given an additional questionnaire that asked questions regarding both interviews.

Interviews took approximately five minutes each. Participants were informed of the time constraint. The experimenter interrupted the interviews at the end of the five minutes, separated the subjects, and distributed the questionnaires.

Introvert/extrovert values were calculated using the 24 item Eysenck and Eysenck EPI scale, which was found to have a 0.71 Cronbach alpha. Mental workload was calculated using a seven-item adaptation (Storck 1995) of the

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<sup>3</sup>This was done to increase the degree of deception as much as possible.

<sup>4</sup>This was done to control for possible bias and expertise differences between the applicants.

NASA Mental Workload Task Load Index (Hart and Staveland 1988) with a Cronbach alpha of 0.87. Self awareness was obtained using a seven-item subjective self awareness scale with a Cronbach alpha of 0.85 (Fenigstein et al. 1975). Perceived eye contact was measured with one seven-point Likert scale question asked of both the applicant and the interviewer.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Demographic Variables and Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses showed that there was no order effect ( $\chi^2 = 0; p = 0.993$ ) in the direct and immediate measure of deception, nor in the difference scores ( $\chi^2 = 0.327; p = 0.567$ ), nor in the direct comparative measure of deception ( $\chi^2 = 0.451; p = 0.502$ ). Tests for gender, age (within the limits of the little variance found in MBA students), native language, and other demographic variables were found to have no effect on detection. Table 1 shows general descriptive statistics.

### 4.2 Detection of Deception

As mentioned above, there were three different measures of deception: assessing honesty immediately after each interview, evaluating each applicant after both interviews were complete, and comparing the two applicants. Interviewers gave the applicant the benefit of the doubt in the immediate measure: they were not good at determining if the applicant was telling the truth or being deceptive ( $\chi^2 = 0.007; p = 0.931$ ). Out of 31 deceivers, three were detected and 28 were believed to be truth-tellers, while out of 29 truth-tellers three were believed to be deceivers and 26 were evaluated as truthful. Evaluations after the second interview were more accurate ( $\chi^2 = 12.17; p < 0.001$ ). In this case, all 28 truth-tellers were properly classified and only 18 (out of 28) deceivers were thought to be telling the truth.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics - Interviewers (n = 28)**

	Medium	Detection	Mental Workload	Perceived Eye Contact	Self Awareness
Minimum	0	0	14	0	18
Maximum	1	1	65	14	77
Mean	.54	.82	36.71	9.61	43.75
Std. Deviation	.51	.39	13.11	4.52	17.35

**Table 2. Group Statistics for Interviewers (n = 28)**

		Face-to-face (n = 13)	Video (n = 15)	Undetected (n = 5)	Detected (n = 23)
Mean	Mental workload	29.69	42.80	47.20	34.43
	Perceived eye contact	12.38	7.20	6.00	10.39
	Self awareness	42.46	44.87	56.40	41

The comparative measure was the most accurate of the three ( $\chi^2 = 23.14; p < 0.001$ ). Out of 28 interviewers, only five incorrectly distinguished the truthful applicant from the deceptive one. In this measure, there is no condition discrimination because the interviewer either misses both or neither applicant. The power of the tests done at the

interviewer level of analysis is lower than the previous ones because the sample size is smaller ( $n = 28$ ). Furthermore, since only five interviewers showed incorrect discrimination, the variance for this group on the other variables is very small. Still, because the third measure is the most accurate detection measure, all further reported analyses are done at the interviewer level. Table 2 shows the mean values for each construct under the different conditions.

### 4.3 Mental Workload

As expected the mental workload of the videoconference interviewers (29.69) was statistically significantly higher ( $F = 9.025, p = 0.006$ ) than that of the face-to-face interviewers (42.80). The mental workload of the interviewers who properly choose the deceiver from the truthful applicant was 34.43 which is significantly lower ( $F = 4.378, p = 0.46$ ) than that of those interviewers who were not able to distinguish truth or deception accurately (47.20).

### 4.4 Self Awareness

Although the self awareness measure of the videoconference interviewers (44.87) was higher than that of the face-to-face interviewers (42.46), the difference was not statistically significant ( $F = 0.130, p = 0.722$ ). At the same time, the effective interviewers (i.e., those who were more accurate in their detection of deception) were less aware of themselves (41.00) than the ineffective ones (56.40). Again, the difference was not statistically significant ( $F = 5.541, p = 0.071$ ). As predicted by the theory, self awareness was highly correlated ( $r = 0.612, p = 0.01$ ) with mental workload.

### 4.5 Eye Contact

Perceived eye contact was significantly lower ( $F = 13.318, p = 0.001$ ) in the videoconferencing interviews (12.38) than in the face-to-face ones (7.20). Perceived eye contact was significantly higher ( $F = 4.349, p = 0.047$ ) in the interviews where the interviewers were properly able to chose the deceptive person from the truthful one (10.39) than in the others (6.00).

### 4.6 Medium Effect

As shown in Table 3, no statistically significant bivariate correlation ( $r = -0.06, p = 0.761$ ) was found between the communication medium and the correct selection of the truthful applicant. Still, indirect correlations can be calculated by following the mediated paths through mental workload ( $r = -0.193, p < 0.01$ ) and perceived eye contact ( $r = 0.221, p < 0.01$ ), adding up to an indirect (mediated) correlation of  $r = .414 (p < 0.01)$ . An analysis of variance (Table 4) shows that communication medium affects mental workload ( $F=9.025, p < 0.01$ ) and perceived eye contact ( $F=13.318, p < 0.001$ ) while at the same time (Table 5) mental workload ( $F = 4.378, p < 0.05$ ) and perceived eye contact ( $F = 4.349, p < 0.05$ ) affect detection.

**Table 3. Bivariate Correlations—Interviewers ( $n = 28$ )**

	Detection	Mental Workload	Perceived Eye Contact	Self Awareness
Medium (video=1)	-.060	.508**	-.582**	.070
Detection	---	-.380**	.379*	-.346
Mental Workload	---	---	-.499**	.612**
Perceived eye contact	---	---	---	-.357

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Table 4. Analysis of Variance for the Communication Medium—Interviewers (*n* = 28)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Mental workload	Between Groups	1196.545	1	1196.545	9.025	.006
	Within Groups	3447.169	26	132.583		
	Total	4643.714	27			
Perceived eye contact	Between Groups	187.202	1	187.202	13.318	.001
	Within Groups	365.477	26	14.057		
	Total	552.679	27			
Self awareness	Between Groups	40.286	1	40.286	.130	.722
	Within Groups	8082.964	26	310.883		
	Total	8123.250	27			

**Table 5. Analysis of Variance for the Detection—Interviewers (*n* = 28)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	<i>p</i>
Mental workload	Between Groups	669.262	1	669.262	4.378	.046
	Within Groups	3974.452	26	152.864		
	Total	4643.714	27			
Perceived eye contact	Between Groups	79.200	1	79.200	4.349	.047
	Within Groups	473.478	26	18.211		
	Total	552.679	27			
Self awareness	Between Groups	974.050	1	974.050	3.542	.071
	Within Groups	7149.200	26	274.969		
	Total	8123.250	27			

## 5. DISCUSSION

Although support was not found for all of the hypotheses, the study produced some interesting results. Under certain conditions, interviewers were able to detect if the applicant was telling the truth or was being deceptive. Mental workload and eye contact were both affected by the communication medium; they both affected the detection capacity of the interviewer. Furthermore, self awareness was shown to affect mental workload. The effect of the communication medium on the detection capability of the interviewer was not found to be statistically significant but indirect correlations between medium and detection were statistically significant.

### 5.1 Detection

Interviewers were not able to detect deceptive applicants when simply asked about the truthfulness of the applicant at the end of the interview. Almost all of them gave the benefit of the doubt to the applicant. Interviewers were better detectors when asked a similar question but only after both interviews had taken place and the same question was asked regarding both applicants in the same place. Although they did not explicitly state that one of the two

applicants was being deceptive, they in general gave a more truthful score to the truthful applicants. Finally, interviewers were very good detectors when forced to select one applicant as being deceptive and the other as truthful. This is partial support for hypothesis 1, since interviewers could not detect truth from deception in absolute terms, but they could choose who was more truthful out of a pair that contained one of each. Alternatively, it could be argued that the applicants who participated on this study (MBA students) were very good actors and therefore it was not easy to determine if they were being deceptive or telling the truth.

## **5.2 Mental Workload**

Hypothesis 3 was supported. A strong correlation was found between the communication medium and the mental workload measure. This implies that the additional tasks required in a videoconference interview do require more work on the part of the interviewer. This is consistent with the literature and anecdotal evidence obtained from people who use videoconferencing technology frequently. It could be argued that as the technology improves, this additional workload would be lessened. However, even with a larger screen and higher resolution, there will still be additional cues to attend to and additional workload imposed by the two dimensional nature of the medium. Indeed, one could assume that some mental effort will always have to be expended on recapturing cues that are normally present in the face-to-face medium (e.g., height, gestures that only partially appear on camera). Thus, there will always be additional tasks that people must undertake in a video setting.

Hypothesis 4 was also supported. Mental workload does appear to be a determining factor in discriminating between truth and deception. It seems that the more mentally loaded the interviewers are, the less capable they are of properly performing the assigned task. It is important to remember that the task assigned only lasted five minutes. It should also be expected that the longer the task and the higher the mental workload, the more tired the interviewer should get. Thus, longer video interviews could mean lower detection accuracy.

## **5.3 Eye Contact**

Supporting hypothesis 8, perceived eye contact was significantly lower during the videoconference interviews. This was probably due to the current technology and to the way the cameras were set up. A better camera setup could ameliorate this problem. Again, it is expected that as the technology improves (bigger images and higher resolution), eye contact should also increase.

Consistent with hypothesis 9, significantly lower perceived eye contact was found in the less effective interviews. This was also consistent with the literature. Gaze and eye contact are important factors in determining detection. The results did not show that liars established more or less eye contact but that it was through gaze and eye contact that the interviewers were able to “read” if the applicant was telling the truth or being deceptive.

## **5.4 Self Awareness**

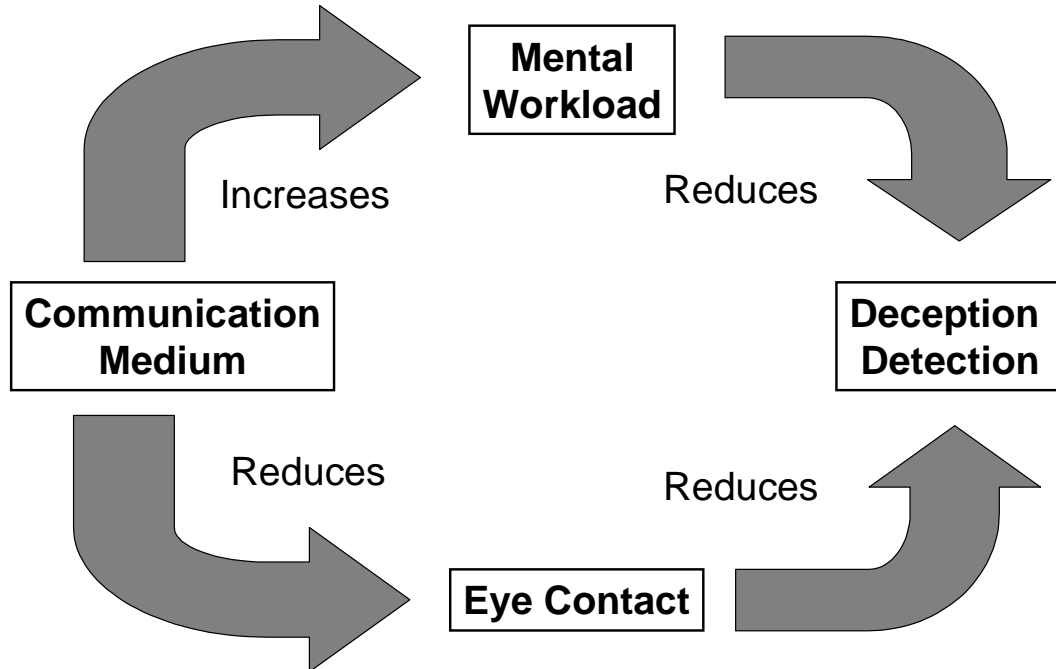
This study did not find the self awareness measure to be correlated with either the medium of communication (hypothesis 5) or the detection capacity of the interviewer (hypothesis 7). This was not congruent with previous studies, where self awareness was significantly greater in video than in face-to-face communication (Storck 1995). The lack of correlation of self awareness with communication medium could have been due to the short time (five minutes) that the interview allowed, since other studies allowed for a more prolonged period of time in front of the screen. The lack of correlation with the detection measure was due to the very small sample size of improperly detected applicants ( $n = 5$ ). Hypothesis 6 was supported since self awareness was highly correlated with increased mental workload.

### 5.6 Communication Medium and Detection

Hypothesis 2 was not confirmed since no direct correlation was found between the communication medium and the detection ability of the interviewer. This was due to the very small sample size of interviewers who were wrong ( $n = 5$ ). Still, an indirect correlation was found. This indirect correlation was found through the mediated effect of mental workload and perceived eye contact (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 shows how the communication medium affects mental workload and eye contact. At the same time, it also shows how those variables affect the detection capability of the interviewer. Unfortunately, the way it is drawn may induce the reader to think of the model in terms of the technology imperative (Markus and Robey 1988). This was not the purpose in drawing the model in this way. It is not believed in this study that the technology has one specific and predetermined effect in the workplace but rather that it is a set of multiple interactions between the technology, the people, and the structure that determines the final outcome.

In order to diminish the visual effect caused by the depiction of the model in Figures 1 and 2, this study also proposes an alternative but non-competing model (Figure 3) that shows the interactions between these variables. In Figure 3, the communication medium has a moderating effect on the influence that mental workload and eye contact have on the detection capacity of the interviewer. The disadvantage of this alternate model is that the direct influence of the communication medium on the two variables is not shown.



**Figure 2.**

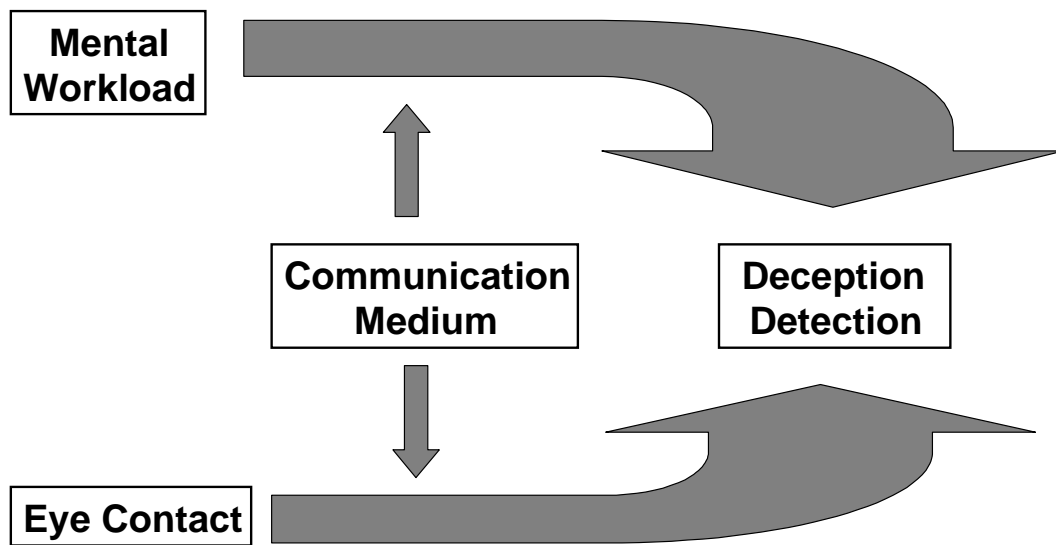


Figure 3

## 6. IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

According to the results of this study, human resource staff and others who are involved in recruiting should continue using this video communication technology to increase the efficiency of the recruiting process. No statistically significant results were found to justify an assertion that video interviews are less effective than face-to-face interviews. However, the finding that high mental workload tends to inhibit accurate person perception suggests that designers of videoconferencing facilities should give special emphasis to ease of use in order to reduce the number of tasks that the users have to accomplish during a videoconference encounter. Rapidly improving technology will have the effect of minimizing the impact of mental workload in the future. In the interim, it will also be important for users to carefully establish camera and screen positions in order to optimize eye contact. Furthermore, most technology development is focused on increasing the frame rate (i.e., on picture quality). This study indicates that efforts to increase the eye contact among the participants in a meeting will also be beneficial.

## 7. FURTHER RESEARCH

This study was, on the one hand, a replication of a previous study, and on the other, it was a early effort to investigate the accuracy of interactive person-perception in the video context. This study provided statistical support for the trends found in Toris and DePaulo that interviewers were good at selecting the truthful applicant when interacting with a truthful and a lying applicant. Future studies should test this capacity when presented with three or more applicants (i.e., where the decision is not only a binary one). This study limited the task to only five minutes, it would be interesting to test if the results would be the same if the task took longer and was more tiresome. No statistically significant differences were found on any of the measures between the two genders, but this study was limited to

same gender groups. Since in the real world this may not always be the case, it would be interesting to test if the results are consistent when the dyads are mixed.

A substantial contribution of this paper is on establishing a task, protocol, and instrument for studying interactive person perception under a video context. It also demonstrated the feasibility of studying this process experimentally. Future research should build on these tools, not only to corroborate the findings but also to test for other variables that may have an effect on the outcome.

As with most research comparing face-to-face and video communication, there does not appear to be any direct adverse performance impact. The study does, however, provide some indication that person perception differences may result in performance differences. Differences in person perception may be due to different cues that are available in the communication setting and to reduced capacity to process the cues that are available. Further work is needed to evaluate more thoroughly the factors that affect person perception in the video medium.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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