Factors influencing the effectiveness of online communication

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Background

- Businesses often use video communication software to interview job applicants.
- Video-mediated communication (VMC) presents new challenges in accurately evaluating the quality of job applicants.
- Technical issues such as poor connectivity, video/sound quality, and camera position can affect perceived competency and trustworthiness.
- Past research has focused primarily on overall user preferences, without examining the effects of the specific technical issues that users encounter.

Independent Variables

Camera Angle
- Height is positively correlated with workplace success, income, and perceptions of social dominance.
- Camera angle affects perceived height and dominance—increasing apparent height should increase probability of being hired.
- Camera positions simulate the most common webcam placements when videoconferencing online.

Redness
- Facial redness indicates good health, and is perceived as attractive
- Attractive people are rated as more intelligent, and are more likely to be hired.
- Increasing video redness should increase hirability and attractiveness ratings.
- Perceived aggression will also be measured since too much red tint can be seen as aggressive.

Eye Gaze
- Lack of eye gaze promotes hostile behavior between people using VMC.
- During videoconferencing, people look towards the screen, not their webcam.
- Off-center webcams could be interpreted as the applicant being untrustworthy or having poor eye contact and attention skills.

Methods

- Participants act as interviewers, judge pre-recorded mock interviews.
- Stimuli: 4 mock-interview videos of equivalent quality, manipulated in one of three variables: redness, eye gaze, or camera angle.
- Participants fill out questionnaires after each video rating hirability, trustworthiness, hireability, occupational efficacy, aggressiveness, then make a hiring decision.

Implications

- Interviewees could adjust camera settings to avoid accidentally disadvantaging themselves in an interview.
- Employers would be able to make less biased hiring decisions—later research may look into whether being aware of the variations in video quality will undermine the effect of the manipulation.
- This would be valuable information for teams collaborating online, where trust is essential.

References

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