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How asynchronous video interview design features influence interviewees' experience, behavior, and interview outcomes

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ABSTRACT

Asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) are now common in personnel selection. Design choices influence interviewees' experience, behavior, and interview outcomes, yet evidence on these effects remains limited. This dissertation examines four AVI design features (evaluator information, response time limits, preparation time, and question wording) and their impact across four studies.

First, I examined evaluator information: audience cues increased honest ingratiation, left honest self-promotion unchanged, moved goals toward person–organization fit, and altered the answering process; interviewees raised concerns about the digital environment. Second, I investigated extended responses, i.e., when interviewees continue talking after signal completion, a phenomenon related to long response time limits and the lack of real-time interaction. Extended responding was frequent, especially among individuals high in emotionality. Compared to the initial response (the first part ending at the initial completion signal), extended responses differed in content and fluency, and harmed evaluations, with higher performance and persuasiveness for initial responses than for overall responses (initial plus extended). Third, I manipulated response time limits (one, three, and five minutes). Performance peaked at three minutes. Speaking time mediated the effects on anxiety, honest impression management, and performance. Fourth, I tested the effect of priming for peak performance and allowing preparation time. Priming increased performance and storytelling, and heightened emotional tone, whereas preparation time did not. Interview performance predicted contextual job performance, with preparation time and wording moderating this relationship.

Together, these studies show that an AVI is not a neutral container but an active context where design cues influence experience, behavior, and evaluation. Results, implications, limitations, and future research avenues are discussed.

Keywords: asynchronous video interviews; interview design; interview experience; impression management; interview anxiety; interview performance; interview validity.

RÉSUMÉ

Les entretiens vidéo asynchrones (*asynchronous video interviews* ; AVIs) sont désormais courants dans les processus de sélection. Les choix de conception influencent l'expérience des interviewés, leur comportement et les résultats d'entretien, mais les données probantes sur ces effets restent limitées. Cette thèse examine quatre caractéristiques de conception des AVIs (informations sur l'évaluateur, limites de temps de réponse, temps de préparation et formulation des questions) et étudie leur impact au fil de quatre études.

Premièrement, j'ai examiné comment avoir des informations sur l'évaluateur influençait les interviewés : le fait de communiquer des informations sur l'évaluateur a augmenté le niveau de flatterie sans affecter l'auto-promotion, a déplacé les objectifs de gestion des impressions vers l'adéquation personne-organisation et a modifié le processus de réponse ; les interviewés ont exprimé des préoccupations concernant le dispositif numérique. Deuxièmement, j'ai étudié le phénomène des réponses prolongées, c'est-à-dire des propos qui se poursuivent après que les interviewés ont signalé la fin de leur réponse, phénomène lié à des limites de temps de réponse longues et à l'absence d'interaction en temps réel. Les réponses prolongées étaient fréquentes, surtout chez les personnes à forte émotivité. Par rapport à la réponse initiale (la partie se terminant par un premier signal de fin de réponse), les réponses prolongées différaient quant au contenu et à la fluidité et nuisaient à l'évaluation : la performance et la force de persuasion étaient plus élevées pour les réponses initiales que pour les réponses globales (parties initiales et prolongées). Troisièmement, j'ai manipulé les limites de temps de réponse (une, trois et cinq minutes). La performance a atteint un maximum à trois minutes. Le temps de parole a joué un rôle de médiation sur l'anxiété, la gestion honnête des impressions et la performance. Quatrièmement, j'ai testé l'effet de la formulation de question pour évoquer la meilleure performance et de l'octroi d'un temps de préparation. L'amorçage pour évoquer la meilleure performance a augmenté la performance et la production de récits et a intensifié le ton émotionnel, tandis que le temps de préparation n'a pas eu d'effet. La performance à l'entretien a prédit la performance de travail contextuelle, effet modéré par le temps de préparation et la formulation des questions.

Dans l'ensemble, ces études montrent qu'un AVI ne constitue pas un simple contenant neutre, mais un contexte actif où des signaux de conception orientent le comportement et l'évaluation. Les principaux résultats, les implications, les limites ainsi que des pistes de recherche futures sont discutés.

Mots-clés : entretiens vidéo asynchrones ; conception de l'entretien ; expérience d'entretien ; gestion des impressions ; anxiété en entretien ; performance d'entretien, validité d'entretien.

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"STORIES MATTER. [...]

STORIES HAVE BEEN USED TO DISPOSSESS AND TO MALIGN.

BUT STORIES CAN ALSO BE USED TO EMPOWER AND TO HUMANIZE."

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE

Contents

1 Introduction

"The employment interview continues to be a centerpiece of employee selection"
(Huffcutt et al., 2011, p. 353)

Four years ago, my supervisor, Adrian Bangerter, made what *I* believe was an excellent hiring decision: he selected *me* as a PhD candidate and teaching assistant at the University of Neuchâtel. He did so using the most widely used tool in personnel selection: *the interview* (Huffcutt et al., 2011; Judge et al., 2000; Levashina et al., 2014). At its core, the selection interview is "a personally interactive process of one or more people asking questions orally to another person and evaluating the answers for the purpose of determining the qualifications of that person in order to make employment decisions" (Levashina et al., 2014, p. 243). Most organizations trust that targeted questions will reveal who is most likely to succeed on the job (McDaniel et al., 1994; Posthuma et al., 2002). The idea is simple: identify who will do the job best.

But interviews do not always live up to that promise. Many interviewers rely, *de facto,* on their intuition, making quick judgments based on confidence or tone of voice, which can introduce bias (Barrick et al., 2012; Graves & Karren, 1996). These impressions may feel accurate but are not always reliable. Poor selection decisions hurt performance, morale, and organizational finances (Graves & Karren, 1996; Hunter & Hunter, 1984). That is why researchers have long worked to reduce these biases.

In recent years, technology has transformed recruitment and selection, with hundreds of new tools entering the market (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2016). Among these innovations, many organizations have turned to asynchronous video interviews (AVIs), especially for early-stage screening. AVIs, also called one-way or on-demand interviews, require interviewees to record responses (audio or video) to preset questions on an online platform without an interviewer present (Lukacik et al., 2022). They are intended to provide a fair, standardized selection process in which all interviewees answer the same questions, in the same order (Basch

& Melchers, 2019; Lukacik et al., 2022). Yet without social cues, feedback, or a visible audience, the experience may feel unfamiliar and impersonal for interviewees (Basch et al., 2020; Langer et al., 2017). Importantly, not all AVIs are the same (Dunlop et al., 2022). How interviewees experience the AVI format depends on features such as preparation time and response time limits, which vary by platform; these design choices influence responses and how those responses are evaluated (Lukacik et al., 2022). The impact may depend on how these features are implemented and on individual differences (Roulin, 2022).

Yet cumulative knowledge remains thin about which design features matter, through which mechanisms, and for whom. Clarifying these factors is important because organizations increasingly adopt AVIs (HireVue, 2023). AVIs elicit design-driven behavior; design features cue what interviewees say and how they say it, which risks rewarding adaptation to the format rather than job-relevant performance (Roulin, 2022). This thesis addresses that gap by examining four design features: evaluator information (whether interviewees know who will evaluate them), response time limits (how long they have to record an answer), preparation time (how much time they have before recording), and question wording (whether the question primes peak performance). I analyze how these features influence interviewee experience, anxiety, impression management, storytelling, and performance. In doing so, the thesis contributes to a growing line of work on AVI design and its consequences for behavior, experience, and performance (Falls et al., 2025; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Moore et al., 2024; Niemitz et al., 2024). I argue that design features act as cues and that interviewees regulate their behavior by reading the interface, the countdown timer, the wording of the question, and evaluator visibility.

To do so, I first clarify what counts as valid evidence in selection interviews (2, psychometric perspective), next I explain interviews as social and interactional encounters where cues guide behavior (3), and then I define AVIs and detail the design features that modify those cues and their expected effects (4). This thesis presents four studies, each targeting different design features (5). In Study 1, I investigate how evaluator information influences interviewees' use of impression management tactics (5.1). In Study 2, I explore whether longer

response time limits lead to extended responses and what these reveal about interviewee behavior and evaluation (5.2). In Study 3, I examine how different time limits affect speaking time, anxiety, impression management, and performance (5.3). Finally, in Study 4, I examine maximal responding and how preparation time and priming influence storytelling, impression management, and performance (5.4). I end by reflecting on what these studies contribute both theoretically and practically, specifying the mechanisms through which design features steer responding, before addressing their limitations and outlining directions for future research.

2 The Psychometric Perspective

> *"The interview is a selection procedure designed to predict future job performance on the basis of applicants' oral responses to oral inquiries"*
> *(McDaniel et al., 1994, p. 599)*

Over the years, researchers have approached selection interviews through a psychometric lens to improve prediction of job performance by addressing the limitations of the intuitive approach, which relies on impression-driven judgments and invites bias (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Judge et al., 2000; Levashina et al., 2014; McDaniel et al., 1994; Posthuma et al., 2002). The psychometric perspective rests on two core concepts: reliability and validity. *Reliability* refers to the consistency of interview scores across interviewers or over time, whereas *validity* indicates whether interview scores represent the intended latent attribute, as specified by theory and job analysis (Cook, 2016; Roulin et al., 2012). Validity matters because it ensures that hiring decisions rely on meaningful, job-relevant criteria.

Because the goal of a selection interview is valid inference, in the following subchapters, I begin by elaborating on validity in selection interviews (2.1), then discuss how higher structure increases the predictive validity of interviews (2.2), and finally address the limitations of the psychometric perspective to motivate a broader view (2.3).

2.1 Selection interview validity

In personnel selection, two forms of validity carry particular weight because together they establish job relatedness, guide standardization and scoring, and support fairness and defensibility: construct and criterion validity (Binning & Barrett, 1989; Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Posthuma et al., 2002; Schmidt & Hunter, 1998). *Construct validity* concerns whether interview scores reflect the intended construct, i.e., a latent attribute defined through job analysis and inferred from responses rather than directly observed (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Deville, 1996). To make this concrete, when hiring a pastry chef to prepare a Black Forest cake (layers of chocolate sponge, whipped cream, cherry filling, and just the right amount of kirsch), high construct validity would mean that questions and scoring focus on pastry techniques rather than on a broader skill such as confidence.

Criterion validity asks whether interview scores relate to a criterion, a reference point for evaluating interviewees, such as job performance (Howes & Muchinsky, 2022). In the same example, if the criterion is supervisors' ratings of Black Forest cake quality, high criterion validity means higher interview scores align with higher supervisor ratings. Criterion validity is *concurrent* when interview scores and the criterion are measured at the same time, and *predictive* when the criterion is measured later on the job. While both are important, predictive validity is particularly valuable in hiring because it reflects the aim of identifying interviewees who will perform well later on the job (Schmidt & Hunter, 1998).

Achieving high validity in selection interviews is challenging. Interviewers may overlook job-relevant attributes, and evaluations can be influenced by personal impressions. Factors unrelated to job performance, such as physical attractiveness or confidence, may affect judgments of an interviewee's suitability for the job (Cook, 2016; Huffcutt et al., 2001). For instance, expectancy effects may amplify this problem: initial impressions affect later ratings and even offers, consistent with the Pygmalion effect (Barrick et al., 2012; Barrick et al., 2010; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). Yet many interviewers overlook these biases and rely on their intuition and experience to select the interviewee they *believe* best fits the role rather than using structured interviews (Rynes et al., 2002; Schmid Mast et al., 2011). These tendencies threaten validity and motivate structured approaches that constrain bias.

2.2 Structure to enhance interview validity

For a long time, selection interviews were widely criticized for their low predictive validity (Anderson, 1992; Harris, 1989; Hunter & Hunter, 1984). One major culprit was the lack of standardization, as interviewers often approached interviews inconsistently (Arvey & Campion, 1982). This variability made it difficult to compare interviewees fairly. Meta-analytical evidence then changed the narrative by showing that selection interviews achieve higher predictive validity when they are structured (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994; Judge et al., 2000; Levashina et al., 2014). *Structure* refers to the degree to which the interview process is standardized across interviewees, thereby limiting interviewers' flexibility (Arvey & Campion, 1982; Campion et al., 1994). A recent meta-analysis by Sackett et al. (2022) reinforced these

findings, reporting that unstructured interviews showed low predictive validity for future job performance (.19), whereas structured interviews reached the highest predictive validity (.42).

Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) quantify the degree of interview structure based on two elements: the standardization of questions and the standardization of response evaluation. At the first level, questions and evaluations are entirely unstructured. Interviewers have full discretion over both elements. As structure increases at the second and third levels, questions and evaluation criteria become increasingly predefined, with some flexibility allowed. At the fourth and highest level of structure, both questions and evaluations are fully standardized, with no flexibility for the interviewer. The higher the level, the more structured the interview and the greater its predictive validity. However, a "ceiling effect of structure" (Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994, p. 188) occurs between the third and fourth levels, as the difference in predictive validity is minimal (.56 vs .57).

While Huffcutt and Arthur (1994) quantify degree of standardization, Campion et al. (1997) translate that degree into design choices, grouped into interview content and the evaluation process. On the interview content side, structured interviews rely on job-analysis-based questions, asking the same questions in the same order to all interviewees, limiting probing and interviewee questions, or asking questions with stronger validity evidence (e.g., background questions; Hartwell et al., 2019). On the evaluation side, multiple interviewers should rate each response. The same interviewers should rate all interviewees, using anchored or other multiple rating scales. These design choices operationalize structure in practice.

Behavioral interviews, a subset of structured interviews, implement these choices and show particularly high validity (Campion et al., 1994; Huffcutt et al., 2004; Janz, 1982; Motowidlo et al., 1992; Taylor & Small, 2002). They typically begin with a job analysis, such as the critical incident technique, to identify the competencies required for the job role (Campion et al., 1994; Motowidlo et al., 1992). To identify these competencies, interviewers use two main types of questions: *past behavior questions,* which require interviewees to describe how they acted in a real situation (e.g.*, Can you tell me about a time when you had to deal with a difficult team member?*), and *situational questions,* which ask interviewees to explain how they would

respond in a hypothetical scenario (e.g., *Imagine you are working with a difficult team member. How would you handle it?;* Roulin et al., 2012*)*. Past behavior questions have higher validity than situational questions, as past actions are strong predictors of future behavior (Campion et al., 1994; Janz, 1982, 1989). Validity is further improved when responses are evaluated using behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS; Kessler, 2006; Smith & Kendall, 1963).

2.3 Limitations of the psychometric perspective

Despite the well-documented benefits of structure for higher validity, the psychometric approach is not without drawbacks. A meta-analysis of structured selection interviews (Levashina et al., 2014) suggests that they may elicit negative emotional responses (Conway & Peneno, 1999), lower satisfaction (Chapman & Rowe, 2002), and diminish perceptions of procedural justice, which may in turn reduce interviewees' willingness to accept a job offer (Chapman & Zweig, 2005). On the interviewer side, structured interviews remain uncommon in practice (Bangerter et al., 2008; König et al., 2010; Rynes et al., 2002). One reason is that interviewers' perceptions of structure often diverge from scientific definitions. Many associate structured interviews with rigidity and loss of control, leading 75% of interviewers to describe their own interviews as *fairly structured*, albeit in ways that often do not meet research criteria (Bangerter et al., 2008; Roulin & Bangerter, 2012). This gap between research and practice helps explain which formats gain traction in day-to-day hiring.

Within that gap, behavioral interviews, a type of structured interview, are more widely accepted because they are framed in practical, business-friendly terms (Bragger et al., 2016; Campion et al., 1997; Levashina et al., 2014; Roulin & Bangerter, 2012). Practitioner literature reinforces this preference by frequently promoting behavioral interviews while rarely emphasizing *structured* interviews *per se*. Labels also matter: the term unstructured carries negative connotations, so many interviewers report using *some* structure, which likely inflates estimates of the actual adoption of structured interviews (Bangerter et al., 2008).

In summary, the psychometric perspective prioritizes standardization, reliability, and validity, with the aim of ensuring that interviews assess interviewees based on measurable traits.

Yet this perspective overlooks the social and interactive nature of interviews, particularly the dynamic between the interviewer and the interviewee (Anderson et al., 2004). Selection interviews go beyond a one-way process in which an interviewer decides whether the interviewee gets the job. Instead, they "involve exchanges of information between interviewees and organizations" (Bangerter et al., 2012, p. 719). The next section builds on this idea by introducing an interactionist perspective and exploring how interviewees manage impressions and construct meaning in real time.

3 From a Social to an Interactionist Perspective

> *"Both the interviewer and the interviewee are attempting to present positive images to each other so that the interviewer attracts the best interviewee and the interviewee gets the best job offer"*
> *(Gilmore & Ferris, 1989, p. 557)*

The 1980s marked a turning point in research on selection interviews, as researchers moved beyond viewing interviews solely as measurement instruments and began to recognize them as social encounters (Anderson, 1992; Arvey & Campion, 1982; Herriot, 1989). Interviews are not just about evaluation; they are also social encounters in which two sides interact, observe, and try to influence one another (Posthuma et al., 2002).

Often, the interview serves as the first meaningful point of contact between the interviewee and the organization. In that moment, each party is seeking something: the interviewer is gauging potential while also representing the company. In turn, the interviewee is trying to understand the job role and demonstrate fit (to the organization and the job). Each side is asking the same silent question: *is this relationship worth investing in?* (Higgins & Judge, 2004). Because of these high stakes, both parties often try to influence how they are perceived, adjusting their moves in a subtle choreography aimed at leaving a good impression (Bangerter et al., 2012; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Judge et al., 2000; Wilhelmy et al., 2016; Wilhelmy et al., 2021).

This effort to influence others connects to the concept of self-presentation, which describes how people adjust what they say and do to be seen positively (Goffman, 1959). This idea laid the groundwork for research on impression management in selection interviews (Anderson, 1992; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Leary & Kowalski, 1990; Schlenker, 1980; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Self-presentation also inspired a more dynamic view of the selection interview: the interactionist perspective, which focuses on how meaning, understood here as the shared definition of the situation (identities, roles, and the interpretation of acts), is co-constructed. In this view, people do not simply perform; they respond and adapt in real time based on how they

interpret the other person (Goffman, 1959, 1967).

To trace these dynamics and better understand how interviewees build their image in interviews, the next subchapters will first address impression management as a social process (3.1), then storytelling as an interactional process (3.2).

3.1 Impression management as a social process

Self-presentation refers to the ways in which individuals attempt to influence how others perceive them (Goffman, 1959; Leary et al., 1994). Whether deliberate or subtle, self-presentation is always present in what we say, how we say it, and what we leave unsaid. Self-presentation often reflects two motives: gaining social approval and staying true to who we are (Baumeister, 1982). Sometimes these motives go hand in hand. Other times, they pull in different directions. People may face a choice between saying what is expected versus saying what feels honest to them (Baumeister, 1982; Leary & Kowalski, 1990).

Goffman (1959) compares everyday social interactions to a theatre performance. People act as performers, the social setting becomes the stage, and others serve as the audience. The performance is tailored to the expectations of the situation. He also distinguishes between the front stage, where people act with intention, and the backstage, where they drop the act, reflect, and prepare. Importantly, not all communication lies under conscious control. Goffman (1959) also distinguishes between expressions *given* (what people deliberately say or show) and expressions *given off* (unintentional cues that others interpret). Despite efforts to manage impressions, individuals are always at risk of being read in ways they cannot fully control (Goffman, 1959, 1967, 2005).

A core concept in Goffman's theory is the notion of *face*. He defines the latter as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self-delineated in terms of approved social attributes - albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself" (Goffman, 1967, p. 7). To be *in face* is to be seen as competent, appropriate, or respectable within a given context. But face is fragile and can be lost, challenged, or undermined. As Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 61) put it,

"face is something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction". When face is at risk, people engage in face-work to prevent embarrassment and repair breakdowns. Individuals with lower self-esteem tend to be more affected by these situations (Brown & Dutton, 1995). Thus, people manage impressions not just to succeed, but also to protect the self and sustain a sense of respect (Brown & Marshall, 2001).

Building on the idea of self-presentation, impression management is defined as "the conscious or unconscious attempt to control images that are projected in real or imagined social interactions" (Schlenker, 1980, p. 6). In interviews, both interviewees and interviewers engage in impression management. Interviewers use impression management to attract strong applicants (Wilhelmy et al., 2016), while interviewees use it, intentionally or not, to secure an offer (Barrick et al., 2009; Peck & Levashina, 2017; Proost et al., 2010). Although both sides engage in impression management, the vast majority of research has focused on interviewees (Barrick et al., 2009; Bozeman & Kacmar, 1997; Delery & Kacmar, 1998; Ellis et al., 2002; Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Higgins & Judge, 2004; Higgins et al., 2003; Kristof-Brown et al., 2002; Proost et al., 2010; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). This asymmetry in research likely reflects the pressure interviewees experience in interviews, where they have limited control but much at stake. As a result, they are more likely to manage how they come across. Motivational differences help explain how each party approaches self-presentation (Roulin & Bourdage, 2017; Wilhelmy et al., 2016).

A common distinction is drawn between honest and deceptive impression management tactics (Bourdage et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion, 2006). Interviewees use honest tactics when questions align with their experience, allowing them to draw on relevant examples (Bourdage et al., 2018). When that is not the case, they may turn to deceptive impression management (*faking*), by exaggerating or presenting an image that stretches the truth (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021; Levashina & Campion, 2006). Although honest tactics can increase performance, their benefits may taper and even backfire when overused. Excessive honest impression management has been linked to poorer interview performance (Robie et al., 2020).

The effects of faking remain difficult to pin down. A meta-analysis found only a weak (near-zero) correlation between faking and interview performance (Ho, Powell, et al., 2021). Yet faking can still hinder accurate assessments, especially since it often goes undetected (Melchers et al., 2020; Ralston & Kirkwood, 1999; Roulin et al., 2014, 2015), raising concerns about interview validity. Taken together, encouraging honest impression management supports fair and well-informed decisions during selection interviews.

Beyond the distinction between honest and deceptive tactics, impression management can also be classified by its function in the interaction. Assertive, defensive, and nonverbal tactics describe how impression management behavior is expressed (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). These tactics are not tied to motivation. Each can be used honestly or deceptively, depending on the interviewee's goals and how they read the situation. First, assertive tactics are commonly divided into self-focused and other-focused tactics, depending on whether the interviewee emphasizes their own strengths (self-focused) or seeks to increase interpersonal appeal (other-focused; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Self-focused tactics aim to highlight interviewees' own competencies or accomplishments, commonly through self-promotion, which involves emphasizing qualifications or achievements to convey person-job fit (Ellis et al., 2002; Proost et al., 2010; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). For example, I could say the following: *I graduated with the highest honors*, as an instance of self-promotion. In my case, it would not be true, so it would also be deceptive. In addition, self-promotion is often related to higher interview ratings and perceived person-job fit (Peck & Levashina, 2017; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Conversely, other-focused tactics aim to boost likability by directing attention toward the interviewer or organization, often through ingratiation, where rather than stressing qualifications, interviewees aim to build rapport and signal warmth or shared values (Proost et al., 2010; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). This may involve expressing enthusiasm or highlighting similarities with the interviewer to convey person-organization fit (Kacmar & Carlson, 1999; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). For example, I might say: *I have to say, I love the way your office is decorated. It really has great energy*. But even though ingratiation can facilitate social rapport, it tends to have a weaker influence on interview outcomes, especially when the target of impression management is not

the evaluator (Peck & Levashina, 2017).

Second, defensive tactics help interviewees protect or repair their image when something might reflect poorly on them (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). These include excuses (shifting blame to external factors), justifications (accepting responsibility but framing the outcome as reasonable), and apologies (admitting fault, showing remorse, and promising to improve). For example, an interviewee might say: *I missed that deadline because the team did not get me the data on time*. The goal is to reduce perceived responsibility. When interviewers raise concerns about past behavior or performance, interviewees who respond with any of these tactics tend to be evaluated more favorably than those who do not (Tsai et al., 2010).

Third, some impression management tactics are nonverbal (Peeters & Lievens, 2006; Schlenker, 2003). Posture, facial expressions, and gestures may be spontaneous or consciously adjusted in response to the interview setting. Nonverbal impression management is often used alongside verbal strategies but can also function on its own (Kristof-Brown et al., 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). These behaviors serve multiple purposes: reinforce or soften what is being said, convey traits such as confidence or sincerity, and influence the first impression. Eye contact, smiling, open posture, and controlled gestures have all been associated with more favorable evaluations (Parsons & Liden, 1984). Participating in shared laughter is another example: interviewers tend to interpret it as a signal of honesty and transparency, and it has been linked to higher hiring recommendations (Brosy et al., 2021).

3.2 Storytelling as an interactional process

One way interviewees manage impressions is by telling stories. Storytelling is defined as a "discourse that is organized more or less chronologically and tells what characters did in a particular situation and what came of their actions" (Ralston et al., 2003, p. 11). Stories vary in length and in the richness of scenes, characters, actions, and outcomes (Ralston et al., 2003). Stories allow interviewees to highlight their competencies in a way that feels more natural and less overtly self-promotional (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). In selection interviews, past behavior questions prompt interviewees to tell a story by asking them to describe how they handled a specific past situation (Ralston et al., 2003; Roulin, 2022; Roulin et al., 2012). Stories support

impression management by embedding self-promotion within a vivid and concrete account. They are also more persuasive and easier to remember, both of which contribute to better evaluations (Bangerter et al., 2014; Green & Brock, 2000; Nabi & Green, 2015).

Despite these benefits, telling a story on the spot is challenging, as interviewees must search memory for a relevant experience, retrieve key details, and organize them while under time pressure (Bangerter et al., 2014; Brosy et al., 2020; Ralston et al., 2003). In addition, long pauses after the question can create a negative impression (Brosy et al., 2016). Faced with such challenge, interviewees often take shortcuts. Some revert to pseudo-stories, describing how they typically behave instead of recalling a specific past event (Bangerter et al., 2014). Others may resort to faking when they cannot quickly retrieve a relevant experience (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021).

But storytelling in interviews is not a solo effort; it unfolds through interaction. As in everyday conversation, storytelling relies on coordination between speaker and listener and requires a temporary suspension of turn-taking rules and the securing of an extended turn (Mandelbaum, 2013; Sacks et al., 1974). Interviewees rely on subtle cues such as nods or brief acknowledgments to gauge engagement and maintain fluency. When these cues are missing, their performance often suffers (Bavelas et al., 2000; Gosteli-Corvalan, 2017; Norrick, 2007). Interviewers, on the other hand, can actively support this process by prompting interviewees to retrieve and complete their stories (Brosy et al., 2020). The CARE prompt (Context, Action, Role, Effects) cues missing elements so interviewees deliver more complete stories (Roulin et al., 2012).

In summary, impression management in interviews involves not only what interviewees say but also how they navigate the interaction with support from the interviewer. Storytelling illustrates this dynamic, as it requires adapting to the moment and responding to cues (Gosteli-Corvalan, 2017). But what happens when those cues are no longer available? The next section turns to AVIs, where interviewees must manage impressions without real-time interaction.

4 Asynchronous Video Interviews

> *"Given the increasing use of technology in selection, and a troubling absence of research, a valuable opportunity exists for researchers to gain a better understanding of the technology-mediated interview process"*
> *(Blacksmith et al., 2016, p. 17)*

Since the early 2000s, AVIs have transformed hiring practices. First commercialized by platforms such as HireVue and then widely adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, AVIs now serve as a standard tool of early-stage selection across industries (Dunlop et al., 2022; Lukacik et al., 2022). AVIs appeal to organizations because they are easy to schedule, provide consistent questions to all interviewees, and do not require interviewers to be present during the interview process (Brenner et al., 2016; Lukacik et al., 2022; Torres & Mejia, 2017).

In a typical AVI, interviewees access an online platform where questions appear as text, recorded videos, or avatars. They then record their responses independently (audio or video), without interacting with any interviewer, submitting each answer one by one, often within a time limit. Completed interviews are later evaluated by human raters or artificial intelligence-based scoring systems (Lukacik et al., 2022).

As their use grows, research has begun to address a number of questions about AVIs. In what ways do they differ from more traditional interview formats? What does it mean to evaluate interviewees outside live interaction? And how do design features influence how interviewees behave and how their responses are interpreted? As others have pointed out, AVIs are not just new formats. They are new interview contexts that prompt us to rethink how selection situations are built and experienced (Landers & Marin, 2021).

To fully understand how AVIs influence interviewees' behaviors and interview outcomes, it helps to start with foundational communication theories. In the next subchapters, I first draw on media and technology frameworks to understand AVIs (4.1). I then consider interviewee reactions and the psychometric validity of AVIs (4.2), and finally, I examine the role of AVI

design features (4.3).

4.1 Media and technology frameworks

Media richness theory (Daft & Lengel, 1984; Daft & Lengel, 1986) explains how different media support communication in complex or ambiguous situations. Rich media such as face-to-face or video conference interviews allow for immediate feedback, multiple nonverbal cues, and a certain level of personalization. These features help people clarify meaning as they go. AVIs, in contrast, are a leaner medium. There is no real-time interaction, nonverbal cues are limited to what is visible within a fixed camera frame, and interviewees cannot ask for clarification, even when faced with complex questions that may be open to interpretation. Media richness theory, although lacking strong empirical support, has influenced later frameworks and, in its original formulation, would suggest that richer, synchronous media are better suited to highly equivocal tasks such as selection interviews.

Media synchronicity theory was developed to address gaps in media richness theory. This theory suggests that communication works best when message exchanges are closely aligned in time, or in other words, synchronized (Dennis et al., 2008; Dennis & Valacich, 1999). Synchronicity here refers to the extent to which one can adjust and respond during an interaction. Synchronicity is influenced by five features: transmission speed (how quickly messages are sent), parallel input (how many people can send messages at once), available cues (range of verbal and nonverbal signals), rehearsability (ability to refine messages before sending), and reprocessability (ability to review messages after receipt). Face-to-face interviews provide high synchronicity and support rapid mutual adjustment and convergence. AVIs reduce this synchronicity, as interviewees respond alone, with no chance to clarify, adapt their message, or see how it is received.

Finally, Potosky's (2008) framework provides a more targeted lens on digital interviews like AVIs with a focus on the administration medium and its effects on assessment and interviewee behavior through four media attributes: interactivity, transparency, social bandwidth, and surveillance. First, interactivity, or the chance for real-time exchanges, is clearly limited in AVIs, restricting interviewees' ability to adapt their responses in the moment.

Second, transparency is also reduced. The medium does not fade into the background, as interviewees remain aware that they are being recorded, often through the self-view option on the interface or a visible countdown timer showing how much time is left. Third, social bandwidth, the richness of transmitted cues, is similarly limited. Since AVIs traditionally rely on written or pre-recorded questions, there is little room for nonverbal cues. Fourth, surveillance refers to the sense of being monitored or evaluated, which tends to be amplified. Interviewees are often aware that their videos can be replayed several times and, in some cases, scored automatically by algorithms.

4.2 Interviewee reactions and psychometric validity of AVIs

Interviewees tend to notice these features, and this perception tracks with reactions research: compared to synchronous formats, interviewees often experience AVIs as more impersonal, more ambiguous, more stressful, and less fair (Basch et al., 2020; Griswold et al., 2022; Kleinlogel et al., 2023; Langer et al., 2017; Zibarras et al., 2025). Unlike with video conference formats, technology affinity does not reliably improve these reactions (Basch et al., 2020). One explanation may be the low social presence in AVIs. Without live interaction or feedback, it becomes harder to feel acknowledged or build rapport, which may affect impression management and fairness perceptions (Basch et al., 2020; Griswold et al., 2022).

The format of AVIs also heightens the self-awareness of interviewees. Recording answers alone and knowing the video may be reviewed later can increase feelings of being monitored and raise pressure and scrutiny (Langer et al., 2017; Torres & Mejia, 2017). From the observer's perspective, the lack of real-time interaction changes which cues are salient; however, first impressions and appearance continue to affect ratings, including in AVIs (Suen et al., 2019). Importantly, however, discomfort in AVIs does not always map onto weaker performance. Interviewees who feel they performed poorly are not consistently rated lower by observers. In fact, visible stress is often judged as lower in AVIs, even though interviewees report feeling more stressed than in face-to-face interviews (Kleinlogel et al., 2023; Muralidhar et al., 2020).

Although interviewees tend to view AVIs less favorably, those perceptions need to be weighed against the psychometric strengths of AVIs. Asking all interviewees the same questions

in the same order, without probing or rapport-building, introduces a standardized component that may help ensure the reliability and validity of AVIs (Campion et al., 1997; Chapman & Zweig, 2005; Huffcutt & Arthur, 1994). Raters can score responses immediately after viewing the recording, which limits memory bias. Responses can also be scored at the response level rather than globally and evaluated independently by multiple raters who were not present and do not need to be co-located, which can further reduce contamination and bolster validity (Campion et al., 1997; Levashina et al., 2014).

Still, some caution against adopting these technologies too quickly. Chamorro-Premuzic et al. (2017, p. 13) warned against the premature adoption of technologies like AVIs, noting that "most of these emerging methods have yet to be rigorously scrutinized by scientific research" and that "academics must explore the validity of emerging technologies and practices regarding big data, technology and human potential". Taken together, these warnings raise the question of whether AVIs, despite their structural advantages, evidence to date sufficiently validates AVIs as selection tools.

In response to these concerns, studies have begun to assess the validity of AVIs. Gorman et al. (2018) found that performance in a mock AVI was positively related to self-reported job performance. More recently, Liff et al. (2024) used machine learning (algorithms that learn patterns from data to make decisions) to rate AVI performance from linguistic features extracted from transcribed responses in a field study; their models showed strong reliability and validity related to supervisor- and customer-rated job performance. In a lab study, Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Renier, et al. (2025) compared face-to-face and AVI formats and found that interview performance predicted behavior in a related work sample equally well in both modalities.

4.3 The role of AVI design

AVIs are often seen as simple delivery systems facilitating interactions, as if the technology itself plays no role in influencing the interaction. But assuming the system is just a means to an end makes it easy to overlook what it allows, what it restricts, and how it influences interviewees' understanding of the task. For a long time, researchers treated technology as

background, as a simple cause, or as a context that interacts with person factors; the most recent view, *technology-as-designed,* centers on how specific design features influence user experience (Landers & Marin, 2021). From this perspective, AVIs are not just delivery systems. They are environments influenced by a series of design decisions, each of which may have distinct effects on interviewees. This perspective draws on two ideas that are especially relevant for AVIs: sociomateriality and affordances. Sociomateriality holds that technology and context are intertwined, so features gain meaning only within specific settings (Orlikowski, 2007). For instance, the re-record option only makes sense in a situation where interviewees are alone and receive no feedback, since it invites a different kind of self-monitoring than in a live exchange. Affordances refer to what a system makes possible given its features and the user's goals (Gaver, 1991). With the re-record option, some interviewees may use it to refine and feel in control of their answer, whereas others may experience pressure to perfect and second-guess their response.

AVI design features are thus defined as "how the interview is programmed, or the configuration of features that are chosen, to create the user experience" (Lukacik et al., 2022). These include platform-level decisions made by the organization or provider before the interview (e.g., allowing re-recording or preparation time) and interviewee-level choices made during the interview itself (e.g., selecting a background or a device). Some features, like preparation time, are not exclusive to AVIs and can also be used in other formats, such as face-to-face interviews (see Huffcutt et al., 2017). Others, such as the re-recording option, are specific to AVIs. These design elements influence how interviewees respond, including their reactions (e.g., fairness), behaviors (e.g., impression management), and outcomes (e.g., interview performance).

These features do more than guide how interviewees move through the format. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, they affect how the process is perceived, what it allows or restricts, and how interviewees respond. For example, the introduction to the AVI impacts interviewee reactions: relatedness-supportive introductions can briefly boost satisfaction and attraction, whereas explanations of how technology works may increase privacy concerns (Langer et al., 2021; Moore et al., 2024). Beyond reactions, design choices also

influence anxiety (Constantin et al., 2021; Rizi & Roulin, 2024), impression management (Basch, Brenner, et al., 2021; Canagasuriam & Roulin, 2024; Langer et al., 2020; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Rizi & Roulin, 2024; Roulin et al., 2022), interview performance (Basch, Brenner, et al., 2021; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Rizi & Roulin, 2024; Roulin et al., 2022), and storytelling (Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Renier, et al., 2025; Patel et al., 2024). Design features thus influence interviewees' behavior and interview outcomes.

5 This Thesis

"Not all AVIs are created, and will perform, equally well"
(Lukacik et al., 2022, p. 12)

In the previous sections, I argued that AVIs are not just new digital interview formats, but new interactional contexts. They remove core elements of the interview encounter, such as real-time cues, a visible audience, and mutual adjustment, and replace them with fixed systems where interviewees must perform alone. For organizations, AVIs offer consistency (Brenner et al., 2016). For interviewees, they introduce a different set of demands (Langer et al., 2017). When designing AVIs, organizations make choices that may seem minor, yet theory suggests that these design features can influence what interviewees say, how they manage impressions, how they experience the interview, and how their responses are ultimately evaluated (Lukacik et al., 2022).

Building on this foundation, this thesis investigates how interviewees respond to the challenges and opportunities of AVIs. In Study 1, I started where AVIs differ most: evaluator information. In AVIs, the evaluator is not clearly identified, so interviewees respond without a defined audience. Because impression management presumes an identifiable audience, I tested how interviewees manage impressions and how they experience AVIs (5.1). Study 2 drew on prior data that indicated a distinct AVI pattern: extended responses. Without turn-taking, interviewees often kept talking beyond the initial answer. I examined how often these occurred, what they contained, and how they related to outcomes (5.2). Next, in Study 3, I turned to response time limits. Platforms adjust this setting easily at scale, yet evidence on its effects remained sparse. I investigated how different limits influenced anxiety, honest and deceptive impression management, and performance (5.3). Finally, in Study 4, I varied preparation time and question wording to elicit maximal responding in a fair way. The goal was to help interviewees tell peak performance responses and to test implications for interview performance, storytelling, impression management, and validity (5.4). Together, these four studies contribute to understanding what AVIs enable, what they constrain, and how design features influence

interviewee behavior and outcomes.

5.1 Study 1: Is anybody watching me? Effects of information about evaluators on interviewees' use of impression management in asynchronous video interviews

In Study 1, I examined how providing evaluator information (e.g., picture, name) in AVIs influenced interviewees' use of impression management (honest self-promotion and ingratiation) and their question-answering process.

Interviewers expect interviewees to engage in impression management during job interviews (Roulin, 2022), yet interviewees report lower impression management intentions in AVIs compared to face-to-face or video conference interviews, likely due to reduced social presence (Basch et al., 2020). While earlier research has mainly contrasted honest and deceptive forms of impression management across AVI designs, fewer studies have examined self-focused versus other-focused tactics. Impression management is goal-directed, and in face-to-face interviews, interviewees typically know whom they are addressing and trying to impress. In AVIs, however, the evaluator is not always clearly identifiable (Lukacik et al., 2022), which makes impression management more difficult to enact. Information about the evaluator, such as their role, expertise, or values, is often conveyed in face-to-face or video conference settings through office environments or visible backgrounds. In AVIs, making this information explicit may help interviewees tailor their responses to create a favorable impression. To test this, I examined whether providing evaluator information influenced other-focused impression management (ingratiation; Hypothesis 1) and self-focused impression management (honest self-promotion; Research Question 1).

AVIs often receive negative reactions, with interviewees finding them creepy, less personal, less fair, and offering fewer opportunities to perform (Basch, Melchers, et al., 2021; Griswold et al., 2022; Langer et al., 2017). However, a more detailed understanding of what drives these reactions is missing, particularly regarding the question-answering experience (Wingate & Bourdage, 2024). Similar concerns exist in face-to-face interviews, where structured

formats, especially past behavior questions, make it difficult for interviewees to find relevant examples and articulate responses (Brosy et al., 2020). These difficulties lower response quality, trigger negative emotions, and sometimes lead to deceptive impression management (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021). Given that AVIs are more selection-focused than face-to-face interviews (Wingate & Bourdage, 2024), these challenges may be even more pronounced. I examined whether the question-answering experience in AVIs differed when interviewees received evaluator information, particularly in relation to their impression management experiences (Research Question 2).

To address these gaps, I conducted an experimental study with 160 participants who completed a mock AVI for a portfolio manager position in a sustainability-oriented company in Switzerland. Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions, manipulating evaluator information. Half received only the evaluator's name (Dominique Müller, a gender-neutral first name paired with the most common last name in Switzerland), while the other half saw a LinkedIn profile screenshot. The profile included the evaluator's name, two pictures (a profile photo and a banner), job title, and a recently reshared post about wind turbines. It was designed to signal an interest in sustainability and to provide cues relevant to impression management. After completing the AVI, participants watched their own interview and wrote down the thoughts and emotions they had experienced during the interview itself (*not* while watching the video). These comments were content-analyzed. Finally, participants reported their use of honest impression management.

The analysis showed that interviewees who received evaluator information engaged in more other-focused honest impression management than those who did not (Hypothesis 1). In contrast, self-focused impression management remained unchanged, as self-promotion does not depend on a specific target (Research Question 1). These findings suggest that providing evaluator information offers a simple way to compensate for the lack of interaction in AVIs by enabling other-focused impression management (Lukacik et al., 2022).

Regarding the question-answering experience, participants focused most on how they produced their responses, aligning with Brosy et al.'s (2020) findings in face-to-face interviews

(Research Question 2). However, the analysis also pointed to the unique difficulties of interacting with a computer rather than a human interviewer. Many mentioned the awkwardness of being recorded, the lack of interaction, and the presence of a timer. These factors may help explain why interviewees perceive AVIs as creepy and impersonal (Langer et al., 2017). Interestingly, while I found similar results for honest impression management using the self-report questionnaire, fewer participants mentioned faking when they had evaluator information. This suggests that those without such information may struggle to engage in honest impression management and compensate by using deceptive tactics (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021).

Further, additional analyses showed that providing evaluator information to interviewees increased person–organization fit goals, reduced person–job fit focus, and lowered defensive impression management goals, potentially boosting confidence. This aligns with person-organization fit research: value-relevant cues (e.g., sustainability signals in evaluator information) direct applicants toward supplementary-fit goals (Kristof, 1996) and suggests that AVIs with greater media richness facilitate ingratiation (Lukacik et al., 2022; Rizi & Roulin, 2024). These findings are further discussed in the General Discussion.

5.2 Study 2: Extended responses in asynchronous video interviews: Investigating frequency, content, and interview outcomes

In Study 2, I investigated extended responses in AVIs and their frequency, content, and interviewee outcomes. Despite its practical relevance, extended responding has not been a main focus in the interview literature. This design-driven behavior surfaced in a prior study, in which interviewees provided longer answers in AVIs than in face-to-face interviews when responding to past behavior questions (Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Renier, et al., 2025), prompting the present investigation.

In AVIs, interviewees sometimes continue speaking even after having already signaled the end of their answer. This behavior, known as extended responding, likely results from long response time limits and the absence of interaction. Storytelling research shows that response quality often depends on listener feedback, such as nonverbal reactions or follow-up questions

(Bavelas et al., 2000; Brosy et al., 2020; Gosteli-Corvalan, 2017; Mandelbaum, 2013). In AVIs, that feedback is absent. Faced with a visible countdown timer and no feedback, interviewees may feel unsure whether their answer is sufficient and continue speaking, adding details or repeating points to fill the time (Bavelas et al., 2000).

Although I noticed that extended responding happens in AVIs, we do not yet know how often it occurs, who tends to do it, what it adds to the response, or how it affects interview outcomes. I therefore took an exploratory approach and developed five research questions. Research Question 1 asked how frequently interviewees engage in extended responding and whether this reflects isolated instances or a consistent pattern across participants. Research Question 2 examined who is more likely to produce extended responses. In particular, I tested whether demographic characteristics, personality traits, and honest impression management were associated with response frequency. Research Question 3 asked whether extended responses were more or less disfluent than initial ones by comparing filler counts and pause lengths across the two phases. Research Question 4 focused on response content. To that end, I compared narrative elements in initial and extended segments. Research Question 5 examined the effect of extended responding on interview outcomes, comparing performance, persuasiveness, and engagement ratings for initial responses and for full responses that included the initial and extended part.

To explore this phenomenon, I analyzed data from 114 participants who completed a mock AVI with three past behavior questions from a previous study (Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Renier, et al., 2025). Each response was divided into two parts for the analyses: an initial response (ending with a closing phrase) and an extended response (any additional content provided afterward). I coded disfluencies (pauses, fillers) and utterance types (situation, task/action, result, self-description, value/opinion, justification). Two teams of trained coders rated each response: one focused on the initial response, the other on the full response (initial plus extended). Both teams rated performance, engagement, and persuasiveness. I also calculated how often participants extended their answers across the three questions and examined whether this tendency related to interviewee characteristics such as personality and

honest impression management.

Extended responses were frequent. Around 80% of interviewees extended their responses at least once, with one-third doing so for all three questions (Research Question 1). Extended responding was positively associated with emotionality and honest self-promotion (Research Question 2). Extended responding may thus reflect both a coping mechanism to manage the lack of feedback for highly emotional interviewees and a strategic opportunity to reinforce their strengths (Bourdage et al., 2018; Gross, 2014). In terms of fluency, extended responses included more pauses but not more fillers, which suggests that interviewees were thinking on the spot (Research Question 3). Rather than filling the silence, they often paused as they worked out what else to say (Bavelas et al., 2000). The content of these extensions also differed: initial responses had more situation and task/action utterances, while extended responses were more likely to include results and references to value and opinion (Research Question 4). This may be an attempt to add depth or meaning once the core story was finished.

However, none of this led to more favorable evaluations overall. Performance and persuasiveness were higher for initial than full responses, while engagement did not differ (Research Question 5). This suggests that continuing to speak may dilute the impact of the initial response (Nabi & Green, 2015; Oschatz & Marker, 2020). These findings are further discussed in the General Discussion.

5.3 Study 3: Tick tock, tick tock, time's up! How response time limits in asynchronous video interviews influence interview anxiety, impression management, and performance

In Study 3, I investigated the influence of response time limits in AVIs. Although AVIs often include a fixed time limit per question (Dunlop et al., 2022; Lukacik et al., 2022), little is known about how different time limits affect interviewees' reactions, behaviors, and outcomes.

First, I examined how response time limits influence interview anxiety. The lack of social cues and the presence of a visible time may heighten interviewees' self-awareness about their performance, making the context feel more evaluative (Lukacik et al., 2022). Therefore, shorter

response time limits may increase anxiety (McCarthy et al., 2017), whereas longer limits may either reduce this pressure or backfire if interviewees become overly conscious of unused time (Orji et al., 2025). I therefore asked: How do response time limits affect interview anxiety (Research Question 1)?

Second, I examined impression management. Honest impression management often requires space to elaborate on relevant experiences, so more time may give interviewees more opportunity to highlight their strengths (Bourdage et al., 2018; Orji et al., 2025). However, more time could also push interviewees to keep talking, and if they do not know what to say, they may resort to deceptive impression management tactics (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021). Based on this, I hypothesized that longer response time limits would increase both honest impression management (Hypothesis 1a) and deceptive impression management (Hypothesis 1b).

Finally, I considered AVI performance. Interviewees need enough time to construct a complete response with relevant details, but too much time may lead to over-explaining or losing focus (Orji et al., 2025). I thus expected performance to follow a curvilinear pattern, peaking at a moderate time limit and declining when time was either too short or too long (Hypothesis 2).

I ran an experimental study with 185 participants who completed a mock AVI with four questions. Each participant was randomly assigned to one of three response time limit conditions: one, three, or five minutes per question. Afterward, I measured speaking time, interview anxiety, impression management use (honest and deceptive), and performance (rated by trained coders).

I first examined how interviewees used the time they were given. Their speaking time increased between one and three minutes, then plateaued between three and five minutes. Importantly, interviewees did not use the allocated time similarly. While those in the one-minute condition used almost all available time (with little variance), those in the three- and five-minute conditions used a smaller proportion (with more variance). These results suggest that additional time prompts longer responses only up to a point. Beyond that threshold, interviewees did not use all available time. I therefore tested whether speaking time mediated

the effects of response time limits on anxiety, impression management, and interview performance.

I found that response time limits did not influence interview anxiety (Research Question 1). However, the effect differed by gender. Women reported higher anxiety across all conditions, consistent with Roulin et al. (2022), while men were most anxious in the three-minute condition, possibly because it felt long enough to create pressure but not long enough to feel flexible. Also, speaking time was negatively related to anxiety, suggesting that anxiety may have held some people back from using the time they had (Daly, 1978). After accounting for speaking time, longer time limits were associated with higher anxiety. In other words, giving more time without using it appeared to backfire. It may make interviewees more aware of being evaluated, which could explain the added tension (McCarthy et al., 2017).

Response time limits did not directly affect honest impression management (Hypothesis 1a), but speaking time did. Interviewees who spoke more engaged in more honest impression management. This suggests that having the opportunity to elaborate and using it helped interviewees showcase their strengths (Orji et al., 2025). Yet, after controlling for speaking time, longer response time limits were associated with lower use of honest impression management. This implies that simply having more time, without actively using it, may leave interviewees uncertain about whether they presented themselves effectively.

In contrast, response time limits had no effect on deceptive impression management (Hypothesis 1b), either directly or via speaking time. Interviewees did not report more deceptive impression management when given extended time, nor did longer speaking time increase deceptive impression management. This suggests that, in this context, additional time did not provide the opportunity or motivation needed to engage in deceptive impression management.

My hypothesis concerning interview performance was confirmed (Hypothesis 2). Interviewees in the three-minute condition scored higher than those in the one- and five-minute conditions. Further analyses showed that response time limits did not affect all aspects of performance equally: clarity and relevance were affected, whereas competence was not. Mediation analyses revealed that speaking time explained this relation. Interviewees with longer

speaking time performed better. However, when speaking time was held constant, longer limits were associated with lower performance, possibly because more time made it harder to maintain focus (Orji et al., 2025).

In sum, these results suggest that while response time limits influence both what interviewees do and how they experience AVIs, speaking time emerges as a central mechanism. These findings are further discussed in the General Discussion.

5.4 Study 4: Maximal responding in past behavior questions: The role of priming and preparation time in performance, storytelling and impression management

In Study 4, I investigated how question wording (priming for peak performance) and preparation time influence interviewee performance, storytelling, impression management, and interview validity in AVIs.

When answering past behavior questions, interviewees are prompted to tell stories, but often they struggle to do so and instead fall back on pseudo-stories: generic descriptions of repeated situations that lack a clear time frame (Bangerter et al., 2014; Brosy et al., 2020; Ralston et al., 2003). Interviewees' responses also reflect typical, day-to-day tendencies rather than maximal performance, i.e., an episode reflecting their peak performance in a given situation (Huffcutt et al., 2024; Huffcutt et al., 2020). Yet typical and maximal performance are only weakly correlated, meaning that relying solely on typical responses may lead to overlooking high-potential interviewees (Sackett et al., 1988). One proposed solution was to prime interviewees to recall a time they performed at their best. Huffcutt et al. (2024) found that such priming increased maximal responding. In this study, I hypothesized that preparation time would also help elicit maximal responding, because a moment to think before answering may facilitate retrieval of specific peak performance episodes (Huffcutt et al., 2017).

I used a 2×2 between-subjects design to test whether question wording through priming and preparation time influenced interview performance (Hypotheses 1–3), storytelling (Hypotheses 4–6), and emotional framing (Research Questions 1–2). Priming may help

interviewees focus on a high-performance event, while preparation time may give them the cognitive space to retrieve it without the pressure to respond immediately (Huffcutt et al., 2017; Huffcutt et al., 2024). Storytelling was treated as a signal of maximal responding because it involves a concrete episode, whereas pseudo-stories reflect typical performance by describing general behaviors (Bangerter et al., 2014). I also examined emotional framing, as stories with emotional shifts or evaluative tone tend to be perceived as more engaging or persuasive (Boyd et al., 2020; Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Schmid Mast, et al., 2025; Nabi & Green, 2015; Naim et al., 2015).

I also examined how preparation time and priming influenced the use of impression management tactics (Research Questions 3–4). The attempt to present one's best self may foster honest self-promotion, but when interviewees struggle to recall a strong example, the same pressure to perform well could lead to exaggeration or fabrication (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021; Huffcutt et al., 2024). Finally, I tested whether interview performance predicted job performance, and whether this link was stronger when either priming or preparation time was provided (Research Questions 5–6). Prior research suggests that, when interviewees have more time, their responses align more closely with job performance (Huffcutt et al., 2017). Question wording may also contribute to variation in validity (Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023).

A total of 274 participants completed a mock AVI for a customer service manager role. They were randomly assigned to one of four conditions crossing preparation time (limited vs. unlimited) with question wording (traditional vs. primed for peak performance). In the limited preparation condition, participants were given only enough time to read the question (about 12–27 seconds) before recording started automatically, though they could begin earlier if they wished. In the unlimited condition, participants could start when ready. Traditional questions asked about past behavior (e.g., *Tell me about a time you handled multiple demands*), while primed questions focused on peak performance (e.g., *Tell me about a particular time you effectively handled multiple demands at your best)*. Each participant responded to three past behavior questions, and each question had a three-minute response time limit. After the interview, they completed measures of honest and deceptive impression management, self-rated

job performance (task and contextual performance), and demographics. Two trained raters scored each response on a 5-point behaviorally anchored scale. Responses were transcribed and coded for stories vs. pseudo-stories, and emotional framing was operationalized as emotional tone (positive and negative) using LIWC-22.

Interview performance was higher with primed questions, supporting Hypothesis 2. This suggests that wording alone helped interviewees recall stronger examples (Huffcutt et al., 2024). Preparation time did not affect performance (Hypothesis 1), which is surprising given prior research suggesting that when interviewees have more time, their responses are rated more highly (Basch, Brenner, et al., 2021; Huffcutt et al., 2017; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Roulin et al., 2022). There was no interaction (Hypothesis 3). The priming advantage held under both preparation conditions, so extra time did not moderate the effect of wording.

A similar pattern emerged for storytelling. Primed questions increased the likelihood of telling a story (Hypothesis 5a), but preparation time had no effect (Hypothesis 4), and pseudo-stories were equally frequent across conditions (Hypothesis 5b). This suggests that priming supported specific recall, but many interviewees still fell back on general responses (Bangerter et al., 2014). Primed responses also contained more emotional language (positive and negative tone). This effect was not moderated by preparation time (Research Question 2), suggesting that emotional framing depends more on how the question is interpreted than on how much time is available (Nabi & Green, 2015).

No effects emerged on honest or deceptive impression management (Research Questions 3 and 4), consistent with mixed evidence in recent AVI research (Basch, Brenner, et al., 2021; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Roulin et al., 2022). This suggests that impression management remained stable across conditions, and neither priming nor preparation time altered interviewees' use of impression management.

Interview performance predicted contextual job performance, but not task performance (Research Question 5). This adds to prior work on AVI validity (Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Renier, et al., 2025; Gorman et al., 2018; Liff et al., 2024). Further, validity was strongest under traditional questions and limited preparation (Research Question 6), suggesting that while

priming improved interview performance, it may have reduced validity (Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023). These findings are further discussed in the General Discussion.

6 General Discussion

> *"Different design choices could affect candidate impression management behaviors, evaluator biases, or construct and criterion-related validity."*
> *(Dunlop et al., 2022, p. 449)*

This dissertation investigated the influence of interview design in AVIs, an emerging digital interview format in which interviewees respond alone to preset questions (Woods et al., 2020). As in face-to-face interviews, each design choice in AVIs has the potential to influence interviewee behavior, the interview process, and its outcomes (Lukacik et al., 2022). Across four studies, I examined different AVI features: evaluator information (Study 1), response time limits (Studies 2 and 3), and preparation time and question wording (Study 4), as these features capture points where the design directly meets the interviewee's experience and can change how they approach and perform the interview.

Study 1 explored whether providing interviewees with information about the evaluator influenced how they managed impressions in AVIs and how they navigated the question-answering process. I found that interviewees who received evaluator information reported more honest ingratiation, while self-promotion remained unchanged. They also mentioned fewer faking intentions. Receiving information about the evaluator changed interviewees' goals, increasing person–organization fit intentions and reducing person–job fit focus and defensive tactics. For question-answering experiences, interviewees expressed concerns about giving a good answer, especially due to the timer and lack of interaction. This study highlighted that adding a social cue, such as evaluator information, helped AVIs feel more grounded and encouraged more honest impression management. This extends prior understanding by showing that a minimal social cue in AVIs redirects goals toward person–organization fit and reduces faking intentions, even without real-time interaction.

Study 2 explored the phenomenon of *extended responding*, building on Germanier, Bangerter, Orji, Renier, et al. (2025). This study found that interviewees sometimes continued

talking even after clearly closing their initial responses in AVIs. I investigated who extended their responses, what those responses contained, and how they influenced interview outcomes. Nearly 80% of interviewees extended at least one response, and one-third extended all three. Interviewees high in emotionality and honest self-promotion were more likely to extend their responses. In terms of content, extended responses were more disfluent and contained more references to results and to values and opinions. But extended responses worked against interviewees and led to lower evaluations. The lack of interaction in AVIs prompted interviewees to extend their responses to appear thorough, which often produced improvised content misaligned with evaluator expectations.

Study 3 examined response time limits (one, three, or five minutes) in AVIs, and their influence on interviewee anxiety, impression management and interview performance. There were no differences between conditions for anxiety, but there was a moderating effect of gender. Women were more anxious than men, with no differences across conditions. Men, for their part, showed a peak in anxiety levels in the three-minute condition. I also found no differences between conditions in the use of honest or deceptive impression management tactics. However, response time limits showed a curvilinear relationship with interview performance, with higher performance in the three-minute condition compared to the others. Importantly, interviewees did not use their allotted time the same way. Interviewees' speaking time increased between one and three minutes, then plateaued. I thus investigated the mediating role of speaking time and found that speaking time explained the relationship between response time limits and interview anxiety, honest impression management, and interview performance.

Study 4 examined whether preparation time and question wording (priming interviewees to present their best performance) influenced interviewee performance, storytelling, emotional framing, impression management, and self-rated job performance. I found that priming increased interviewee performance (compared to traditional past behavior questions), as well as storytelling and emotional language. There was no effect on impression management (honest or deceptive), preparation time did not influence any of these variables, and there was no interaction. There was also a positive relationship between interview performance and

contextual job performance, and the relation was stronger under limited preparation time and traditional past behavior questions. This study demonstrated that while priming interviewees to present their best performance increased both interview performance and storytelling without increasing deceptive impression management; this improvement came at the expense of reduced interview validity.

Each study addresses its own strengths and limitations. In the following sections, I synthesize the findings to address two questions about AVIs: which design features cue interviewee behavior and experience, and when those reactions help or harm performance and validity. First, I argue that AVI design features function as situational cues that interviewees read and regulate against, and that effects depend on cue detectability and individual differences (6.1). Second, I turn to their impact on interview outcomes and validity (6.2). I close with practical implications (6.3) and a reflection on limitations and future directions for AVI research (6.4).

6.1 Design features as signals that influence what interviewees do

An interview is traditionally an interactive process where two or more people exchange information, but AVIs twist this into a delayed and one-sided exchange (Langer et al., 2017; Levashina et al., 2014). As Potosky's (2008) media attributes framework suggests, this reduces social bandwidth and interactivity while increasing perceived surveillance. Interviewees receive less feedback and face more ambiguity, which may increase pressure to regulate their behavior without guidance.

Although AVIs have become more common, they still feel unfamiliar. In Studies 3 and 4, interviewees reported more experience with synchronous interviews than with AVIs, echoing earlier findings (Rizi & Roulin, 2024; Roulin et al., 2022). Study 1 interviewees raised familiar concerns similar to those in face-to-face interviews, such as how to choose and explain examples (Brosy et al., 2020), but nearly half also described the format itself as awkward or disorienting. Other AVI studies have reported similar discomfort (Basch et al., 2020; Griswold et al., 2022; Langer et al., 2017; Zibarras et al., 2025).

This discomfort stems not only from novelty, but also from the absence of cues that

would normally guide behavior. In synchronous interviews, interviewees adjust their behavior based on the interviewer's tone, reactions, and conversational style (Martín-Raugh et al., 2023; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). These cues help clarify expectations and support impression management. In AVIs, these cues are missing. Instead, interviewees look to the system itself: the interface, the countdown timer, the wording of the question, and even evaluator information. Without established norms or routines, they must infer what is expected and how they will be evaluated.

Findings across my studies support this cue–behavior link. In Study 1, interviewees who received information about the evaluator reported more honest ingratiation and no increase in honest self-promotion. Evaluator information reintroduced a sense of social presence, allowing interviewees to direct impression management toward a visible target. This aligns with research conceptualizing ingratiation as an other-focused, target-directed tactic and showing that IM tactics influence interviewer judgments (Gilmore & Ferris, 1989; Jones & Pittman, 1982). Evaluator information oriented goals toward person–organization fit rather than defensive or job-focused tactics, consistent with evidence that ingratiation is associated with higher perceived PO fit and hiring recommendations, that PO fit is distinct from PJ fit, and that interviewees infer PO fit from contextual cues (Higgins & Judge, 2004; Kristof-Brown, 2000; Kutcher et al., 2013).

Studies 2 and 3 highlight a different type of cue: the response time limit. Rather than functioning only as a time constraint, the response time limit also serves as a situational prime. In Study 3, increasing the limit prompted interviewees to speak longer, but only up to a point. In Study 2, a longer response time limit appeared to lead interviewees to extend their answers, even after they had concluded their initial point. This gave rise to an *extended response* phenomenon, where the longer time limit appeared to signal that longer speaking was expected. Drawing on Grice's (1975) cooperative principle, interviewees assume the system provides relevant and informative cues. For example, if the AVI design specifies a five-minute response window, interviewees may interpret this as the implied speaking time. Design features such as the response time limit thus guide judgments about how much to say, *a fortiori* when other cues

are absent.

Study 4 provides a final example of how design features act as a cue. Here, question wording served as a framing mechanism. When interviewees were primed to *show their best performance*, they were more likely to tell stories and use emotional language. In that study, question wording acted as a contextual cue, guiding what respondents retrieved and how they framed their answers, consistent with question priming effects (Schwarz, 1999). The prompt acted as an explicit goal cue, compensating for the lack of interpersonal feedback and activating storytelling, a behavior typically seen as co-constructed and audience-responsive (Mandelbaum, 2013; Norrick, 2007; Ralston et al., 2003). Similar to prompting in live interviews, which helps applicants recall and identify relevant experiences, question wording influenced how interviewees understood the question and the kind of response expected. This narrowing clarifies the goal, reduces search costs, and supports organized, emotionally resonant accounts, which explains the observed gains in performance and storytelling. This made storytelling more likely, with or without preparation time.

Considered as a whole, these results suggest that AVI design features guide behavior by serving as situational cues, which interviewees must detect and interpret. These cues activate self-presentation goals and regulate responses accordingly. Goal-setting theory provides a useful lens for understanding this process. According to Locke and Latham (2002, p. 706), "goals serve a directive function; they direct attention and effort toward goal-relevant activities and away from goal-irrelevant activities. This effect occurs both cognitively and behaviorally" and "[goals] affect action indirectly by leading to the arousal, discovery, and/or use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies". In the context of AVIs, design features act as implicit goals or normative expectations, encouraging interviewees to align their behavior with what they believe the situation demands. When these cues are detectable and interpretable, they facilitate goal-directed behavior. When they are absent or ambiguous, interviewees face greater ambiguity and must regulate. They may thus fall back on internalized expectations or prior experience.

These regulatory patterns were not the same for everyone, and the effects of AVI design differed across individuals (Lukacik et al., 2022; Tilston et al., 2024). In Study 2, interviewees

higher in emotionality were more likely to extend their responses, suggesting that personality influenced how they managed ambiguity. In Study 3, gender moderated the effect of response time on anxiety. From this perspective, behavior in AVIs emerges through the interaction between design features and individual dispositions, which sociomaterial theory describes as the entanglement of the social and the material (Orlikowski, 2007). Across studies, this points to a broader model: AVI design features prompt regulation strategies, and these strategies are influenced by individual differences. Behavior reflects not just what is designed, but how the feature is used, and by whom.

This interactional view accords with trait activation theory and situation strength. Trait activation theory holds that traits are expressed when trait-relevant cues are present, and it distinguishes cue types such as demands, constraints, releasers, distracters, and facilitators across task, social, and organizational levels (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett et al., 2021). In this case, evaluator information could operate as a social releaser, time limits as constraints, question wording as a demand, and preparation time as a potential facilitator (Lievens et al., 2015). Situation strength predicts that individual differences show more when cues leave discretion and less when cues tightly channel behavior (Judge & Zapata, 2015).

6.2 When cue-elicited behavior alters what is evaluated

I previously argued that AVI design features function as cues that guide interviewee behavior. In this section, I clarify how those cue-elicited behaviors feed into outcomes and validity. Interview performance is described as the result of "individual differences and situational factors, either individually or in tandem, which can influence how interviewers rate that performance" (Huffcutt et al., 2011, p. 354). From this perspective, what interviewees express reflects not only their underlying ability but also how the situation activates certain behaviors. This pattern also appears in AVIs.

Across Studies 2-4, I found that design features such as response time limits and question wording influenced how interviewees performed (directly and indirectly). Rewording questions to recount a peak performance led to higher interview performance ratings. Also, a three-minute response time limit supported higher interview performance, whereas a five-

minute limit coincided with more extended responding and lower interview performance. Longer answers did not simply add content; they invited digression, ran counter to conversational norms, and reduced coherence, which in turn harmed performance, especially perceived relevance and clarity, not competence. This raises validity concerns. If ratings emphasize delivery rather than competence, skilled interviewees with weaker delivery may be penalized, which could undermine validity. Such design features can operate as predictor method factors that introduce valid variance or construct-irrelevant variance and thereby affect observed criterion-related validity (Lievens & Sackett, 2017; Sackett et al., 2022; Sackett et al., 2023).

AVIs are often assumed to be valid selection tools, especially when they include behavioral questions and standardized evaluation criteria (Campion et al., 1997; Lukacik et al., 2022). Study 4 supported this to a point. Interview performance predicted contextual job performance, suggesting that AVIs can elicit behavior that reflects broader workplace capabilities. However, this relation held only when no priming or preparation time was provided. When either was added, the relation weakened. Some design features like question wording and preparation time, while intended to support maximal responding, weakened the relation between interview performance and contextual job performance. Thus, AVI design, like standardization elements, could be an underexplored source of validity variance (Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023).

This thesis also engages with the debate on impression management and validity, especially the mixed results regarding deceptive impression management (Melchers et al., 2020). Across my studies, AVI design features influenced behavior and honest impression management (directly and indirectly), without increasing deceptive tactics. Only one cue influenced deception. When interviewees felt that detection of deception was possible, faking receded (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021). Study 1 pointed in the same direction: evaluator information reduced faking intentions, consistent with findings that automated assessment reduces deceptive impression management (Langer et al., 2020).

Further, deceptive impression management carried little consequence for interview

outcomes. Across Studies 3 and 4, deceptive tactics showed no relation to interview performance, while honest impression management related positively to interview performance. This aligns with prior research on impression management and interview ratings (Bourdage et al., 2018; Ho, Powell, et al., 2021). Extending to job performance, Study 4 showed that honest impression management correlated with task and contextual job performance, whereas deceptive tactics did not. Honest impression management may thus boost performance ratings because it reflects "a form of socially adequate behavior that also serves as a skill on the job" (Ingold et al., 2015, p. 428), which strengthens the job-relevant signal. In contrast, deceptive tactics can add noise, as fakers may allocate effort to deception rather than to response quality, which limits any benefit (Ho, Powell, et al., 2021). Set against mixed findings on deception impression management and validity, this pattern points to limited consequences from deception in AVIs and a stronger role for honest tactics in the interview signal.

6.3 Practical implications

This dissertation raises important considerations for the design and implementation of AVIs. Across the four studies, I demonstrated that design features such as evaluator information, response time limits, preparation time, and question wording influenced interviewee behavior, the interview process, and its outcomes. In the absence of social feedback, interviewees rely on these features to infer expectations and adjust their behavior accordingly. This has direct implications for how AVIs should be designed and implemented.

First, organizations and platform providers should provide clear guidance in their AVIs. Interviewees often infer intent from design features. For instance, for time-related features, an instruction such as "Use as much or as little time as you need," repeated before each question, may reduce ambiguity. Making the purpose of time limits explicit may help interviewees focus on their answers instead of guessing what the system expects.

Second, organizations and platform providers should consider the characteristics of the target population when adjusting AVI design. A single format may not suit all interviewees. Where appropriate, limited accommodation may be offered (features that would not a priori threaten the validity), such as the option to display or hide the countdown timer, since this

feature may help some interviewees manage time while distracting others (Lukacik et al., 2022). Such flexibility may ease pressure without compromising standardization. For features directly tied to evaluation objectives, such as question wording, adjustments may not be appropriate.

Design choices did not increase deception, and deception was unrelated to job performance. These findings should reassure organizations skeptical of AVIs and concerned that AVIs may encourage deception, indicating limited consequences for validity.

More broadly, this thesis shows that AVIs can support valid assessment when design choices align with the intended goal. Some features may improve delivery and boost interview performance but may not improve validity. Organizations should clarify their priorities and select the format accordingly.

6.4 Limitations and future research

This dissertation has several limitations. The studies focused on how design features influenced responses to individual questions. This allowed me to identify design-driven behaviors such as extended responding or storytelling. However, this may be a dynamic process. As AVIs grow in popularity, interviewees may adjust their strategy as they gain familiarity with the format or develop expectations about what is rewarded. This thesis did not examine within-interview adaptation or learning effects. Because design features operate as cues, these adaptations can shift which behaviors are elicited and, by extension, what raters evaluate across the interview. Future research could use longitudinal or repeated-exposure designs to track how applicants recalibrate behavior across questions or multiple AVI experiences.

Most studies isolated one design feature (response time, evaluator information, question wording), whereas Study 4 manipulated two features (priming and preparation time), so interactions among features remain unknown even though real AVIs present bundles of cues. In addition, some platform elements were not held constant (e.g., self-view, layout) and study contexts differed (lab versus home), which may introduce environmental cues known to affect evaluations (Basch et al., 2024; Roulin et al., 2023). Future work should test common cue bundles like preparation time and response time limit (see Lukacik & Bourdage, 2024).

Finally, all four studies focused on verbal cues, neglecting nonverbal ones, which also

play a role in selection interviews (Gifford et al., 1985; Imada & Hakel, 1977; Nguyen et al., 2014). Although AVIs typically restrict visible nonverbal information to a portrait frame, contextual cues may still elicit nonverbal behaviors such as eye contact, which may influence interview outcomes (Basch & Melchers, 2024). Future research should explore how AVI design features influence nonverbal behavior available in AVIs (e.g., gaze, facial expressiveness, head nods, gesture aperture) and whether these cues add criterion-relevant information beyond verbal content.

7 Conclusion

AVIs have become increasingly common in personnel selection, yet research on how their design influences applicant behavior and outcomes is still emerging. Previous studies have mainly focused on psychometric properties such as validity (Gorman et al., 2018; Liff et al., 2024), interviewee reactions (Brenner et al., 2016; Langer et al., 2017), and impression management tactics (Rizi & Roulin, 2024; Roulin et al., 2022).

This dissertation examined how specific other AVI design features (evaluator information, response time limits, preparation time, and question wording) influence interviewee anxiety, impression management, interview outcomes and validity. Across four studies, results showed that these features serve as behavioral cues influencing how applicants self-regulate in response to ambiguity and absence of social interaction (Landers & Marin, 2021; Lukacik et al., 2022). These findings highlight the importance of considering AVI design not just as a methodological choice but as an active factor interacting with interviewees' behavior and their individual differences.

Still, many aspects remain understudied. Future research could further explore interactions between multiple design features, investigate adaptation processes within longer interviews, and clarify the implications of design choices on validity. Applicants, recruiters, and organizations stand to benefit from further understanding of how AVIs shape the selection experience.

8 Declaration on the Use of AI Tools

In this thesis, I declare that I used the following tools to correct my English: Grammarly (https://app.grammarly.com), DeepL (DeepL SE, https://www.deepl.com/translator), and ChatGPT 4o (OpenAI, https://chat.openai.com/chat). I used these tools to verify grammar, spelling, wording clarity, coherence and to translate some ideas from French.

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10 Appendices

10.1 Study 1

Orji, K., Roulin, N., & Bangerter, A. (2024). Is anybody watching me? Effects of information about evaluators on applicants' use of impression management in asynchronous video interviews. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, *33*(1), e12515. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijsa.12515

Is anybody watching me? Effects of information about evaluators on applicants' use of impression management in asynchronous video interviews

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This study is pre-registered as an anonymous AsPredicted form (https://aspredicted.org/4FL_K82).

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Abstract

Asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) are widely used in hiring, but the lack of social presence (e.g., uncertainty about the identity of evaluators) may hinder effective impression management (IM) for applicants. This study examined whether providing information about evaluators facilitates applicant IM use in AVIs, specifically ingratiation or self-promotion. It also explored the experience involved in applicants' response generation. In a mock AVI, 160 participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (with or without information about the evaluator). They reported their thoughts after watching their interview recordings. Providing information about the evaluator enhanced ingratiation but did not affect self-promotion. Qualitative analyses revealed that participants with evaluator information were more likely to reference organizational values and align themselves with the evaluator, whereas those without it concentrated more on demonstrating their job-relevant skills. Participants' reported thoughts and emotions suggested that formulating suitable answers and interacting with a computer represent major concerns.

Keywords: asynchronous video interviews; impression management; behavior elicitation

Practitioner Points:

- Asynchronous video interview questions (AVIs) are often text-based, and the evaluator is unknown.
- Applicants experience discomfort or challenges completing AVIs, such as interacting with a computer instead of a person.
- Providing information about the evaluator in AVIs can create opportunities for honest impression management, particularly through ingratiation.
- Providing information about the evaluator can reduce the prevalence of faking thoughts.
- Organizations should be cautious about using evaluator information too early in the selection process.

Is anybody watching me? Effects of information about evaluators on applicants' use of impression management in asynchronous video interviews

In recent years, asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) have gained popularity as a screening tool (HireVue, 2022). AVIs are a web-based method where job applicants record themselves answering predetermined questions, which can be asked in written form, in a video, or by an avatar, without direct interaction with interviewers (Lukacik et al., 2022). AVIs provide greater flexibility for applicants and interviewers while reducing time and costs associated with traditional in-person interviews (Brenner et al., 2016). They also allow deferred evaluation by interviewers or even automatic evaluation via computer algorithms (Blacksmith et al., 2016; Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2017). However, applicants tend to accept AVIs less than face-to-face and synchronous technology-mediated interviews, especially when they know that their answers will be evaluated automatically (Langer et al., 2019; Suen et al., 2019). Their lack of acceptance may be due to the lack of social presence conveyed by the medium (Guchait et al., 2014), potentially inhibiting impression management (IM) — actions aimed at making a favorable impression on recruiters (Basch et al., 2020).

IM has been widely studied in traditional, in-person interviews. Yet it is still under-researched in AVIs, and little is known about how AVI design can impact the use of IM (e.g., Basch et al., 2021; Roulin et al., 2023). Unlike face-to-face interviews, in an AVI with text-based questions, the evaluator is not always clearly identified, significantly reducing the opportunities for IM (Lukacik et al., 2022). Thus, the availability of information about the evaluator may influence the use of IM in AVIs. Information about the evaluator, such as their background, expertise, and values, could enable applicants to tailor their responses, highlight relevant skills, and adjust their communication style to create a positive impression. To address this research gap, our study investigates how providing information about the evaluator influences applicants' use of self-promotion and ingratiation, two common IM tactics in interview settings.

Additionally, we further explore how applicants experience AVIs and plan their IM strategies when answering AVI-based questions by asking them to report on their thought

processes related to their responses. We thus contribute to a better understanding of applicants' experience of AVIs specific to the question-answering process. This adds granularity to existing findings on applicant reactions to AVIs (Basch et al., 2020). This research also holds practical implications for using AVIs in selection. By understanding the impact of evaluator information on applicant IM and on applicants' experience of answering questions, organizations can improve their evaluation of the person-job (PJ) fit and person-organization (PO) fit of applicants and potentially improve applicants' experiences and reduce negative reactions. Indeed, applicant IM is associated with both PJ fit and PO fit perceptions (Kristof-Brown, 2000; Peck & Levashina, 2017) and hireability ratings (Proost et al., 2010; Roulin et al., 2014), highlighting its importance for selection decisions.

Applicant Impression Management in Selection Interviews

IM is a social influence process where applicants attempt to shape the image conveyed to interviewers (Bolino et al., 2016). In selection interviews, most applicants use IM, consciously or unconsciously, to influence how interviewers view them and improve their hirability (Barrick et al., 2009; Peck & Levashina, 2017; Proost et al., 2010; Roulin et al., 2014). Importantly, applicants can use both honest and deceptive IM. They opt for honest IM when they can genuinely showcase their skills and experiences in response to questions (Bourdage et al., 2018). On the other hand, when they find it challenging to answer, they might resort to deceptive IM (or "faking"), which involves using slight exaggerations, insincere flattery, or creating false impressions (Levashina & Campion, 2007).

Prior research suggests a positive correlation between IM and interview ratings (Kleinmann & Klehe, 2010; Peck & Levashina, 2017), and between honest IM and hirability ratings (Bourdage et al., 2018). However, the effectiveness of honest IM for interview performance is limited to a certain threshold, beyond which it becomes counterproductive (Robie et al., 2020). On the other hand, faking hinders interviewers' capacity to thoroughly evaluate applicants' skills and make accurate job performance predictions (Melchers et al., 2020). Furthermore, detecting faking is difficult for interviewers (Roulin et al., 2015),

potentially impacting interview validity (Huffcutt et al., 2004; Roulin et al., 2016). Notably, Buehl et al. (2019) found that the impact of faking on interview validity varies depending on the type of performance being predicted. In contrast, Ingold et al. (2015) found a nonsignificant correlation between self-reported faking and ratings of work performance. Concerning interview outcomes, recent meta-analytic findings reveal a near-zero correlation between faking and interview ratings (Ho, Powell, et al., 2021). However, this relationship is moderated by evaluators' experience and the presence of multiple interviewers: Faking is more impactful with novice interviewers or when more interviewers are involved.

IM tactics can be other-focused (e.g., ingratiation) or self-focused (e.g., self-promotion; Kacmar & Carlson, 1999; Levashina et al., 2014; Proost et al., 2010). Applicants use other-focused tactics, such as expressing interest in the company, to emphasize similarities with the interviewer and evoke liking, thereby demonstrating a good fit with the organization's values (i.e., PO fit). Ingratiation can take the form of highlighting organizational fit, opinion conformity, or other-enhancement (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Applicants use self-focused tactics to draw attention to their strengths, skills, and achievements (e.g., telling interviewers how good they were at their previous job; Ellis et al., 2002; Kacmar & Carlson, 1999). Applicants thus aim to convince interviewers that they are a good fit for the position based on their personal qualifications (i.e., PJ fit). This can be done via self-enhancement, entitlements, exemplification, and self-promotion (Ellis et al., 2002; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Self-focused IM is more positively related to higher interview ratings than other-focused tactics, which, while beneficial for social interaction, have less impact on interview success (Peck & Levashina, 2017; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Further IM aimed directly at the evaluator significantly improves interview ratings and perceived fit, while IM directed at a third-party observer has a reduced impact, as the observer is less influenced by these tactics (Peck & Levashina, 2017).

In selection interviews, applicants use self-promotion and ingratiation differently. For instance, when answering past-behavior questions like "Can you tell me about a time you had to deal with an angry client?", applicants use more self-promotion tactics. Conversely, when

answering situational questions like “Imagine you were dealing with an angry client. What would you do to manage the situation?", they tend to rely more on ingratiation tactics (Ellis et al., 2002). While both tactics can enhance interviewers’ evaluations and lead to positive outcomes, their combination is even more effective (Proost et al., 2010). Importantly, interviewers’ perceptions play a key role in the effectiveness of IM. Specifically, interviewers’ positive perception of honest self-promotion is associated with better interview outcomes (Roulin et al., 2014). Moreover, interviewers’ perception of applicants’ competences mediates the relationship between honest self-promotion use and interview ratings, while honest ingratiation use is positively associated with warmth perceptions (Amaral et al., 2019).

Applicant Impression Management in AVIs

To engage in IM behavior (honest or deceptive), applicants need to have the willingness, capacity, and opportunity to do so (Bourdage et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion, 2006). Specifically, situational factors, like interview format or organizational characteristics, provide varying opportunities for IM. Likewise, target-related factors like interviewer characteristics influence both the willingness and opportunities to engage in IM.

The unique characteristics of AVIs make engaging in IM a tricky task. Indeed, applicants report lower intentions to use IM in AVIs compared to face-to-face or videoconference interviews, likely because they perceive lower social presence in AVIs (Basch et al., 2020). However, AVIs can be designed in different ways, which could impact applicants’ use of IM tactics (Lukacik et al., 2022). For instance, allowing applicants more preparation time leads them to produce more honest IM (Basch, Brenner, et al., 2021), but this effect might not be very robust (Roulin et al., 2023). Also, when given the possibility to re-record their answers, applicants who do so fake less (Roulin et al., 2023). Applicants may also be aware that AVIs may use algorithms to analyze their behavior and detect faking. The prospect of automated assessment can influence how applicants engage in IM. Indeed, applicants who think a computer will automatically evaluate their responses, use less faking, respond more succinctly, and feel they have fewer opportunities to perform (Langer et al., 2020).

Previous research on IM in AVIs has mainly explored honest IM versus faking, but less self-focused versus other-focused IM. Yet IM is a goal-directed behavior and talking to a computer webcam (vs. a person) makes it more difficult for applicants to engage in other-oriented IM tactics such as ingratiation (Lukacik et al., 2022). Indeed, to engage in other-focused IM, applicants need a target whose characteristics are known to them. Specifically, they need information on their evaluators' personal characteristics. This information can enhance the opportunities and willingness for applicants to engage in honest IM (Bourdage et al., 2018). In traditional synchronous interviews, this information becomes easily accessible through prior knowledge (e.g., LinkedIn profiles of evaluators), social interaction (e.g., evaluators introducing themselves and the organization), or visual cues in the office environment (e.g., framed pictures on the evaluator's desk). When applicants have access to such cues, it can help them better understand the interviewer and thus engage in more targeted IM, potentially resulting in improved interview ratings (Bolino et al., 2008; Delery & Kacmar, 1998; Wilhelmy et al., 2021). In contrast, in AVIs there is no interaction and often no target. Applicants cannot observe and respond to an evaluators' nonverbal and verbal cues, making it difficult to build rapport with them. The lack of target and social interaction should result in fewer opportunities to use other-focused IM tactics (Lukacik et al., 2022).

Providing information about the evaluator can potentially compensate for the absence of visual cues and help applicants tailor their IM strategies. For instance, if applicants have access to information about the evaluator's identity, preferences, or even their position within the company, these cues can help them design and implement ingratiation tactics. With such knowledge in hand, applicants may thus have more opportunities and willingness to employ ingratiation tactics and effectively establish rapport with the evaluator (Bourdage et al., 2018; Lukacik et al., 2022).

In this study, we focused on honest IM because it is more prevalent, effective, and encouraged when used with moderation (Bourdage et al., 2018; Robie et al., 2020; Roulin, 2022). We thus manipulated the information provided to participants about the evaluator, with

the expectation that those who received such information would use more honest ingratiation compared to those who did not.

Hypothesis 1. Applicants with information about their evaluator will use more honest ingratiation tactics than those without information.[1]

The potential impact of providing information about the evaluator on the use of self-focused tactics like self-promotion is less clear. One could argue that providing information to applicants about the evaluator would not alter their use of self-promotion in AVIs. This is because applicants do not need a target to talk about themselves and highlight their responsibilities in positive events, their skills, or their relevant experiences (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Therefore, regardless of the information available about the evaluator, applicants have the opportunity to produce the same amount of self-promotion. Alternatively, one could argue that in the absence of information about the evaluator (i.e., target) during AVIs, applicants might try to compensate the inability to use other-focused tactics by engaging in more self-promotion (Lukacik et al., 2022).

Research Question 1. What is the effect of having information about an evaluator on applicants' honest self-promotion?

Applicants' experiences of question-answering in AVIs

A review of studies on applicant reactions to structured interviews (Levashina et al., 2014) suggests they may foster negative affective reactions (Conway & Peneno, 1999), decrease satisfaction (Chapman & Rowe, 2002), decrease perceptions of procedural justice, and decrease intentions to accept a job offer (Chapman & Zweig, 2005). However, it is unclear which dimensions of interview structure drive these reactions (Levashina et al., 2014). This has implications for AVIs, because they incorporate several structure elements by default (e.g., same questions asked in a consistent way to all applicants; Lukacik et al., 2022). Notably, applicants find structured interviews to be more difficult than less structured interviews (Chapman & Zweig, 2005), suggesting that structured interview questions, such as past-behavior questions, may be partly responsible for negative applicant reactions. Recent studies in face-to-face

interviews highlight the difficulties applicants experience in promptly finding relevant examples and formulating responses to past-behavior questions (Brosy et al., 2016; Brosy et al., 2020). This impacts response quality, contributes to negative emotional reactions, and leads to potential faking (Brosy et al., 2020). These results are in line with a qualitative study that explored the reasons applicants engage in deceptive IM in interviews (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021): to compensate for their limited relevant work experience, to handle the expectations associated with prestigious organizations or the pressure to secure employment, or to align themselves with what they perceive to be the interviewer's values, interests, or personality.

AVIs also suffer from negative applicant reactions. Applicants often find them creepy, less personal, less fair and offering less opportunity to perform (Basch, Melchers, et al., 2021; Griswold et al., 2022; Langer et al., 2017; Langer et al., 2019). However, a more granular understanding of the drivers of these negative reactions is missing. As with face-to-face interviews, the question-answering experience may constitute such a driver, perhaps even more so because AVIs are often much more selection-focused than face-to-face interviews, which are also recruitment-focused (Wingate & Bourdage, 2024). Given that AVIs represent a novel technology, we know very little about how applicants experience the question-answering process. This invites speculation about whether similar question-answering experiences occur in AVIs and how providing information about the evaluator could also influence applicants' experience of the interview. Examining applicants' experiences related to the question-answering process in AVIs can improve our understanding of why AVIs are less accepted and why applicants react more negatively to them.

Research Question 2. How do applicants experience responding to questions in AVIs? Particularly, do applicants' IM-related experiences differ when provided with information about the evaluator?

Method

Sample

We recruited students from a subject pool in a Swiss university. A power analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009), assuming an effect size of d = 0.40 (Langer et al., 2020), using independent t-tests, and assuming a power of 1-β = 0.80, determined that N = 156 participants would be necessary. We thus recruited a sample of 160 participants with 50% of women. Participants had a mean age of 21.48 years (SD = 3.91) and had on average taken part in 2.77 (SD = 5.37) job interviews. Around 60% of participants had a high school diploma, while 40% held a university degree (30% with a bachelor's degree and 10% with a master's degree).

Study Design

Participants were equally split and randomly assigned to one of two conditions: one half received details about the evaluator, while the other half did not. In the no-information condition, they were only told the evaluator's name (i.e., Dominique Müller). We selected a gender-neutral first name and the most common last name in Switzerland to ensure no unintended information was conveyed to participants. Participants in the information condition had access to a screenshot of the evaluator's LinkedIn page (presented on the AVI platform). On this page, they could find the evaluator's name, pictures (i.e., profile picture and banner), their job title, and a post they recently reshared (about wind turbines). The LinkedIn profile was intended to show that environmentalism and sustainability were important to the evaluator, thus offering participants information to engage in other-focused IM.

Procedure

Overview

Participants provided informed consent and received instructions on how to use the AVI platform. They were instructed to act exactly as they would in a real interview when seeking employment. Then, they were given 5 minutes to read a job description for a portfolio manager position in a sustainability-oriented company (APPENDIX 1) and prepare for the interview. Participants were allowed to take notes, which could be used during the interview. Those with

information about their evaluator also had access to a screenshot of the evaluator's LinkedIn profile. Then, they all took part in an AVI comprising five questions. Participants had 20 seconds to read each question and prepare their response before starting their recording. For each question, they were limited to a single recording attempt, with a maximum response duration of three minutes. After the interview, participants watched the video-recordings of their responses and wrote down their thoughts and feelings. They paused the video whenever they remembered a thought or feeling they experienced during the interview and wrote it down (they were instructed to *not* write down thoughts or feelings experienced while watching the video). This method has been previously used to access participants' thoughts and feelings at specific moments (Hall & Schmid Mast, 2007). Then, participants completed measures of honest IM use (Bourdage et al., 2018), and demographic questions. Finally, they were debriefed and received a monetary compensation of 20 CHF (USD $22.80) for their participation for a 50-minute session, which is more than the minimum hourly rate (20 CHF/60minutes) determined by the university. This also corresponds to the average hourly wage of students working part-time jobs in Switzerland.

Job interview questions

The interview consisted of five questions: A question inviting participants to introduce themselves (i.e., "Could you please introduce yourself and briefly summarize your background?"), two past-behavior questions (i.e., "Describe a situation where you were dealing with people who were angry about a particular work situation. How did you react to this?" and "Tell me about a situation where you were working as a team on a project that had to be completed within a limited time frame. How did you manage to lead your team to complete this project on time?"), a question about their values (i.e., "What values are important to you at work?") and a question about PJ fit (i.e., "Why do you think you would be the right person for this job?"). The last two questions were designed to give participants more opportunities for IM (Barrick et al., 2009; Langer et al., 2020).

Measures

Honest impression management

Honest IM was measured with a 32-item scale of the HIIM (Honest Interview Impression Management; Bourdage et al., 2018), slightly adjusted for the AVI context. The scale was translated from English to French and checked by backtranslation. It included fourteen items measuring honest self-promotion IM (Cronbach's α = 0.83, e.g., "I talked about the accomplishments I'd had at my previous job"), eight items measuring honest ingratiation IM (α = 0.88, e.g., "I talked about the values the hiring organization and I shared"), and ten items measuring honest defensive IM (α = 0.89, e.g., "I gave reasons why I felt benefited positively from a negative event I was responsible for"). We also computed an overall honest IM score (α = 0.88). All responses were on a 1-5 scale (1 = "completely disagree", and 5 = "completely agree").

Thoughts and feelings experienced while answering questions

We employed quantitative content analysis following Crano et al. (2014) to analyze participants' written comments. Quantitative content analysis specifies that each unit of analysis (or coding unit) of a text should receive one code. Because comments could sometimes be quite complex, this would potentially result in multiple potential codes applying to a given coding unit. To address this, we segmented comments into utterances, typically consisting of a clause with a single subject, verb, and object, as coding units (Brosy et al., 2020). The entire comment was treated as the context unit (Crano et al., 2014), guiding the interpretation and code assignment. For example, the comment "I have the impression that the interview went well, which removes all the pressure from me, and I say everything I think, even some more personal elements" would be segmented into three utterances: (1) "I have the impression that the interview went well", (2) "which removes all the pressure from me", (3) "and I say everything I think, even some more personal elements".

Table 1

Categories of Applicants' Thoughts and Feelings

Category		Definition	Example	Frequency		Mention (%)		Proportion (%)	
				No Info	With Info	No Info	With Info	No Info	With Info
1	Negative emotion	Negative emotional state, e.g., stress, hesitation, disappointment	*I'm hesitating a lot*	250	167	77.50	70.00	11.99	9.85
2	Discourse production	Difficulties in finding words, speaking, speech rate, tone of voice	*I could hardly find my words*	194	209	76.25	66.25	10.54	9.62
3	Finding an answer	Difficulties in finding an appropriate response to the question asked	*I don't know what to say*	194	202	76.25	75.00	10.35	13.92
4	Self-promotion	Highlighting abilities, skills, or professional experience	*I wanted to highlight my open-mindedness*	205	156	65.00	66.25	12.63	11.15
5	Response quality concerns	Concern on response characteristics, e.g., vocabulary, detail level	*Using "yeah" is not very professional*	203	139	75.00	63.75	10.64	7.31
6	Irrelevant response	Response considered too general or produced just to say something.	*I was not specific in my answer*	156	171	70.00	68.75	8.23	10.92
7	Positive emotion	Positive emotional state, e.g., joy, relief, satisfaction	*I feel very relieved*	120	90	56.25	47.50	6.61	5.07
8	Ingratiation	Noting evaluator or company traits, e.g., flattery or conformity	*I share the same values as the company*	64	106	41.25	51.25	3.64	7.45
9	Digital device	Device-related experiences e.g., lack of real-time interaction	*The timer disturbs me*	70	63	38.75	38.75	3.76	3.80
10	Faking	Making up examples or embellishing the situation	*I'm making things up*	91	42	37.50	20.00	4.20	2.51
11	Questions asked	Apprehension of the type of question	*I think that it's a tricky question*	72	60	37.50	36.25	2.97	4.04
12	Relevant response	Response deemed good and easy to find	*I think that it's a good experience*	64	63	41.25	38.75	3.25	3.63
13	Other	Miscellaneous comments	*I was recalling the angry customer scene*	58	68	41.25	40.00	2.96	3.96
14	Non-verbal behavior	Mentioning elements e.g., camera eye contact, body language	*I'm touching my head*	63	42	25.00	25.00	2.24	2.01
15	Repetition	Review of speech repetition instances	*I am repeating my words too many times*	50	47	37.50	32.50	2.95	2.58
16	Bad image	Concerns about the evaluator's (or other) perception	*I don't want to appear egocentric*	34	21	30.00	18.75	1.58	1.18
17	Job information	Reflection on the requirements previously read in the job advertisement	*I forgot the name of the job description*	21	15	15.00	17.50	0.85	1.00

Note. N =3,570 utterances (No info = 1909. With info = 1661); Mention (%): Percentage of participants mentioning the category at least once; Proportion: proportion of category utterances related to the total number of utterances in the condition; No Info = No information about the evaluator, With Info = With information about the evaluator.

We created a category system using Brosy et al.'s (2020) categories and adapting them to better fit our dataset. Specifically, we excluded categories related to face-to-face interactions, such as temporization (e.g., speaking to gain time) and turn management, and introduced new categories pertinent to IM (i.e., *Self-promotion* and *Ingratiation*), and AVIs (i.e., *Digital device*). Also, two other categories related to participants' perceptions of their own image (i.e., *Bad image)* and their interpretation of job information (i.e., *Job information*) were created based on an initial inspection of the data. We coded each of the 3,570 utterances obtained into one of 17 categories we created for the study (Table 1, for further examples see APPENDIX 2). Interrater agreement was high (k = .93) based on double coding of 20% of the comments by the first author and a graduate student who received training.

Manipulation check

We created two items (i.e., "Dominique Müller shared a publication on wind turbines" and "Dominique Müller has a picture of a dog on her profile banner") to check if the information manipulation was perceived by participants. Indeed, Dominique Müller shared a publication on wind turbine and had a dog picture on her profile banner. Participants had three options to respond to those questions: *Yes, No, I don't know*. We expected participants with evaluator information to answer *Yes* to both items, while those without it were expected to answer *I don't know*. Among participants without information, 75% responded as expected to at least one question. For those with information, the rate was 82.5%. This exceeds the chance rate of 55.55% ($\chi^2_{\text{NoInfo}}(1, 80) = 12.32$, $p < .01$; $\chi^2_{\text{WithInfo}}(1, 80) = 23.61$, $p < .01$) and confirms that our manipulation was successful. Also, we tested H1 and RQ1 both with our full sample and excluding participants who failed the manipulation check. The two sets of analyses yielded the same results.[2] We report the results with all participants below.

Results

Ingratiation (H1) and Self-Promotion (RQ1) by Condition

Means, standard deviations and correlations among the study variables are provided in Table 2. For the purposes of testing H1 and RQ1, we excluded six participants from the analysis due to incomplete data, resulting in a sample size of 154 participants. Participants with

information about the evaluator reported using significantly more ingratiation than those without information, M_{noinfo} = 3.48 (*SD* = .84), $M_{withinfo}$ = 3.74 (*SD* = .75), $t(152) = -2.03$, $p < .05$, Cohen's d = -0.33, 95% CI [-.64, -.01]. These results support H1. Regarding RQ1, there was no significant difference in the reported use of self-promotion between conditions, M_{noinfo} = 3.23 (*SD* = .59), $M_{withinfo}$ = 3.21 (*SD* = .71), $t(152) = 0.18$, $p = .85$, Cohen's d = 0.03, 95% CI [-.29, .35]. Note that self-promotion correlates significantly and positively with other IM types (Table 2).

Experiences reported during answering questions (RQ2)

Table 1 presents the frequencies of categories of thoughts reported by participants. The most frequent categories were *Negative emotion*, *Discourse production*, and *Finding an answer*, accounting for 34% of all mentions. These results indicate that one of the interviewees' primary concerns was to find a suitable response, which might be associated with experiencing negative emotions. Also, 38.7% of participants reported having trouble completing the interview with a computer rather than interacting with a human.

Categories related to IM, including *Ingratiation*, *Self-Promotion*, and *Faking*, comprised 18.60% of all mentions. *Self-Promotion* was the most prevalent, making up 54.4% of IM-related comments, with participants highlighting their skills (e.g., "I want to show my openness to dialogue and my willingness to find solutions"). *Ingratiation* represented 25.6% of IM-related comments, with participants who had information about the recruiter more often appealing to the recruiter's personal preferences (e.g., "I'm trying to connect with the recruiter by discussing the environment based on what I've read on her LinkedIn"). Finally, *Faking* comprised 20% of IM-related comments, as illustrated by statements such as, "I wanted to impress, so I lied." Notably, *Faking* showed the largest difference between conditions. Among participants without information about the evaluator, 37.5% mentioned faking at least once, compared to 20% of participants with evaluator information.

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Pearson's Correlations Between Study Variables.

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Gender	0.50	0.50							
2	Age	21.48	3.91	-.03						
3	Condition	0.50	0.50	.00	.07					
4	Interview experience	2.77	5.37	.07	.55**	.16*				
5	Honest self-promotion	3.22	0.65	-.15	.15	-.02	.18*			
6	Honest ingratiation	3.61	0.81	.06	.03	.16*	-.02	.26*		
7	Honest defensive IM	2.41	0.86	-.24**	.18*	.09	.22**	.37**	.09	
8	Overall Honest IM	3.08	0.54	-.15	.17*	.12	.18*	.73**	.65**	.73**

Note: N = 154. Gender: 0 = Male; 1 = Female; Condition: 0 = No information about the evaluator; 1 = With information about the evaluator; Interview experience = Number of prior interviews; All IM responses were on a 1-5 scale. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$

Finally, we conducted a Spearman's rank correlation analysis (Table 3) to examine the relationships between the experimental conditions and categories of applicants' thoughts and feelings, while controlling for the number of utterances. Here, we report the key variables (IM-related categories and the experimental condition). The experimental condition was negatively related to response quality concerns (r = -.17, p = .03) and faking (r = -.20, p = .01), but showed no significant relationship with self-promotion (r = -.03, p = .70) or ingratiation (r = .14, p = .07 – though the direction of that relationship is consistent with self-reports).

Participants with information about the evaluator had less thoughts about response quality concerns and faking. Also, self-promotion was negatively related to negative emotion (r = -.21, p < .01), discourse production (r = -.25, p < .01), finding an answer (r = -.33, p < .01), digital device (r = -.17, p = .03), and repetition (r = -.20, p = .01). Ingratiation was negatively related to discourse production (r = -.20, p = .01), finding an answer (r = -.23, p < .01), and irrelevant responses (r = -.18, p = .02).

Exploratory Analyses – IM goals

To gain a deeper understanding of how applicants' IM-related experiences differ when provided with information about the evaluator [3], we explored participants' IM goals, focusing on utterances categorized as *Self-promotion* and *Ingratiation* in Table 1. IM goals are mentioned in explanations for the use of IM tactics (e.g., "I'm sharing my personal life in Europe to please the recruiter who shares positions about Europe"). In order to preserve the connections participants spontaneously create between IM tactics and their goals, this analysis was conducted on participants' comments in context (i.e., *without* dividing them into utterances).

Table 3
Spearman's Rank Correlation Between Categories of Applicants' Thoughts and Feelings, and Condition

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	Condition	-																
2	Negative emotion	-.09	-															
3	Discourse production	-.08	.14	-														
4	Finding an answer	.11	-.06	-.11	-													
5	Self-promotion	-.03	-.21**	-.25**	-.33**	-												
6	Response quality concerns	-.17*	.00	.09	.01	-.14	-											
7	Irrelevant response	.07	-.13	-.03	.14	-.15	-.02	-										
8	Positive emotion	-.09	.19*	.11	-.17*	-.12	.02	-.10	-									
9	Ingratiation	.14	-.05	-.20*	-.23**	.27**	-.06	-.18*	-.15	-								
10	Digital device	.03	.02	.06	.03	-.17*	-.04	-.20*	-.03	.04	-							
11	Faking	-.20*	-.05	-.02	-.11	-.05	-.03	-.07	.00	.03	.08	-						
12	Questions asked	.02	.02	.00	.13	-.07	-.09	-.09	.01	-.01	.26**	.04	-					
13	Relevant response	.01	.04	-.05	-.07	-.14	.00	-.11	.32**	-.03	.02	.09	.12	-				
14	Other	.04	-.08	-.07	-.02	.04	-.02	-.08	.00	.03	.00	-.01	.12	.16*	-			
15	Non-verbal behavior	.01	-.07	.16*	-.10	-.12	-.02	-.04	.04	-.03	.15	.04	-.05	.07	.12	-		
16	Repetition	-.05	.01	.10	.05	-.20*	.01	-.05	-.03	-.11	.08	.05	.05	-.10	-.04	.12	-	
17	Bad image	-.12	-.02	-.03	-.03	.03	.15	.05	.05	-.07	.07	.15	-.04	.06	.11	.16*	.05	-
18	Job information	.04	.02	-.12	.02	.07	.08	-.03	-.13	.09	.00	.07	.00	-.09	.00	.07	.06	.15

Note: N = 160. Condition: 0 = No information about the evaluator; 1 = With information about the evaluator; * p < .05; ** p < .01

We thus coded each comment related to *Self-promotion* and *Ingratiation* into five categories (Table 4). In the *PJ fit* category, participants aimed to align their characteristics with the job requirements, while in the *PO fit* category, participants aimed to align their characteristics with those of the organization or the recruiter (Bourdage et al., 2018; Kristof-Brown et al., 2002). The third and fourth categories involve defensive IM goals. The third category, *Repairing negative image*, involved participants addressing perceived shortcomings or previous negative experiences (Tsai et al., 2010). The fourth category, based on Robie et al. (2020), focused on why participants might refrain from engaging in IM. Termed *Fear of overdoing*, it reflected participants' concerns about appearing too eager or going too far. Finally, comments that did not mention an IM goal were categorized under *No goal*. Interrater-agreement was high (k = .88) based on double coding of 20% of the comments.

Table 4

Self-Promotion and Ingratiation Goals by Condition

	Category	Self-Promotion		Ingratiation	
		No Info	**With Info**	**No Info**	**With Info**
1	**PJ Fit**	70.1%	55.2%	0%	0%
2	**PO Fit**	0%	0%	42.4%	64.7%
3	**Repairing negative image**	6.8%	2.9%	12.1%	0%
4	**Fear of overdoing**	4.1%	2.9%	3.1%	2.0%
5	**No goal**	19%	39%	42.4%	33.3%

N = 336 comments; No Info = No information about the evaluator, With Info = With information about the evaluator.

The goal most strongly associated with *self-promotion* comments is demonstrating PJ fit, and the goal most strongly associated with *ingratiation* comments is demonstrating PO fit. Both *self-promotion* and *ingratiation* are infrequently associated with repairing negative

images and fear of overdoing. Giving participants information about the evaluator has the effect of shifting participants' goals in several ways. First, it reduces self-promotion-related comments featuring goals (147 comments to 105) overall, reduces their association with PJ fit (70.1% to 55.2%) and almost doubles the proportion of those comments that are not associated with a goal (19% to 39%). Second, having interviewer information increases ingratiation-related comments featuring explanations (33 to 51), increases their association with PO fit (42.4% to 64.7%) and decreases the proportion of those comments that are not associated with a goal (42.4% to 33.3%). Finally, providing information decreases defensive IM goals for both self-promotion and ingratiation comments. The results of the Fisher's exact test for self-promotion ($p < .01$) and ingratiation ($p = .02$) indicate a significant association between participants with and without information. This pattern suggests that providing information about their evaluator increases the salience and clarity of PO fit goals. That is, participants with information about their evaluator were more aware of the link between ingratiation and PO fit goals and focused on them more consistently. This may have had the added effect of boosting participants' confidence (as evidenced by the decrease in defensive IM goals).

Discussion

Main Findings and Theoretical Implications

This study had two main goals. The first was to investigate the effects of information about the evaluator on other-focused (ingratiation, H1) and self-focused (self-promotion, RQ1) honest applicant IM during AVIs. The second (RQ2) was to gain a deeper insight into interviewees' experience of answering questions in AVIs. We hypothesized, and found evidence, that interviewees with information about the evaluator report using more other-focused honest IM than those without such information. For self-focused tactics, we explored two competing premises: (1) that the level of self-promotion would stay the same, no matter the information available about the evaluator, because these tactics do not require a specific target; or (2) that interviewees might resort to employing more self-promotion to compensate for the limited opportunity to use other-focused tactics in the absence of a target (Lukacik et al., 2022). Our results supported the first alternative. Providing information about the evaluator had no impact

on interviewees' use of self-focused tactics. Overall, our results show that providing information about the evaluator represents an easy way to overcome the limitations associated with the one-way communication of AVIs, at least in terms of creating opportunities for other-focused tactics. Moreover, self-reported ingratiation was more prevalent than self-reported self-promotion in our study, an interesting result as the typical pattern is the reverse (e.g., Peck & Levashina, 2017; Rizi & Roulin, 2023). This could be attributed to our choice of a sustainability-oriented portfolio manager role, which invited interviewees to use ingratiation to better align with the sustainability values and standards of the hiring organization.

Regarding interviewees' experience of the question-answering process, the most frequent thoughts were associated with response production (*Negative emotion*, *Discourse production*, *Finding an answer and Response quality concerns*). Our findings align with Brosy et al.'s (2020) study on traditional in-person interviews, where the most frequent categories were also related to response production. Specifically, *Finding an answer* and *Negative emotion* ranked highest, while *Discourse production* and *Response quality concerns* were among the 6 most frequent categories. However, our analyses also uncovered challenges unique to AVIs. Interviewees reported difficulties associated with interacting with a computer rather than a human interviewer (i.e., *Digital device* category, mentioned by 39% of interviewees). They commented on the awkwardness of being filmed or the presence of a timer (e.g., "Not having someone in front of me (even on video) is disturbing to me"). This may explain earlier findings on applicant reactions indicating that applicants perceive AVIs as creepy and less personal and affording less opportunity to perform (Basch, Melchers, et al., 2021; Langer et al., 2017). Furthermore, we observed that only a few participants mentioned faking, and this was even rarer in the condition with evaluator information. Without such information, applicants may find it difficult to engage in honest IM. In an attempt to overcome the challenge of creating a positive impression, they might resort to using deceptive strategies (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021). To our surprise, there was no significant correlation between the experimental condition and ingratiation thoughts, although the relationship was in the expected direction. Given the previous findings from self-reported IM scales, we had expected a stronger link. However, the *p*-

value was close to the .05 threshold and fell below .10 (p = .07), suggesting a potential trend that may not have reached significance, possibly due to variability in coding responses.

Finally, an exploratory analysis of goals interviewees associated with self-promotion and ingratiation revealed that giving participants information about their evaluator had the effect of shifting their goal focus, reducing the salience of PJ fit goals, increasing the salience of PO fit goals, and possibly boosting their confidence by reducing defensive IM goals. This is consistent with the foundation of PO fit research, since PO fit is defined as "the compatibility between people and organizations" and is partly based on perceptions that a person (i.e., an applicant) and an organization (i.e., represented by the evaluator here) "share similar fundamental characteristics" (Kristof, 1996, pp. 4-5). Moreover, engaging in other-focused tactics IM like ingratiation is an effective way for interviewees to influence evaluators' perceptions of PO fit (Chen et al., 2008). Our findings also confirm theoretical propositions (Lukacik et al., 2022) and preliminary findings (Rizi & Roulin, 2023), suggesting that media-richer AVIs can facilitate ingratiation. These effects may also potentially explain why applicants feel AVIs (in general) do not give them the opportunity to perform (Langer et al., 2020).

Practical Implications

When designing an AVI, organizations should consider providing applicants with information about the hiring team (and particularly who will evaluate their recordings). This can create opportunities for applicants to use honest IM, especially honest ingratiation, which could ensure that can they truly demonstrate their level of fit, and indirectly provide evaluators with more job-relevant information to assess their potential future work performance (Bourdage et al., 2018; Peck & Levashina, 2017).

However, our analysis showed that providing evaluator information led applicants to trade off self-promotion (PJ fit) in favor of ingratiation (PO fit) - a potential drawback in early selection stages when employers need to assess job-relevant skills. To balance this, organizations might consider sharing evaluator details later in the process or tailoring the type

of information shared based on its cultural relevance. This approach can help applicants demonstrate both their fit for the job and the organization at the right stage.

Finally, providing information about the evaluator can also help reduce faking in AVIs, which might help alleviate concerns about the negative repercussions of deceptive IM on interview validity.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

The main limitation of this study is the use of experimentally manipulated mock interviews with students. These may not accurately represent the high-stakes situation of an AVI with actual applicants who are genuinely interested in the job offer and possess a profile suitable for the position. In a laboratory experiment featuring a job offer that provided only sufficient information about the company, the stakes are low, potentially resulting in lower motivation among participants to manage impressions. However, our findings suggest that participants engaged in honest IM quite extensively. Further, we anticipate that differences between the two conditions would likely be larger in real application scenarios. Moreover, a laboratory study was necessary to examine the causal effect of providing information about the evaluator on IM and thoughts. Indeed, it would have been ethically problematic to conduct an experimental study using random attribution to conditions with real applicants.

Another limitation is the approach used to assess participants' thought processes. While this approach has been previously employed (Brosy et al., 2020; Hall & Schmid Mast, 2007), we cannot always distinguish between thoughts that arose while watching the video and those that occurred during the response to questions. To address this limitation, future research could explore alternative methodologies or incorporate additional measures to better disentangle these distinct components of participants' experiences. For instance, participants could engage in a post-interview debriefing session with a semi-structured discussion guide. This would allow researchers to probe participants' retrospective reflections on their thoughts and experiences during the AVI, facilitating a more nuanced and guided understanding of the thought processes involved.

A third limitation is that our study only presented a single evaluator profile, which limits generalizability to the population of potential stimuli (Highhouse, 2009). We chose to use a single profile because this was the first study of the phenomenon. Future research on the effects of providing information about evaluators on applicant IM should use multiple evaluator profiles to better sample the stimulus variability inherent in actual hiring situations. Perhaps the type of evaluator (e.g., depending on age, gender, race, professional role, or experience) or the type of information provided (e.g., level of details, professional vs. personal information) also plays a role.

Further research should also include additional constructs like perceived social presence, AVI performance, and deceptive IM using a scale like the Interview Faking Behavior scale (Levashina & Campion, 2007) to investigate if providing information about the evaluator could influence these outcomes. Furthermore, future research should explore other ways of providing evaluator's information to applicants. While in this study, participants had access to a screenshot of the evaluator's LinkedIn page, there are other potential approaches to consider. For instance, Rizi and Roulin (2023) recently examined the effectiveness of using videos where the hiring managers introduce themselves at the beginning of the AVIs, and then record themselves asking the interview questions. One could extend this by comparing various methods of presenting evaluator information, such as text, a virtual interviewer/avatar, or a video of a real interviewer. It is possible that richer information media would facilitate IM more than a (text-based) LinkedIn page. Also, investigating how interviewees' IM behaviors differ based on the AVI evaluator's role and future work relationship would be beneficial. For instance, interviewees may be more likely to engage in ingratiation (regardless of the presentation format) if the evaluator is their future manager, and they want to create a personal connection with them already in the AVI. Conversely, if the evaluator is an individual they will not directly work with (e.g., a human resource employee), interviewees' responses and IM use may depend on the format of the evaluator information (i.e., more ingratiation with a video presentation than with an avatar and even more than with text).

Conclusion

AVIs are on the rise and are likely here to stay. This study offers empirical evidence that AVI design influences applicants' experiences and behavior (Lukacik et al., 2022) and emphasizes the importance of providing information about the evaluator to encourage honest IM, particularly ingratiation. Moreover, our findings suggest that applicants' main concern during AVIs remains finding a suitable answer, just like in face-to-face interviews. This concern might be exacerbated by interacting with a computer instead of a human, which is unique to AVIs.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in OSF: https://osf.io/xtaqr/?view_only=e18f8bed7ab6450b9dc789d737dcae29.

Endnotes

[1] https://aspredicted.org/4FL_K82

[2] Results excluding respondents who failed the manipulation check also support H1. Participants with information about the evaluator reported using significantly more ingratiation than those without information, M_{noinfo} = 3.47 (SD = .88), $M_{withinfo}$ = 3.81 (SD = .72), t(107) = -2.09, p = .04, Cohen's d = -0.41, 95% CI [-.80, -.02]. Regarding RQ1, there was no significant difference in the use of self-promotion between the two conditions, similar to the results including participants who failed the manipulation check, M_{noinfo} = 3.14(SD = .59), $M_{withinfo}$ = 3.14 (SD = .72), t(107) = 0.86, p = .39, Cohen's d = 0.17, 95% CI [-.22, .56].

[3] We thank an anonymous reviewer for inspiring this analysis

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APPENDIX 1: Job Description

Green Project

Client Portfolio Manager - 60%

Company Description:

Green Project is a Geneva-based company with the primary mission of assisting other businesses in reducing their carbon footprint. We offer innovative tools to drive change in responsible production and consumption.

Your Mission:

- Act as the direct representative of the company to clients.
- Develop a set of activities and projects.
- Manage and motivate a team while ensuring communication between management and employees.
- Evaluate the team members.

Your Profile:

- Proficient in computer tools (Word, Excel).
- Demonstrates a sense of responsibility and excellent priority management.
- A people person who enjoys daily interactions with partners.

What We Offer:

- A dynamic and multidisciplinary work environment.
- Access to continuous training opportunities.
- Flexible working hours.
- Option for telecommuting.

Application:

If you are interested in this opportunity, please submit a complete application including your CV, cover letter, work certificates, and other relevant documents.

The position is available as soon as possible.

APPENDIX 2: Additional Examples for Thought Categories

Category		Definition	Examples
1	Negative emotion	Negative emotional state, e.g., stress, hesitation, disappointment	*I'm hesitating a lot; I was embarrassed; I'm a bit stressed*
2	Discourse production	Difficulties in finding words, speaking, speech rate, tone of voice	*I could hardly find my words; I have a stutter; I couldn't find the word "promotion"*
3	Finding an answer	Difficulties in finding an appropriate response to the question asked	*I don't know what to say; I had no idea what I was going to come up with; I don't know where to begin*
4	Self-promotion	Highlighting abilities, skills, or professional experience	*I wanted to highlight my open-mindedness; I wanted to present my academic background; I am capable of working in a team*
5	Response quality concerns	Concern on response characteristics, e.g., vocabulary, detail level	*Using "yeah "is not very professional; I realize that starting a sentence with a negative is a bad idea.; This phrase was very cliché*
6	Irrelevant response	Response considered too general or produced just to say something.	*I was not specific in my answer; I thought that maybe the employer didn't really want to hear that; I was telling myself that I was talking nonsense while talking about investments*
7	Positive emotion	Positive emotional state, e.g., joy, relief, satisfaction	*I feel very relieved, I am comfortable; I felt very confident about this question*
8	Ingratiation	Noting evaluator or company traits, e.g., flattery or conformity	*I wanted to show interest in this company; I say what I believe the employer wants to hear; I wanted to prove that I shared the same values*
9	Digital device	Device-related experiences e.g., lack of real-time interaction	*The timer disturbs me; I hadn't realized at all that I had already reached the end of the allotted time; I just remembered that I'm being filmed*
10	Faking	Making up examples or embellishing the situation	*I'm making things up; I had to make up a story; I'm bluffing*
11	Questions asked	Apprehension of the type of question	*I think that it's a tricky question; This question surprised me; The question put me in a difficult position*
12	Relevant response	Response deemed good and easy to find	*I think that it's a good experience; I knew exactly what I was going to answer; I found myself quite relevant there*
13	Other	Miscellaneous comments	*I was recalling the angry customer scene; The last project dates back to college; No idea what I had in mind at that moment*
14	Non-verbal behavior	Mentioning elements e.g., eye contact with the camera, body language	*I'm touching my head; I felt like I wasn't smiling enough; I'm moving a lot*
15	Repetition	Review of speech repetition instances	*I am repeating my words too many times; As usual, I'm repeating myself; I realize that I'm repeating myself*
16	Bad image	Concerns about the evaluator's (or other) perception	*I don't want to appear egocentric; I feel too preachy; I'm afraid talking about secondary school makes me feel a bit childish.*
17	Job information	Reflection on the requirements previously read in the job advertisement.	*I forgot the name of the job description; I'm trying to remember the job in general; I can't remember if the team has already been formed.*

10.2 Study 2

Orji, K., Bangerter, A., Germanier, E., Renier, L. A., & Schmid Mast, M. (2025). *Extended responses in asynchronous video interviews: Investigating frequency content, and interview outcomes*. Institute of Work and organizational Psychology, University of Neuchâtel.

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Extended Responses in Asynchronous Video Interviews: Investigating Frequency, Content, and Interview Outcomes

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Abstract

Past-behavior questions are common in job interviews, prompting applicants to share a story about their experiences. In asynchronous video interviews (AVIs), which lack real-time interaction, applicants often engage in extended responses — continuing to speak after completing their initial answers. This behavior seems to be influenced by the absence of feedback and the presence of visible countdown timers. Using a database of 114 mock AVIs with three past-behavior questions, this study examined the frequency and content of extended responses (i.e., disfluencies and storytelling), their associations with applicant characteristics (i.e., gender, age, personality, impression management), and their influence on interview outcomes (e.g., performance, engagement, persuasiveness). Over 75% of participants extended their responses to at least one question. Emotionality and honest self-promotion were positively associated with extended responses. Compared to initial responses, extended responses included more pauses but no additional fillers. Content analysis revealed that extended responses contained more results and values/opinions, while initial responses focused more on situational and task/action details. Performance and persuasiveness ratings were notably higher for initial responses compared to overall responses (initial+extended). While extended responses are common in AVIs, they appear to provide limited benefits and may even harm applicants' evaluations. These findings and their implications are discussed.

Keywords: asynchronous video interviews, extended responses, applicant behavior, interview evaluation, technology interview

Extended Responses in Asynchronous Video Interviews: Investigating Frequency, Content, and Interview Outcomes

Past-behavior interview questions have been a cornerstone of job interviews, based on the idea that past actions are good predictors of future performance (Janz, 1989). These questions ask applicants to describe specific situations that demonstrate their skills and abilities, for example "Can you describe a situation where you had to mediate a conflict between two employees?" (Ralston et al., 2003; Roulin, 2022). The quality of stories produced in everyday life depends on both the verbal and nonverbal feedback from listeners (Bavelas et al., 2000; Gosteli-Corvalan, 2017; Mandelbaum, 2013). Similarly, in selection interviews, interviewers can play an important role in helping applicants tell better stories (Brosy et al., 2020; Ralston et al., 2003).

Unfortunately, applicants in asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) do not receive verbal or nonverbal feedback. They record responses to pre-defined questions without interacting with an interviewer, making it hard to judge the relevance of their answers. Consequently, they might look to the AVI interface for cues, particularly the countdown timer, which can prompt them to either add more details or repeat points if they finish early (Lukacik et al., 2022). Responses can therefore be split into two phases: *the initial response*, which reflects the applicant's original storytelling, and *the extended response*, prompted by the remaining time. The literature on storytelling suggests that the content of extended responses may not improve the overall response quality and may even decrease it (Bavelas et al., 2000). Using an AVI database, we investigated the prevalence and content of extended responding in AVIs, who does this, and how it impacts interview outcomes.

This study makes three contributions. First, it demonstrates that the lack of real-time interaction in AVIs leaves applicants uncertain about whether their responses are adequate. Without feedback, they may add unnecessary details or overexplained points, affecting the quality of their answers. Second, it extends existing AVI research (e.g., Langer et al., 2020; Roulin et al., 2023) by revealing how specific AVI design elements, such as response time limits or visible countdown timers, influence applicants' behavior (Lukacik et al., 2022). Finally, it suggests ways to improve AVIs. Organizations could refine questions and adjust time

instructions, like removing the countdown timer. Applicants who understand how extended responses affect evaluations may focus on giving shorter, clearer answers to improve their chances.

Storytelling in responding to past behavior questions

Storytelling is an interactive process in which narrators ask their audience for feedback in order to gauge how well their story is being received. Nonverbal cues like nodding, simple acknowledgements like "mhm," or more focused remarks like "Goodness me" are some examples of this feedback (Bavelas et al., 2000; Bavelas & Gerwing, 2011; Norrick, 2007). When these cues are absent, storytellers may become uncertain about how the audience is attending to the narration, resulting in lower storytelling quality. Notably, a disengaged or unresponsive audience can disrupt narrators during key moments, like the story's ending, leading to disfluencies (e.g., pauses, fillers, repetitions, or hesitations) and resulting in disjointed conclusions, unnecessary repetition or justification of the narrative (Bavelas et al., 2000).

When responding to past-behavior questions, applicants act as narrators, while interviewers act as the audience, shaping how the story unfolds. Applicants often start by establishing the context and linking their story to the interview question to engage the audience right away. To convey their experiences vividly, they might incorporate direct speech, describe their thoughts, or reenact specific moments (Gosteli-Corvalan, 2017). As the story progresses, interviewers may ask follow-up questions, encouraging applicants to expand on details or share additional narratives, which adds depth to their story (Brosy et al., 2020). To close a story, applicants signal completion by summarizing key outcomes (e.g., "Our teamwork increased productivity by 20%") or returning to the initial point (e.g., "So, that's how I resolved the conflict"). Discourse markers like "To sum up" and nonverbal cues, such as nodding or stopping speaking, also reinforce closure. Interviewers are also expected to participate in closing by giving feedback (e.g., "Great job"), asking a follow-up question, or through nonverbal cues like nodding or smiling. Without such signals, applicants may continue offering new closures (Bavelas et al., 2000).

Stories can influence interviewers. A detailed story can transport the audience, which will make the recounted experience more vivid and enhance its impact (Schank & Berman, 2002). Narrative immersion, the state of being deeply engaged in a story, not only enhances a story's memorability and persuasiveness but also inherently signal the storyteller's motive and level of engagement (Green & Brock, 2000; Van Laer et al., 2013). When immersed, audiences are more open to the story's messages, increasing the likelihood of belief or attitude change (Nabi & Green, 2015; Oschatz & Marker, 2020). This occurs because, as individuals engage more deeply with the story, they become less critical and more willing to accept the ideas being conveyed. A well-told story allows applicants to manage impressions by showcasing key skills, and secure higher hiring recommendations (Bangerter et al., 2014; Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Applicants who thus tell a good story are more likely to be perceived as persuasive and competent.

Despite these benefits, telling a good story on the spot is challenging (Bangerter et al., 2014). Applicants find it hard to recall relevant examples and tend to focus too much on situational details without clearly connecting them to specific outcomes. Even when given questions in advance, this remains a common issue (Brosy et al., 2020). Such difficulties can cause applicants to pause for a long period right after the interviewer asks a question (Brosy et al., 2016). Such prolonged pauses often result in non-narrative responses, indicating that the speaker may have abandoned their attempt to find a story to narrate, which can negatively affect evaluations. Moreover, only 41.3% of responses to past-behavior questions reflect maximal performance. However, rewording questions to prompt high-performing examples increase the likelihood of maximal responding (Huffcutt et al., 2024).

Responding to Past-Behavior Questions in AVIs

In face-to-face interviews, storytelling relies on real-time interaction with the interviewer. However, this dynamic changes in AVIs, where applicants record their responses without receiving any feedback from an interviewer. AVIs offer various design options, such as different preparation times or the ability to re-record responses (Lukacik et al., 2022), which

influence outcomes. For instance, while applicants who use more preparation time perform better and engage (slightly) less in honest impression management (IM), those who use more re-recording attempts perform better and engage in less deceptive IM (Basch et al., 2021; Roulin et al., 2023).

Such design elements may also influence how applicants respond to past-behavior questions. As mentioned earlier, applicants often find it difficult to come up with relevant responses on the spot (Brosy et al., 2020). More preparation time may help them build a story that better fits the question and showcases their skills, as longer preparation time is associated with higher interview performance (Basch et al., 2021; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2024; Roulin et al., 2023). However, in AVIs, where applicants face a countdown timer and respond without an interviewer providing feedback or follow-up questions, it can be harder to gauge whether their responses are clear or complete, potentially lowering storytelling quality (Bavelas et al., 2000; Brosy et al., 2020). If time remains, applicants may feel the need to continue speaking, adding details or restating points, a behavior referred to as *extended responding*. Interestingly, participants produce as many stories in AVIs and face-to-face interviews (Germanier et al., 2024). However, applicants in AVIs tend to speak more and express their values and opinions more frequently (Germanier et al., 2024).

This study investigates extended responding using data from 114 participants who took part in a mock AVI as part of a study comparing face-to-face interviews and AVIs in terms of applicants' storytelling, interview performance, and criterion validity (Germanier et al., 2024). Participants completed measures of personality and IM use and answered three past-behavior questions. For the current study, we divided their responses into initial and extended phases. Since little is known about this phenomenon in AVIs, we used an inductive research approach guided by five open-ended research questions.

Research Question 1 (RQ1): *How frequently do applicants engage in extended responding in AVIs?* We aim to determine whether extended responding is a systematic behavior in AVIs or occurs sporadically. To address this, we coded applicants' initial and

extended responses based on response completion and counted the frequency of extended responses across participants.

Research Question 2 (RQ2): *Is extended responding in AVIs related to applicants' characteristics?* We aim to understand individual differences in extended responding behavior. To explore this, we examine the relationship between socio-demographic attributes (i.e., gender, age), personality traits (i.e., honesty-humility, emotionality, extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness), honest IM strategies (i.e., honest self-promotion, honest ingratiation, honest defensive), and the frequency of extended responding.

Research Question 3 (RQ3): *Are extended responses more disfluent than initial responses?* Unplanned extensions may compel applicants to fill silences with unplanned content, potentially increasing disfluencies such as pauses and fillers, which are often linked to uncertainty in spontaneous speech (Wollermann et al., 2013). We thus aim to understand whether this behavioral shift affects the fluency of extended responses compared to initial ones. To examine this, we will compare the frequency of fillers and duration of pauses between initial and extended responses.

Research Question 4 (RQ4): *What narrative elements differentiate extended from initial response responses in AVIs?* Storytelling in interviews often follows the STAR model (i.e., situation, task-action, and results), with initial responses typically emphasizing the situation and tasks/actions while providing less detail on results (Bangerter et al., 2014) We aim to explore whether extended responses rehash these elements or shift focus to other narrative components, such as values/opinions or justifications. To do so, we will code and analyse utterance types in initial and extended responses using the STAR model framework.

Research Question 5 (RQ5): *How do AVI outcomes differ between the initial response and the overall response?* Given that well-told stories are known to engage audience, showcase key skills, and shape perceptions of persuasiveness and competence (Bangerter et al., 2014; Green & Brock, 2000; Nabi & Green, 2015), we aim to compare evaluations of performance, engagement, and persuasiveness between the initial response and the overall response (i.e.,

initial and extended responses combined) to assess whether extended responding adds value or detracts from the initial response. This will be assessed using ratings from trained evaluators scoring responses on these three dimensions.

Method

Participants

This study focuses on 114 participants who took part in an AVI, including 69 women. ll were recruited from a subject pool at a Swiss university after ethics clearance was obtained. The average age was 21.70 years (*SD* = 3.30), with participants having completed an average of 2.01 job interviews (*SD* = 2.85). Educational backgrounds included 50% with a high school or professional degree, 42.1% with a bachelor's degree, 6.1% with a master's degree, and 1.8% with other degrees.

Procedure

Overview

The study by Germanier et al. (2024) consisted of two lab sessions. In the first session, participants gave consent, completed the 60-item HEXACO-PI-R (Ashton & Lee, 2009), and role-played a manager conducting layoffs with two actresses (Richter et al., 2016). They had 10 minutes to prepare for the first layoff scenario and 5 minutes for the second one. The study by consisted of two lab sessions. In the first session, participants gave consent, completed the 60-item HEXACO-PI-R, and role-played a manager conducting layoffs with two actresses (Richter et al., 2016). They had 10 minutes to prepare for the first layoff scenario and 5 minutes for the second one. Data from the layoff scenarios is not reported here.

About a week later, during the second session, participants returned to the lab to take part in a mock job interview for a managerial role. They were randomly assigned to either a face-to-face interview or an AVI condition. After the interview, participants completed measures of honest IM use and provided demographic information. Finally, they were debriefed and received monetary compensation of CHF 40 (USD $45) and a variable bonus of 0 CHF to 40

CHF, based on their performance at the layoffs and interview, to enhance motivation. Interviews were transcribed verbatim as a basis for coding of response phases, fillers and utterance types. In this study, we will focus exclusively on participants taking part in the mock AVI.

Job Interview

In the AVI condition, participants first read instructions about the platform they were about to use. The experimenter ensured the webcam and microphone were functioning properly and explained how the AVI worked before leaving the room. Participants had up to 20 seconds of preparation time before each question and 5 minutes of response time limit per question. They could start early by clicking "start recording" or finish early by clicking "stop recording". During the interview, participants could not see their own video feed and a countdown timer displaying the 5-minute limit per question was visible throughout the entire response. The interview session included a job interview introduction, on-screen written questions, and a closing text, mirroring the face-to-face interview script.

The interview was composed of four questions, a warm-up question and 3 past-behavior questions. The first question requested a brief introduction from applicants (i.e., "Could you please introduce yourself and summarize your background in a few words?"), the second and third questions evaluated multitasking (i.e., "Can you describe a situation where you were responsible for completing several tasks in a short period of time? How did you organize yourself to manage this situation?") and team management (i.e., "Can you describe a situation where one of your colleagues did not complete the tasks requested within the time limit. How did you deal with this situation?"). The last question requested applicants to recount the recent layoff experience (i.e., "Can you tell us about a recent situation in which you had to give bad news to someone?"). For this study, we focused our analysis on the three past-behavior questions.

Measures

Personality

Participants completed the 60-item French version of the HEXACO-PI-R R (Ashton & Lee, 2009), which included 10 items for each personality dimension: honesty-humility (α = .74; e.g., “I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed”), 10 items measuring emotionality (α = .80; e.g., “I would feel afraid if I had to travel in bad weather conditions”), 10 items measuring extraversion (α = .78; e.g., “I prefer jobs that involve active social interaction to those that involve working alone”), 10 items measuring agreeableness (α = .77; e.g., “My attitude toward people who have treated me badly is “forgive and forget”), 10 items measuring conscientiousness (α = .76; e.g., “I plan ahead and organize things, to avoid scrambling at the last minute”) and 10 items measuring openness to experience (α = .74; e.g., “I'm interested in learning about the history and politics of other countries”). Responses were rated on a 1-5 scale (1 = “completely disagree”, and 5 = “completely agree”), with higher scores indicating stronger alignment with the respective traits. Among the 60 items, 29 were reverse-scored. An average score was calculated for each dimension.

Impression Management

Honest IM was measured with a 32-item honest interview impression management scale (HIIM; Bourdage et al., 2018), slightly adjusted for the AVI context. The scale was translated from English to French and checked by backtranslation and included fourteen items measuring honest self-promotion IM (α = .88; e.g., “I talked about the accomplishments I’d had at my previous job”), eight items measuring honest ingratiation IM (α = .91; e.g., “I talked about the values the hiring organization and I shared”), ten items measuring honest defensive IM (α = .83; e.g., “I gave reasons why I felt benefited positively from a negative event I was responsible for”). Responses were rated on a 1-5 scale (1 = “completely disagree”, and 5 = “completely agree”) and an average score was computed for every dimension. A high score indicates a stronger use of honest impression management strategies.

Disfluencies: Pauses and Fillers

Disfluencies were coded by a research assistant and the first author. Fillers were defined as a short non-lexical sound such as “uh” or “um”. The number of fillers was computed for each past-behavior question, based on the transcriptions, and then summed across all questions for each participant. The final measure was the frequency of fillers. Interrater agreement for fillers was reported as Fleiss’ Kappa = .99 ($p < .01$).

A pause was defined as a period of at least 200 milliseconds (0.2 seconds) during which the participant did not produce speech, and the duration of pauses was measured using the ELAN software package (Wittenburg et al., 2006). The duration of silences was calculated for each past-behavior question, based on the video recordings, and then summed across all questions for each participant. The final measure was reported as the total pause duration in seconds. Interrater agreement for pauses, based on 20 double-coded interviews, was $r = .68$ ($p < .01$).

Response Phase: Initial and Extended Response

Response phases were coded by a research assistant and the first author, distinguishing between the initial and extended responses for each participant. To determine the demarcation point indicating the conclusion of the initial response, we used specific cues commonly associated with the end of a story or pseudo-story (Gosteli-Corvalan, 2017). These cues included summarizing the story, returning to the initial point, indicators referencing an outcome or resolution, and discourse markers signaling the end of speech, such as “To sum up”. The coding was done at the question level for the three past-behavior questions. Each question was coded as 1 if extended responding occurred and 0 if it did not. The scores were then summed up to give a total score per participant based on how many times they extended their responses across the three questions (ranging from 0 to 3).

For example, the following transcript (translated from French to English) illustrates an applicant's initial response and extended response, with fillers (i.e., "uh" and "um") and pauses (in seconds).

Initial response: "So uh it's true that in the uh legal field uh which is kind of a field (.57) uh mixed with entities that uh I'm part of which uh is quite different uh from the field I'm applying to uh but it's true that um the situations (.50) uh where there are quite a few responsibilities uh with short time frames uh are also quite common in that field as well (.77) and so uh the way I organize myself well it's about maximizing prioritization (.60) figuring out at what moment uh at what moment I absolutely need uh for example to be in contact with someone (.64) so I'll first handle the—if it's the evening I'll first handle the tasks (.67) the tasks I can do alone and then uh save the tasks (.73) that I need to do in collaboration for the uh the office hours uh the more classic office hours (.92) and um and then there you go stress stress makes you more efficient and you don't really have much time I think to ask yourself a lot of questions (.81) so uh so yeah just uh prioritize uh what's the most important thing to do (.89) leave the more minor things for last and uh try to to to think (1.33) well about the worst-case scenario like if I need someone okay well I'll need them and when and try to match the times when I can be in contact with those people with the times um when uh they'll be available (.89) and uh well (1.10) I think that's how it is well that's how I do it."

Extended response: "Uh (1.30) and um (1.34) yeah for uh well I've produced several uh videos uh for uh events so uh it had to be ready you know some time before the event and uh it's it's well there are plenty of things you can do alone and there are things you can't do alone and so that's how I organize myself."

Interrater agreement, based on double-coding of 17 participants, was high (Cohen's Kappa = .92, $p < .01$).

Utterance Type

The first and third authors segmented the participants' responses into utterances and subsequently coded them. First, the utterances were sorted into two overarching categories: narrative and decontextualized assertions. The narrative category was further divided into three subcategories: Situation, Task-Action, and Result (STAR; Bangerter et al. 2014). Decontextualized assertions were divided into three types: Values-Opinions (e.g., "because I think taking care of the relationship we have with, uh, our collaborators is important"; self-description (e.g., "I am a person who is relatively empathetic"), and justification (e.g., "It was for the good of my company"; Bangerter et al., 2014). All categories were mutually exclusive, meaning that each utterance received one of the 6 previously described codes. The sum of each response type was computed for the three past-behavior questions. Interrater agreement, based on the double-coding of 30 transcripts, was Fleiss' Kappa = .99, $p < .01$.

Response Evaluation: Performance, Engagement and Persuasiveness

Each response to one of the three past-behavior questions was evaluated on performance, engagement, and persuasiveness. Two research assistants evaluated the initial responses, while two others evaluated the overall responses, which included both initial and extended phases.

Performance. We measured performance using three items (α =.90) that measured the relevance of a response (i.e., how relevant the response was to the question), its clarity (i.e., how clear the response was) and perceived competence (i.e., how competent participants appeared). All responses were on a 1-5 scale (1 = "completely disagree", and 5 = "completely agree"), and an average score was calculated. Interrater reliability, based on double-coding of 25% of the data, was $r = .92$ for the initial response and $r = .93$ for the overall response (both $p < .01$).

Engagement. We measured participants' engagement through a single item (i.e., The participant appeared engaged/motivated while answering the questions) on a 1-5 scale (1 = "completely disagree", and 5 = "completely agree"). Interrater reliability, based on double-

coding of 25% of the data, was r = .81 for the initial response and r = .69 for the overall response (both p < .01).

Persuasiveness. We measured participants' persuasiveness through an item (i.e., The participant demonstrates persuasiveness in their responses). The response was measured on a 1-5 scale (1 = "completely disagree", and 5 = "completely agree"). Interrater reliability, based on double-coding of 25% of the data, was r = .74 for the initial response and r = .65 for the overall response (both p < .01).

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations between the main variables are provided in Table 1. RQ1 focused on the prevalence of extended responses among participants. Most of the participants (78.9%) extended their responses. Specifically, 25.4% extended their response for one past-behavior question, 20.2% for two questions, and 33.3% for all three questions. On average, participants talked for M = 162.83 seconds (SD = 60.66) per question. extending their responses talked on average per question 125.61 seconds (SD = 50.30) in the initial response and 72.76 seconds (SD = 35.71) in the extended response.

To answer RQ2 we investigated relations between extended responding and applicant characteristics. We thus correlated applicants' characteristics (gender, age, interview experience, personality, and use of IM) with their extended response scores (the number of questions featuring extended responses). There were no significant correlations between extended response scores and gender (r = .06, p = .56), age (r = .09, p = .35), or interview experience (r = .01, p = .95). Extended response scores did not correlate with honesty-humility (r = -.09, p = .32), extraversion (r = -.02, p = .86), agreeableness (r = .10, p = .29), conscientiousness (r = .09, p = .36), or openness (r = -.02, p = .83). However, there was a positive correlation between extended response scores and emotionality (r = .19, p = .05). There was no correlation between extended responses scores and ingratiation IM (r = -.06, p = .52) or defensive IM (r = .05, p = .58). However, there was a positive correlation between extended responses scores and honest self-promotion (r = .22, p = .02). Interestingly, there was also a positive correlation between

participants extended speaking score and their response word count (r = .62, p < .01) and response duration (r = .59, p < .01).

RQ3 investigated whether extended responses were more disfluent than initial responses. To address this, we conducted two paired-sample t-tests to compare disfluencies (i.e., fillers and pauses) between initial and extended responses. For fillers, we calculated the number of fillers relative to the total word count. The analysis revealed no significant difference in the filler ratio between initial and extended responses; $M_{initial}$ = .06 ($SD_{initial}$ = .03), $M_{extended}$ =.07 ($SD_{extended}$ = .04), t(86) = -.23, p = .82, Cohen's d = -.02, 95% confidence interval (*CI*) [-.23, .19]). Participants did not use more fillers in extended responses compared to initial ones. The analysis revealed a significant difference in the pause duration ratio between initial and extended responses; $M_{initial}$ = .07 ($SD_{initial}$ = .04), $M_{extended}$ = .10 ($SD_{extended}$ = .07), t(86) = -4.79, p < .01, Cohen's d = -.51, 95% *CI* [-.74, -.29]). Participants paused more in the extended response compared to the initial one.To address RQ4 and investigate differences in narrative elements between initial and extended responses, we conducted a repeated-measures ANOVA with response phase (Initial vs Extended response) and utterance type (Situation, Task/Action Results, Values/Opinion, Self-description, Justification and Other) as two within-subject factors, using the prevalence of utterance type (divided by the total number of utterances) as the dependent variable. Since Mauchly's test showed violations of the sphericity assumption for repeated measures, we used the Greenhouse-Geisser correction method in our analysis. Pairwise comparisons with Bonferroni adjustments are presented in Table 2. There was no main effect of response phase, F(1,86) = 1.43, p = .24, η_p^2 = .02, suggesting no difference between the initial response and the extended response. However, we observed a significant main effect of utterance type, F(2.14, 188.10) = 137.25, p < .01, η_p^2 = .62, indicating differences in how responses were produced. Finally, we found an interaction effect between response phase and utterance type, F(2.16, 186.07) = 31.61, p < .01, η_p^2 = .27, demonstrating that the differences between response phases depended on the type of utterance. In the initial response phase, participants produced more "Situation" and "Task-Action" utterances than in the extended response. Conversely, "Values/Opinion" and "Results" utterances increased from initial to

extended responses, while “Self-Description,” “Justification,” and “Other” utterances remained unchanged across both phases.

To address RQ5, which investigates how AVI outcomes differ between the initial response and the overall response, we conducted three paired sample *t*-tests with Bonferroni adjustments to compare response evaluation differences (performance, engagement and persuasiveness) between initial and overall responses. Results indicated that performance scores were higher in the initial response compared to the overall response; $M_{initial}$ = 3.54 ($SD_{initial}$ = .73), $M_{overall}$ =3.37 ($SD_{overall}$ = .64), $t(86) = 2.13$, $p = .04$, Cohen’s $d = .23$, 95% *CI* [.02, .44]. Similarly, persuasiveness scores were higher in the initial response compared to the overall response; $M_{initial}$ = 3.47 ($SD_{initial}$ = .49), $M_{overall}$ =2.93, ($SD_{overall}$ = .72), $t(86) = 7.05$, $p < .01$, Cohen’s $d = .76$, 95% *CI* [.52, .99]. However, there was no difference in engagement scores; $M_{initial}$ = 3.10 ($SD_{initial}$ = .65), $M_{overall}$ =3.00 ($SD_{overall}$ = .77), $t(86) = 1.78$, $p = .08$, Cohen’s $d = .19$, 95% *CI* [-.02, .40]. Globally, then, responses were evaluated more favourably in the initial response compared to the overall one.

Discussion

This study explored the phenomenon of extended responses in AVIs, examining their prevalence, relationships with participants’ characteristics (i.e., socio-demographic attributes, personality, IM strategies), content (i.e., disfluencies and storytelling), and outcomes (i.e., performance, engagement, persuasiveness). In AVIs, there is no interviewer to interact with and thus no real-time feedback. Even though participants were told they could stop once they finished responding, extended responses were common, with about one-third of applicants consistently adding more to their responses across all questions. The visible countdown timer appears to trigger extended responding, suggesting that without feedback, applicants interpret remaining time as a cue to continue speaking rather than as a neutral constraint. This aligns with previous research on storytelling, which indicates that the absence of real-time interaction disrupts traditional conversational flow (Bavelas et al., 2000).

Further, the tendency to extend responses varied based on individual characteristics. Applicants with higher emotionality scores were more likely to extend their responses. According to emotion regulation theory, individuals with higher emotionality may have struggled to regulate their emotions in stressful situations like AVIs (Gross, 2014), and the lack of real-time feedback may have prompted them to extend their responses as a coping mechanism to regain control. Those who engaged in honest self-promotion were also more likely to extend their responses, possibly seeing the additional time as a chance to emphasize their skills or reiterate why they were well-suited for the position (Bourdage et al., 2018). On the other hand, strategies like ingratiation or defensive behaviors did not show the same link to extended responses. This makes sense, as these approaches usually depend on immediate social cues, which are missing in AVIs (Bolino et al., 2008).

Regarding the disfluencies, participants paused more in their extended responses compared to the initial ones, although filler use did not differ. This suggests that during these extended phases, applicants felt compelled to continue speaking, even when they had exhausted their initial thoughts. Without knowing what to say next, they had to formulate unplanned new utterances, resulting in more pauses. This aligned with prior research showing that the absence of immediate feedback could increase disfluencies at the end of a story (Bavelas et al., 2000).

Extended responses alter response structure as they didn't follow the same structure as initial ones. While the first part of applicants' answers typically focused on the situation and tasks/actions, the extended responses leaned more toward discussing results and expressing personal values or opinions. This pattern is common in storytelling in face-to-face interviews, where individuals often emphasize the situation and tasks/actions, while neglecting outcomes (Bangerter et al., 2014). In AVIs, to compensate for the uncertainty linked to the closure of the initial response, they add more details about results and link the story to their values and opinions, ensuring that the connection between their behavior and personal values is understood. While Bavelas et al. (2000) studied storytelling in face-to-face settings, their

findings on narrators justifying or rehashing endings remain relevant in AVIs, as the lack of feedback likely triggers similar behaviors.

Finally, concerning the differences in interview outcomes between the initial response and the overall response (i.e., initial plus extended response), while engagement scores showed no differences, performance and persuasiveness scores were higher for initial responses compared to the overall responses. Extended responses in AVIs could overwhelm evaluators with excessive information and increase their cognitive load, making it harder to pinpoint key points and assess core competencies. Also, extended responses were frequently perceived as unfocused or rambling, which could diminish the persuasiveness of applicants' arguments (Nabi & Green, 2015; Oschatz & Marker, 2020). Extended responding appears thus to have limited benefits and can even negatively impact the evaluation of applicants' performance and persuasiveness. This means that extended responses in AVIs might add noise to selection processes and even impair validity by making it harder for raters to distinguish strong from weak applicants. This effect may unintentionally disadvantage high-emotionality applicants, who could be disproportionately affected by extended responding biases.

Based on these findings, applicants should aim to keep their answers concise and focused, using structured approaches like the STAR method to improve clarity (Bangerter et al., 2014; Nabi & Green, 2015). At the same time, organizations need to recognize that the lack of interaction in AVIs is already challenging for applicants and design elements, such as visible countdown timers and response time limits, could further negatively influence on applicant behavior. Providing a reasonable time limit, like three minutes, could help applicants deliver thorough but concise answers without unnecessary stress or disfluencies (Liff et al., 2024; Lukacik et al., 2022). Balancing these factors could make the process fairer and more effective.

This study has some limitations. First, we used mock interviews with university students. These scenarios may not fully capture the high-stakes nature of actual AVIs, where applicants are genuinely interested in the job and have profiles closely aligned with the role, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. While financial incentives and the use of honest IM

strategies suggest participants were motivated, real AVIs may amplify these effects due to greater applicant investment. Future research should replicate this study in real-life settings to enhance generalizability. We anticipate that in a real AVI context, the phenomenon may be even more pronounced due to the increased incentive for applicants to ensure they are understood clearly.

Another limitation lies in the design of the AVI used in this study. The parameters were set to make the AVIs comparable to face-to-face interviews (Germanier et al., 2024), which may not reflect the diversity of timing and settings in real AVIs. Not all time limits may prompt extended responses. Future studies should explore the manipulation of response time limits or no time limit in AVIs and their impact on extended responses. Future research should prioritize investigating how the lack of real-time interaction in AVIs contributes to extended responses and explore strategies to mitigate its effects. The absence of immediate feedback may create uncertainty, prompting applicants to provide longer, more detailed answers as they attempt to ensure their points are understood. Studies could test the effect of incorporating simulated real-time feedback, such as virtual avatars providing nods or affirming gestures, to replicate the presence of an interviewer. Also, including explicit, visible instructions on the interface during the interview—reminding applicants that they do not need to use the full time provided—could help reduce unnecessary extended responses. These measures could enhance the realism of AVIs and potentially improve applicant performance.

Conclusion

Our study examines extended responses in AVIs, showing how the absence of real-time interaction influences speaking time and applicant behavior. Extended responses, often driven by lack of real time feedback, are common but lack benefits and can overwhelm evaluators. We recommend addressing speaking time in AVIs through clearer time guidance and features to reduce uncertainty. Future research should explore how design elements like response time limits or on-screen instructions affect speaking time and its link to interview outcomes, such as applicant performance and evaluator decisions.

Declaration of generative AI and AI assisted technologies in the writing process

The authors used ChatGPT 4.0 (OpenAI, https://chat.openai.com/chat) to check grammar, spelling, and to improve readability in this paper. After using the tool, the authors thoroughly reviewed and revised the content as needed and take full responsibility for the final published article.

Disclosure statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are openly available in OSF: https://osf.io/jknrv/?view_only=8ad468226b664057b6a627627f4916c7

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations Between Study Variables.

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1	Gender	1.39	.49	-															
2	Age	21.70	3.30	.17	-														
3	Interview experience	2.01	2.85	.07	.52**	-													
4	Honesty-Humility	3.44	.67	.02	.22*	.01	-												
5	Emotionality	3.14	.71	-.37**	-.07	-.02	.15	-											
6	Extraversion	3.36	.61	.11	.02	.17	-.05	-.28**	-										
7	Agreeableness	3.14	.64	.05	.12	.00	.25**	-.13	-.12	-									
8	Conscientiousness	3.58	.57	.08	.09	.06	.25**	.14	-.05	-.03	-								
9	Openness	3.57	.63	.01	.03	.01	.17	-.03	.29**	.26**	.05	-							
10	Honest Self-Promotion IM	2.99	.72	.13	.02	.01	-.22*	.04	.24**	.01	.10	.01	-						
11	Honest Ingratiation IM	2.31	.86	.05	.09	.08	-.07	.04	.12	-.05	-.03	-.05	.51**	-					
12	Honest Defensive IM	2.84	.77	.17	.06	-.04	.03	-.17	.07	.26**	-.04	.07	.31**	.44**	-				
13	Response Word Count	432.51	176.42	.03	-.01	-.11	.03	.00	-.01	.16	.08	00	.32**	-.01	.22*	-			
14	Response Duration	162.83	60.66	.07	.04	-.11	.07	-.03	-.07	.24*	.05	.07	.20*	-.06	.21*	.90**	-		
15	Fillers	.06	.03	-.11	-.06	-.05	-.01	-.08	-.13	.07	.05	.09	-.04	-.09	-.03	-.09	.05	-	
16	Pauses (seconds)	.18	.08	.26**	.12	-.05	.10	-.12	-.11	.19*	-.08	.17	-.29**	-.19*	-.11	-.20*	.06	.12	-
17	Extended Response Score	1.59	1.16	.06	.09	.01	-.09	.19*	-.02	.10	.09	-.02	.22*	-.06	.05	.62**	.59**	.07	-.02

Note: N = 114. Pearson correlation with pairwise deletion. IM = Impression management; Gender: 1 = Female, 2= Male; Interview experience = Number of prior interviews; All personality and IM responses were on a 1-5 scale. $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Pairwise Comparisons for Utterance Type per Response Phase (Initial Response and Extended Response)

	Initial Response	Extended Response	Pairwise Comparisons		
	***M*(*SD*)**	***M*(*SD*)**	**Mean Difference**	**Standard error**	**95% CI**
Situation	27.00(14.39)	10.35(14.03)	16.64**	2.08	[12.50; 20.78]
Task-Action	41.44(15.47)	31.93(25.36)	9.52**	3.13	[3.30; 15.74]
Results	5.05(6.15)	9.06(14.49)	-4.01*	1.56	[-7.10; -.92]
Values/Opinion	19.49(14.76)	42.33(31.90)	-22.85**	3.33	[-29.46; -16.23]
Self-Description	1.40(3.20)	2.04(4.66)	.64	.60	[-1.83; .55]
Justification	1.94(2.81)	1.25(3.90)	-.70	.51	[-.31; 1.71]
Other	3.67(3.93)	4.19(6.00)	.52	.76	[-2.03; 1.00]

Note: $N = 87$; $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$

10.3 Study 3

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Tick tock, tick tock, time's up! How response time limits in asynchronous video interviews influence interview anxiety, impression management, and performance

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This study is pre-registered as an anonymous AsPredicted form https://aspredicted.org/8dct-y37t.pdf.

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Abstract

Asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) often feature a limit on the total time allotted for an applicant's response to a question. Little is known about how this time limit affects applicants' experiences and outcomes. This experiment investigates the influence of different response time limits, one, three, or five minutes, on interview anxiety, impression management (IM), and interview performance. Participants (N = 185) took part in a mock AVI. We measured their interview anxiety state, honest and deceptive IM usage, and interview performance. Results showed that time limits did not directly affect anxiety or IM, but changed how long participants spoke. Applicants spoke differently depending on the condition, with speaking time plateauing from three minutes. Speaking longer was linked to lower anxiety, more honest IM, and higher performance. However, simply offering more time did not guarantee these benefits. In fact, longer response time limits increased anxiety and lowered honest IM and performance when controlling for speaking time. Also, performance followed a curvilinear pattern: it was highest with a 3-minute time limit and lower when applicants had one or five minutes. These findings suggest that while one minute may not seem enough to applicants, giving more than three does not improve outcomes.

Keywords: asynchronous video interviews, response time limit, interview performance, impression management, interview anxiety, technology

Practitioner Points:

- Asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) can be designed in various ways, particularly by adjusting the response time limit.
- Response time limit has a curvilinear relationship with interview performance.
- Speaking time increases as response time limit moves from one minute to three minutes and then plateaus.
- Speaking time mediates the relationship between response time limits and interview anxiety, honest IM, and interview performance.
- Organizations and AVI providers can ensure applicants have sufficient time to respond (more than one minute), without giving too much extra time, which does not provide additional value

Tick tock, tick tock, time's up! How response time limits in asynchronous video interviews influence interview anxiety, impression management, and performance

Introduction

Asynchronous video interviews (AVIs) are increasingly used across industries in early hiring stages (Woods et al., 2020), and offer a flexible and cheap alternative to in-person interviews (Brenner et al., 2016). An AVI is a one-way interview in which applicants log onto an online platform and, typically under time constraints, record their responses to predefined questions; these recordings are later evaluated by an interviewer or a computer algorithm, meaning there is no direct communication with an interviewer (Lukacik et al., 2022). Although AVIs come with clear benefits, many applicants report negative feelings about them, often pointing to the absence of real-time interaction (Langer et al., 2017; Zibarras et al., 2025). Still, highlighting the high standardization and scheduling flexibility of AVIs can help improve perceptions of fairness and usability (Basch & Melchers, 2019).

While early research on AVIs took a *technology-as-causal* perspective, comparing outcomes and reactions to traditional formats, recent work adopts a *technology-as-designed* perspective, focusing on how design features shape applicant behavior and interview outcomes (Landers & Marin, 2021). Lukacik et al. (2022) proposed a framework examining how AVI design may influence applicants' experiences and interview outcomes. Building on it, this study investigates how response time limit, the maximum time applicants have to respond, affects their interview anxiety, use of impression management (IM) tactics, and interview performance. To do so, we manipulate response time limit across three conditions: one, three, and five minutes. The three-minute limit serves as our baseline because it is commonly used in industry (Liff et al., 2024) and allows sufficient self-expression (Langer et al., 2017). We then create shorter and longer conditions by reducing or extending the baseline by two minutes.

This study advances existing research on how AVI design influences applicant experience and interview outcomes (e.g., Lukacik & Bourdage, 2024) and extends Lukacik et al.'s (2022) framework by investigating how response time limits may affect not only interview anxiety but also affect applicants' use of IM tactics and interview performance. This study also provides

guidance for hiring organizations and AVI providers on setting response time limits to balance standardization with applicant comfort and helps applicants manage settings to their advantage (e.g., improve their performance by making effective use of the time provided).

AVI Design and Response Time Limit

Much early research focused on comparing AVIs to face-to-face (FTF) interviews. Because AVIs remove real-time interaction, applicants have fewer chances to ask follow-up questions or get immediate feedback (Torres & Mejia, 2017). These studies generally conclude that applicants perceive AVIs as less fair and more stressful than FTF interviews (Basch et al., 2020; Blacksmith et al., 2016; Hiemstra et al., 2019; Kleinlogel et al., 2023; Melchers et al., 2021). However, a limitation is that many of these studies designed AVIs closely based on FTF interviews, by limiting preparation time for example (e.g., Germanier et al., 2025; Kleinlogel et al., 2023). As a result, they treated AVIs as if they all worked the same way, overlooking how much the design can vary.

Recently, AVI research has shifted toward a *technology-as-designed* perspective, focusing on how design features influence applicant behavior and interview outcomes (Landers & Marin, 2021). Growing evidence shows that specific design choices influence applicant experience. A relatedness-supportive introductory video, with an empathetic message and humor, improves applicant satisfaction and organizational attraction during AVIs (Moore et al., 2024). Furthermore, applicants with more preparation time and the option to re-record react more positively to AVIs, while those faced with a high number of questions react more negatively (Roulin et al., 2022; Tilston et al., 2024). These effects are not the same for everyone: applicants over 30 years old react more negatively to longer interviews, while those under 30 years old appreciate having more time to respond (Tilston et al., 2024).

This study examines response time limit in AVIs, the maximum duration allowed for applicants to answer each question before the recording automatically stops. Unlike in live interviews, where response length can vary depending on the conversation flow, AVIs often impose fixed time limits (Dunlop et al., 2022). With a short response time limit, recordings can end before applicants are finished, or applicants may rush, skip important details, or struggle to

showcase their skills. Conversely, a longer response time limit can prompt applicants to overthink and feel pressured to keep talking just to fill the time, even when they have nothing more to add; this can lead to extended responses that lack focus (Orji et al., 2025). Ideally, the response time limit should allow applicants to deliver clear, structured answers that reflect their ability without the constraints of time.

AVI Anxiety

Job interviews often act as stressors, triggering anxiety, a state of nervousness, apprehension, and heightened self-awareness (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004). Unlike general stress, anxiety involves fear of negative evaluation, often driven by uncertainty or perceived threat (Spielberger, 1985). It can reflect a predisposition (trait anxiety) or arise in a specific situation (state anxiety; Spielberger, 1985, 2010). Most applicants report anxiety, often due to concerns about selection outcomes (Powell et al., 2018).

Interview format also influences anxiety. Video conference interviews tend to elicit higher anxiety than face-to-face or telephone formats (Melchers et al., 2021). AVIs appear to produce similar levels (Roulin et al., 2022), though this has not been tested directly (Constantin et al., 2021). AVIs also present unique challenges due to the absence of real-time interaction. Without immediate feedback, like smiles, nods, or clarifying questions, applicants may feel isolated or overly self-aware (Constantin et al., 2021). Providing preparation time or re-recording options does not appear to influence anxiety (Roulin et al., 2022), but media-rich AVIs may increase social presence and reduce anxiety (Rizi & Roulin, 2023).

Some AVIs display countdown timers, making time pressure and evaluation more salient and potentially intensifying anxiety (Lukacik et al., 2022). Shorter time limits may increase applicants' anxiety by making them feel rushed and amplifying fears of negative judgment (McCarthy et al., 2017). Giving applicants more time might help some feel less anxious and express themselves more clearly. But longer time limits can also have the opposite effect. Applicants who become too aware of unused time or start questioning the completeness of their answers may experience more self-doubt, which can increase anxiety (Orji et al., 2025).

RQ1. How does the response time limit in AVIs impact applicants' interview anxiety?[1]

Impression Management in AVIs

Applicants often engage in IM behaviors during interviews to create, maintain, or enhance a favorable image (Ellis et al., 2002). IM can be broadly categorized as honest (e.g., truthful self-promotion) or deceptive (e.g., exaggeration; Bolino et al., 2008). However, engaging in IM (honest or deceptive) requires applicants to have the willingness, capacity, and opportunity to do so (Bourdage et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion, 2006). AVIs impose unique constraints on these factors compared to traditional interviews. AVIs lack dynamic social cues and interaction, which reduce opportunities for applicants to use other-focused IM (e.g., ingratiation; Lukacik et al., 2022). Applicants themselves report reduced intentions to use IM in AVIs, likely due to the format's limited capacity to support a sense of social presence (Basch et al., 2020).

Despite these constraints, AVI design features can influence IM behaviors. Richer media or providing information about the evaluator may increase the use of other-focused IM strategies, such as ingratiation (Rizi & Roulin, 2023). Similarly, more preparation time is linked, albeit weakly, to more honest IM (Basch, Brenner, et al., 2021; Roulin et al., 2022). Re-recording options and warnings about algorithmic detection of faking also reduce deceptive IM (Langer et al., 2020; Roulin et al., 2022). However, some AVI features produce inconsistent effects. Lukacik and Bourdage (2024) found that preparation time and re-recording options had no impact on honest or deceptive IM behaviors. Similarly, warnings about faking detection and evaluator type (human vs. automated) showed minimal influence on IM strategies. However, some combinations of AVI features, such as allowing applicants to review their responses without enabling re-recording, increased the willingness to engage in deceptive IM.

In this study, we suggest that longer response times can facilitate IM by allowing applicants greater opportunity to elaborate on their responses. When applicants have more time, they are more likely to extend their answers, and those who do so, tend to use more honest IM (Orji et al., 2025). This is because a longer response time allows applicants to move beyond simply summarizing their experiences. They can provide more detail, explain their point of view, and highlight relevant skills and strengths, all of which reflect honest IM (Bourdage et al., 2018). We thus hypothesize that the more time applicants have, the more they will engage in honest

IM. On the other hand, more time may also add pressure to use up all the available time (Orji et al., 2025). Applicants who lack sufficient relevant content or meaningful examples may feel compelled to continue speaking, even if they have nothing else to say. Under this pressure, they may resort to making false claims, thereby increasing deceptive IM (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021; Levashina & Campion, 2006). In this case, the extra time could provide both the opportunity and motivation to engage in deceptive IM tactics.

H1. When response time limit in AVIs increases, applicants use more honest (H1a) and deceptive (H1b) IM.

AVI Performance

Interview performance is central to selection processes as it captures how clearly and effectively applicants communicate their skills, experiences, and fit for a role (Huffcutt et al., 2011). Compared with in-person interviews, AVIs offer lower social bandwidth (i.e., the degree to which relevant information can be communicated), reduced interactivity (i.e., the degree to which interaction is possible), and less transparency (i.e., the degree to which communication is smooth and the medium goes unnoticed; Potosky, 2008). In other words, in AVIs, applicants have fewer communication channels (e.g., nonverbal cues), and may thus become aware of interacting through technology rather than FTF (Potosky, 2008). These constraints may lead applicants to feel less clear or confident in their responses and to perceive their performance as poorer (Kleinlogel et al., 2023; Langer et al., 2017; Muralidhar et al., 2020). Yet, despite these perceptions, there are no real differences between AVI and FTF interview performance, whether assessed objectively (e.g., behaviorally anchored rating scales) or through subjective recruiter ratings (Germanier et al., 2025; Kleinlogel et al., 2023). Furthermore, AVI design elements such as richer media and the ability to re-record responses can enhance performance (Lukacik & Bourdage, 2024; Rizi & Roulin, 2023; Roulin et al., 2022). Preparation time also positively influences performance not only through the amount of preparation time applicants spend preparing (Roulin et al., 2022) but also through active response preparation (i.e., taking notes and identifying the most important points to mention; Basch et al., 2021).

Another AVI feature likely to influence interview performance is the response time limit. If the limit is too short, applicants may struggle to fully express their thoughts or experiences, resulting in rushed or incomplete answers. These incomplete responses could negatively affect performance ratings because key details may be missing, as detailed responses tend lead to higher performance (Huffcutt et al., 2024). Conversely, giving applicants too much time may lead them to over-explain or rehash their point. This could lead to less focused responses and make them harder for evaluators to follow (Orji et al., 2025). Ideally, applicants need a balanced response window, enough time to clearly communicate details without getting lost in unnecessary elaboration. The three-minute limit, as is commonly used (Liff et al., 2024), may strike this optimal balance, helping applicants perform at their best while avoiding the pitfalls of too little or too much time.

H2. Interview performance will be highest with a three-minute response time limit, and lower with both shorter and longer response time limits.

Method

Sample

We recruited students from a subject pool in a university. A power analysis using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009), assuming an average effect size of $f = 0.25$, using one-way ANOVAs with three groups, and assuming a power of $1\text{-}\beta = 0.80$, determined that $N = 179$ participants would be necessary. We thus recruited a sample of 185 participants with 50% women. Mean participant age was 20.71 ($SD = 3.24$) years. Participants had on average 15.98 ($SD = 43.20$) months of work experience and participated in 2.39 ($SD = 4.80$) in-person interviews. Only 10.8% of participants had experienced an AVI with an average of 1.75 AVIs ($SD = 1.21$) prior to the study. Most participants had a high-school diploma (71.9%), while 22.7% had a Bachelor's degree and 5.4% a Master's degree.

Study Design

Data collection took place on an AVI platform that allows manipulation of various design elements as response time limit. We manipulated the response limit per question across three conditions: 1 minute, 3 minutes, and 5 minutes. The choice of the 3-minute baseline was based

on its common use in AVIs (Liff et al., 2024) and its recommendation as an appropriate response time limit to help applicants feel they have enough time to express themselves (Langer et al., 2017). Then, for the two other conditions, we adjusted by adding and subtracting two minutes from the initial three minutes. Participants were randomly allocated and evenly distributed across the three conditions to ensure a balanced design.

Procedure[2]

Participants were welcomed by an experimenter and began by reading and signing an informed consent form. After making sure the webcam and microphone were working properly, participants were then given three minutes to read a job description for an assistant manager position in a new company based in the university's city. During this time, they could take notes to use in the interview. Once the three minutes were up, the experimenter answered any questions about the job offer.

The experimenter then explained how the AVI would work: Participants would see four written questions on screen, one at a time, and would have one chance to record each response. They were told they could stop recording early and move to the next question if they wished. The response time limit depended on their assigned condition (one, three, or five minutes). Each question was followed by a 15-second preparation time, during which participants could read the question and prepare their response but could not start the recording themselves. The recording began automatically after the preparation time. During the recording, participants could see a countdown timer showing how much time they had left. They could stop the recording at any point by clicking a button, or let it run until the time limit, at which point it would stop automatically. Once everything was clear, the experimenter left the room.

Participants answered four questions: A question inviting them to introduce themselves and put them at ease (i.e., *Could you please introduce yourself and briefly summarize your background?*), two past-behavior questions (i.e., Planning and organization: *Talk about a situation where you had to deal with an unforeseen event that required you to reorganize your work or adjust the planning of a project. Explain how you reacted to manage the situation.* and Communication: *Describe a situation where you had to communicate a complex topic to*

your superiors, colleagues, or other individuals. How did you handle this situation?), and a question about their Person-Job fit (i.e., *Why do you think you would be the right person for this job?*). All questions were pilot-tested to ensure they could be reasonably answered within the assigned response windows of 1, 3, or 5 minutes. To isolate the effect of response time, each participant received the same time limit across all four questions within their condition, minimizing variation due to question type or complexity and enhancing internal validity.

After the interview, participants completed a Qualtrics questionnaire that included the Measure of Anxiety in Selection Interviews (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004), the Honest Interview Impression Management short scale, the Interview Faking Behavior short scale (Bourdage et al., 2018), and some demographic questions (i.e., age, gender, education, job experience, interview experience). Finally, participants received 20 CHF (USD $22.20) for participating. To create an incentive, they were also told that the 12 participants with the best interview performance would receive a bonus of 30 CHF (USD $33.30), which they received after the study.

Measures

Interview Anxiety

Participants completed a 17-item version of the Measure of Anxiety in Selection Interviews scale (McCarthy & Goffin, 2004), using the version adapted for state anxiety in AVIs in Roulin et al. (2022). This version includes items from three types of interview anxiety: communication (e.g., *During the interview, I often could not think of a thing to say*), social (e.g., *I became very uptight about having to record my responses for an interviewer*), and performance anxiety (e.g., *In the interview, I got very nervous about whether my performance was good enough*). We computed an average anxiety score ($\alpha = .89$), with responses rated on a 1–5 scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*).

Impression Management

Honest and deceptive IM were measured using the 11-item Honest Interview Impression Management short scale and the 15-item Interview Faking Behavior Short Scale, both slightly adapted for the AVI context (Bourdage et al., 2018). Honest IM included items for honest self-promotion (e.g., *I made sure I emphasized my skills and abilities*), honest ingratiation (e.g., *I*

discussed interests that I shared in common with the hiring organization), and honest defensive IM (e.g., *I gave reasons why I felt I benefited positively from a negative event I was responsible for*). Deceptive IM included items for slight image creation (e.g., *I exaggerated my responsibilities on my previous jobs*), extensive image creation (e.g., *I invented some work situations or accomplishments that did not really occur*), deceptive ingratiation (e.g., *I tried to show that I shared the organization's views and ideas even if I did not*), and image protection (e.g., *I tried to avoid discussing my lack of skills or experiences*). Finally, we computed an average honest IM score (α = .66) and deceptive IM (α = .86) score. All responses were on a 1-5 scale (*strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*).

Interview Performance

Participants' interview performance was evaluated by two trained research assistants who were blind to the experimental conditions, including the response time limits. They scored each video response on a 1-5 scale (*completely disagree* to *completely agree*) using three items (α = .90; Kleinlogel et al., 2023) measuring relevance of response (i.e., The participant provides relevant answers), clarity of response (i.e., The participant answers the questions clearly), and perceived competence (i.e., The participant appears competent in responding to the question). Each participant received three ratings per question. These were averaged at the question level, then again across the four questions to compute an interview performance score per participant. Interrater reliability, established through double-coding 25% of the data, was high (r = .92, p < .01).

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations among study variables are provided in Table 1.

Speaking time

Participants in the 1-minute condition talked for 55.48 (*SD* = 5.95) seconds, those in the 3-minute condition talked for 127.07 (*SD* = 40.29) seconds, and those in the 5-minute condition talked for 136.49 (*SD* = 51.15) seconds. Figure 1 shows histograms of speaking time (in seconds) for each response time limit condition (1, 2, and 3 minutes). In the 1-minute condition,

responses clustered near 60 seconds, with most participants using the full time. The 3-minute condition showed more spread, with many responses between 80 and 120 seconds. The 5-minute condition was more dispersed, with a flatter distribution and responses ranging broadly, though most stayed under 180 seconds.

A one-way ANOVA with Bonferroni-adjusted pairwise comparisons indicated a significant effect of response time limit on speaking time, $F(2, 182) = 84.04$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .48$. Pairwise comparisons showed that the 1-minute condition differed significantly from both the 3-minute ($M_{diff} = -71.59$, $SE = 6.83$, $p < .01$, 95% *CI* [-88.09, -55.10]) and the 5-minute condition ($M_{diff} = -81.01$, $SE = 6.83$, $p < .01$, 95% *CI* [-97.50, -64.51]), whereas there was no difference between the 3-minute and 5-minute conditions ($M_{diff} = -9.41$, $SE = 6.80$), $p = .50$, 95% *CI* [-25.84, 7.01]. Participants thus spoke significantly less in the 1-minute condition compared to the longer conditions.

Given the large within-condition variations in speaking time in the three-minute and five-minute conditions, we did not only examine how response time limits influence anxiety, honest and deceptive IM, and performance, but also explored the role of actual speaking time as a mediator of these relationships (Figure 2)[3]. To compute the mediation models, we used the lavaan package in R with 5000 bootstrap samples. Speaking time was rescaled by dividing by 60 to reduce the large variance. Both linear and squared terms for response time limit were included to account for the observed nonlinear effects, with response time limits centered to reduce multicollinearity. When reporting the regression analyses, we coded the time limit variable as –1, 0, and +1, centered on the 3-minute condition. Both the linear ($\beta = .63$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$) and quadratic ($\beta = -.28$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$) terms significantly predicted speaking time, indicating that speaking time increased curvilinearly across conditions. Together, the response time limit variables explained 47% of the variance in speaking time.

Anxiety

The mean anxiety scores for the 1-minute, 3-minute, and 5-minute response times were 2.59 ($SD = .75$), 2.72 ($SD = .69$), and 2.77 ($SD = .76$). The total effect analysis showed neither significant linear ($\beta = .09$, $SE = .07$, $p = .17$) nor quadratic effects ($\beta = -.04$, $SE = .11$, $p = .73$). As

a result, when not accounting for speaking time, response time limit was not related to anxiety. However, mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect via speaking time. The model explained 9% of the variance in anxiety (R^2 = .09). Increased speaking time significantly predicted reduced anxiety (β = -.42, *SE* = .09, $p < .01$). The linear indirect effect was negative and significant (β = –.24, *SE* = .06, $p < .01$), indicating that increasing response time initially reduced anxiety by allowing participants to speak longer. The quadratic indirect effect was positive and significant (β = .19, *SE* = .06, $p < .01$), suggesting that very high response time limits do not increase speaking time, and may thereby increase anxiety. After accounting for speaking time, the direct linear effect became significant and positive (β = .37, *SE* = .09, $p < .01$), indicating that at equivalent speaking times, longer response time limits increased anxiety. The quadratic direct effect remained nonsignificant (β = -.14, *SE* = .08, $p = .06$). In sum, speaking time mediated the relationship between response time limit and anxiety. While more time helped reduce anxiety by allowing participants to speak more, very long time limits may have introduced other stressors that increased anxiety independently of how much applicants actually spoke.

Because anxiety score was correlated with gender, a two-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of response time condition and gender (men vs. women) on interview anxiety [4]. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of gender, $F(1, 179) = 23.72$, $p < .01$, indicating that women reported higher levels of interview anxiety (*M* = 2.93, *SD* = 0.69) compared to men (*M* = 2.45, *SD* = 0.64). There was no main effect of condition, $F(2, 179) = 1.22$, $p = .30$. The interaction between condition and gender was significant, $F(2, 179) = 5.48$, $p = .01$, suggesting that the effect of response time limit on anxiety differed by gender. To unpack this interaction, separate one-way ANOVAs were conducted for men and women. For men, the effect of condition on interview anxiety was significant, $F(2, 89) = 4.12$, $p = .02$. Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD indicated that men in the 3-minute condition (*M* = 2.71, *SE* = 0.12) reported significantly more anxiety than those in the 1-minute condition (*M* = *2.23*, SE = 0.12; p = .02). However, anxiety in the 5-minute condition (*M* = 2.40, *SE* = 0.12) did not differ from either the 1-minute ($p = .58$) or 3-minute condition ($p = .17$). For women, the effect of condition

approached significance, $F(2, 90) = 2.53$, $p = .09$. Post hoc comparisons confirmed that none of the differences between conditions were significant ($p_s > .05$). Anxiety levels in the 1-minute ($M = 2.95$, $SE = 0.13$), 3-minute ($M = 2.73$, $SE = 0.13$), and 5-minute ($M = 3.12$, $SE = 0.12$) conditions did not differ significantly from one another.

Honest IM

We then examined how response time limit influenced applicants' honest IM. The mean honest IM scores for the 1-minute, 3-minute, and 5-minute response times were 3.15 ($SD = .51$), 3.19 ($SD = .61$), and 3.09 ($SD = .59$), respectively. The total effect analysis revealed neither a significant linear ($\beta = -.03$, $SE = .05$, $p = .56$) nor a quadratic effect ($\beta = -.08$, $SE = .09$, $p = .40$), indicating no relationship between response time limit and honest IM when speaking time was not considered. Mediation analysis, however, indicated a significant indirect effect via speaking time. The model explained 11% of the variance in honest IM ($R^2 = .11$). Increased speaking time significantly predicted higher honest IM ($\beta = .45$, $SE = .10$, $p < .01$). The linear indirect effect was positive and significant ($\beta = .20$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$), indicating that increasing response time limits initially enhanced honest IM through higher speaking time. The quadratic indirect effect was also significant and negative ($\beta = –.16$, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$), suggesting that once time limits exceeded three minutes, speaking time no longer increased, limiting further increases in honest IM. After accounting for speaking time, the direct linear effect became significant and negative ($\beta = -.32$, $SE = .09$, $p < .01$), indicating that a longer response time limit reduced honest IM at equivalent speaking time. The quadratic term remained non-significant ($\beta = .06$, $SE = .08$, $p = .42$). Speaking time thus mediated the relationship between response time limits and honest IM. While more time encouraged honest IM by allowing applicants to speak more, longer time limits undermined this effect.

Deceptive IM

We then examined the influence of response time limit on deceptive IM. The mean deceptive IM scores for the 1-minute, 3-minute, and 5-minute response times were 2.33 ($SD = .72$), 2.22 ($SD = .66$), and 2.23 ($SD = .80$). Total effect analyses revealed no significant linear ($\beta = -.05$, $SE = .07$, $p = .47$) nor quadratic effects ($\beta = .06$, $SE = .11$, $p = .58$), indicating no

relationship between response time limit and deceptive IM when speaking time was not considered. Mediation analysis similarly showed no significant indirect effect via speaking time. Speaking time itself did not predict deceptive IM (β = -.07, *SE* = .11, *p* = .49). The linear indirect effect was non-significant (β = –.04, *SE* = .06, *p* = .50), as was the quadratic indirect effect (β = .03, *SE* = .05, *p* = .51). Direct effects remained nonsignificant after controlling for speaking time (linear: β = -.01, *SE* = .07, *p* = .93; quadratic: β = .02, *SE* = .07, *p* = .80). Overall, response time limit was unrelated to deceptive IM, with or without considering speaking time.[5]

Interview performance

We finally assessed the influence of response time limit on interview performance. The mean performance scores for the 1-minute, 3-minute, and 5-minute response times were 3.00 (*SD* = .39), 3.40 (*SD* = .67), and 3.15 (*SD* = .60). The total effect analysis indicated no significant linear effect (β = .07, *SE* = .05, *p* = .13), but revealed a significant quadratic effect (β = -.33, *SE* = .10, *p* < .01), indicating a curvilinear relationship in which performance initially increased with more response time, but declined when time became too long, when not accounting for speaking time. Mediation analysis revealed a significant indirect effect via speaking time: increased speaking time significantly predicted higher interview performance (β = .51, *SE* = .09, *p* < .01). The model explained 21% of the variance in performance (R^2 = .21). The linear indirect effect was positive and significant (β = .23, *SE* = .05, *p* < .01), whereas the quadratic indirect effect was negative and significant (β = -.18, *SE* = .05, *p* < .01), suggesting that giving applicants more time at first improved performance by helping them speak more, but too much time had the opposite effect, which lowered performance. After controlling for speaking time, the direct linear effect was significant and negative (β = -.22, *SE* = .09, *p* = .01) and the quadratic term was nonsignificant (β = -.12, *SE* = .08, *p* = .13). In other words, when applicants spoke for the same amount of time, having a longer response time limit, their response was actually associated with lower performance. Speaking time thus mediated the relationship between response time limit and performance. While increasing response time helped applicants perform better by allowing them to speak more, very long time limits reduced performance through both reduced speaking time and additional negative effects.

We further conducted three one-way ANOVAs to examine each of the performance dimensions (clarity, relevance, and competence) separately, to assess whether the response time limit affected them uniformly. The results showed that response time limit significantly influenced both relevance; $F(2, 182) = 13.41$, $p < .01$) and clarity; $F(2, 182) = 6.63$, $p < .01$), but not competence; $F(2, 182) = 2.63$, $p = .08$. Post hoc comparisons using the Bonferroni correction indicated that for relevance, the 3-minute ($M = 3.58$, $SD = 0.65$) was higher than 5-minute ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.63$) condition and the 1-minute condition ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.47$) was the lowest. For clarity, the 3-minute condition ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.72$) was rated higher than both the 1-minute ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.46$) and 5-minute ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 0.78$) conditions. There were no significant pairwise differences for competence (1-minute: $M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.42$; 3-minute: $M = 3.21$, $SD = 0.74$; 5-minute: $M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.58$).

Discussion

This study examined how response time limits in AVIs influence interview anxiety (RQ1), IM, both honest (H1a) and deceptive (H1b), and performance (H2). Participants used their allotted time differently across conditions. Participants with a one-minute limit used nearly all their available time (92.47%, about 55 seconds), suggesting this limit is likely too restrictive. In contrast, those with a three-minute limit used approximately 71% of their available time (around 127 seconds), while participants given five minutes used only about 46% (approximately 136 seconds), showing greater variability. These results reveal a plateau effect in participants' use of speaking time and align with industry observations: Liff et al. (2024) identified a three-minute response limit as common practice, whereas Dunlop et al. (2022) reported an average response time limit of around two minutes. Thus, while one minute seems insufficient, offering more than three minutes does not necessarily encourage participants to speak longer or make better use of their additional time.

Our first goal was to investigate how response time limits in AVIs impact participants' interview anxiety (RQ1). Results showed that response time limits did not directly influence how anxious participants felt. Instead, what mattered was how much time they actually spent speaking, which is consistent with research on social interactions suggesting that speaking more

may make people feel less anxious (Daly, 1978). Interestingly, after controlling for actual speaking time, longer response limits independently increased anxiety. This suggests that having too much unused time available may heighten applicants' awareness of the evaluative context, potentially leading them to worry more about the completeness of their response (McCarthy et al., 2017; Orji et al., 2025). In other words, while more time can reduce anxiety by allowing participants to fully express themselves, too much extra time, especially if left unused, may have the opposite effect. Because interview anxiety was positively correlated with gender (r = .33; similar results by Roulin et al., 2022), with women reporting more anxiety than men, we tested whether gender moderated the effect of response time. Results showed a main effect of gender, with women feeling more anxious overall, and a significant interaction. Women consistently reported high anxiety across all conditions. Men, on the other hand, reported the highest anxiety in the 3-minute condition. One possible explanation is that women already experience high anxiety in job interviews and may be less sensitive to smaller design variations like response time limits. For men, one minute may have felt too short to worry about, and five minutes more flexible. But three minutes may have created more pressure to use the full time, increasing awareness of the time constraint and, in turn, anxiety (Lukacik et al., 2022). Anxiety was also negatively related to honest IM (r = -.38) and positively related to deceptive IM (r = .17). These findings are consistent with those of Powell et al. (2021), who found that interview anxiety was linked to reduced honest self-promotion and increased use of deceptive tactics. Taken together, these results suggest that the associations between anxiety and IM observed in face-to-face interviews may also be present in AVIs.

Our second goal was to examine whether response time limits influence participants' use of honest and deceptive IM. Contrary to our hypothesis that increasing response time limits in AVIs would lead applicants to use more honest (H1a) and deceptive (H1b) IM, response time limit did not directly predict honest IM. However, the relationship between response time limit and honest IM was mediated by speaking time. Longer time limits led to more speaking time, which was associated with higher honest IM. Participants who spoke more also tended to use more honest IM, which fits with earlier findings showing that talking more about one's

experiences gives more room for honest IM (Bourdage et al., 2018; Orji et al., 2025). Interestingly, once we controlled for speaking time, longer response time limits were actually linked to less honest IM. Thus, simply having more time, without really using it, may make participants feel like they did not do enough. Honest IM was also positively related to performance, reinforcing the idea that effectively engaging in honest IM is a strong predictor of interview performance (Bourdage et al., 2018; Peck & Levashina, 2017).

Regarding deceptive IM, we hypothesized that a longer response time limit would increase deceptive IM by giving participants more opportunity to fake. However, response time limit did not significantly predict deceptive IM, and speaking time did not mediate the relationship. This suggests that just having more time, or talking for longer, is not enough to push participants toward faking. Faking takes deliberate effort, cognitive control, and mental resources (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021). In our study, the setting may not have created the kind of pressure or motivation needed for participants to fake. Interestingly, deceptive IM remained low across conditions. Finally, our findings showed that deceptive IM was not related to interview performance, which supports earlier results (Ho, Powell, et al., 2021).

Our final goal was to examine whether response time limit influenced participants' interview performance. We hypothesized (H2) and found evidence that performance would be highest with a moderate response time limit, and lower with both shorter and longer limits. This curvilinear pattern supports the idea that there is an optimal window for responding, where participants have enough time to communicate their answers without rehashing or overexplaining (Orji et al., 2025). Also, this effect was mediated by speaking time. Participants in the three-minute condition spoke more than those with only one minute, and those who talked more received higher performance ratings. This suggests that actually using the available time to give a clear and complete answer matters for how well participants are evaluated. This pattern aligns with findings from written interviews, where longer responses tend to be rated more positively, likely because they allow participants to express themselves more thoroughly (Huffcutt et al., 2024). Interestingly, controlling for speaking time, longer response time limits were actually associated with lower performance. This suggests that simply offering more time

does not necessarily lead to better responses. When given five minutes, participants may feel unsettled by the amount of time available. Even if they speak for a similar duration as those with three minutes, the extended time may make it more difficult to maintain a clear direction throughout the response. In contrast, a three-minute limit may provide enough space to express one's experiences while helping participants stay focused. Thus, while giving participants sufficient time is important, the way that time affects their responding may be just as important. Additional qualitative analyses exploring applicants' thoughts on response time limits, supporting our proposed mechanism, are available in the online supplement (Supplement D).

Looking more closely at the separate performance dimensions, we found that response time limit did not impact all aspects equally. Clarity and relevance were highest with a three-minute limit, while perceived competence did not vary significantly across conditions. This suggests that what improves with more time is the structure and focus of the answer, not artificial boosting of perceived competence. Overall, giving applicants a balanced amount of time mainly helps them provide clearer and more relevant answers, without necessarily increasing how competent they appear to evaluators.

Altogether, these findings support recent AVI research showing that design features shape applicants' experience (Lukacik & Bourdage, 2024; Lukacik et al., 2022). By identifying speaking time as a key mediator, our study helps explain how response time limits influence anxiety, IM, and performance. This pattern is similar to what Roulin (2022) found: giving applicants preparation time or a re-recording option did not improve their experience by itself. What mattered was how they used those features. Applicants who prepared more or actually re-recorded their answers reported better reactions. In the same way, just giving more time to respond did not help unless applicants used it in a way that supported their performance. Together, these findings suggest that the design matters, but what applicants do with the time and tools they are given matters more.

This study offers several insights for organizations and AVI design. First, they suggest that response time limits do not increase the risk of faking. Even when given more time, participants did not engage more in deceptive IM, which should reassure recruiters. Instead, those who

spoke more engaged more often in honest IM. Providing enough time can therefore support honest self-presentation and help recruiters better assess person-job fit (Kristof-Brown, 2000). However, simply giving more time without clear guidance can also backfire. After controlling for speaking time, longer limits independently increased anxiety, which may lead applicants to form negative impressions of the organization or withdraw from the process (Constantin et al., 2021).

A three-minute response limit appears to offer the best balance: it gives applicants time to express themselves clearly, without encouraging overthinking or performance decline (Liff et al., 2024). More broadly, these results highlight that what matters is not just how much time is given, but how it is used. Speaking time consistently predicted lower anxiety, more honest IM, and better performance. Helping applicants make effective use of their time, through clear instructions, may enhance the quality of their responses. For instance, applicants could be encouraged to use the time they need to give a complete response, without feeling they have to keep talking just because time is still available.

This study has some limitations that suggest avenues for future research. First, the sample primarily consisted of university students with limited professional and AVI experience, participating in a low-stakes mock AVI. This may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader applicant populations, particularly those with extensive professional experience. However, conducting a laboratory study was necessary to examine the causal effects of response time limits in AVIs on interview anxiety, IM, and performance. Indeed, it would have been ethically challenging to conduct an experimental study with real applicants using random assignments to conditions. Despite the low-stakes setting, our findings suggest that participants engaged extensively in honest IM, which could be a good indicator of their engagement. Future research could build on this by investigating these effects with participants who have more professional experience.

We found that response time limits did not directly affect interview anxiety, which may be due to the relatively straightforward nature of the interview questions. Future research could explore how response time limits influence anxiety, IM, and performance when question complexity varies. For instance, complex questions requiring critical thinking or self-reflection

may interact differently with time constraints, as applicants may experience heightened anxiety or employ distinct IM tactics in response to more challenging prompts (Lukacik et al., 2022). This research could offer a more nuanced understanding of how response times may be tailored based on question type, potentially recommending customized time limits for different question categories to optimize interview outcomes in AVIs. Another explanation may lie in the study's controlled laboratory setting. An experimenter ensured that the equipment functioned properly and that the recording environment was quiet and free of distractions. This likely reduced the anxiety applicants might experience in real-world AVIs, such as technical difficulties, background noise, or unfamiliarity with the platform. Future studies could scale back this type of procedural support to better reflect real AVI conditions.

Future research could investigate whether the impact of response time limit on IM is moderated by applicant characteristics (e.g., personality traits) or job type (e.g., roles requiring more social interaction). Future studies could also investigate how different timer designs, such as countdowns that disappear after a brief period or soft reminders instead of visible clocks, affect applicant experiences and performance. This research could guide the development of design features that retain the structuring benefits of timers. One could also explore alternative AVI designs in which there is no fixed time limit, and the response ends only when the applicant actively signals they are done (e.g., the applicant must click somewhere when they are done recording). This would differ from the current design, where applicants could stop the recording early but were still constrained by a visible countdown and a maximum time limit. Such designs may better accommodate individual differences in communication styles and comfort levels, potentially enhancing the applicant's experience.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of response time limits in AVI design, and the role speaking time plays in shaping applicant experience. While our findings suggest that a three-minute time frame maximizes positive outcomes and reduces negative ones (compared to one and five minutes), AVI design goes beyond setting optimal duration but also requires understanding how applicants use the time they are given. These findings add to the growing

body of literature on AVI design by pinpointing how specific time allocations can influence applicant experience. More broadly, this highlights a need to approach technology-driven selection processes as interactive spaces, influenced as much by applicant behavior as by design itself.

Endnotes

[1] https://aspredicted.org/8dct-y37t.pdf

[2] Detailed information about the materials used in the study (e.g., job description, interview questions, participant instructions, comprehension check, and full item wordings) is provided in Online Supplements A–D, available under https://osf.io/ufpg2/?view_only=ea083bb2cef549b59228cfbf1093bc8e

[3] Although we initially planned to test the hypotheses and research questions using four one-way ANOVAs (as preregistered), differences in speaking time led us to conduct mediation analyses. The total effects mirrored the ANOVA results, allowing us to address the research questions and hypotheses as intended.

[4] We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

[5] Because defensive IM may not have been relevant or feasible in this mock interview context, we conducted a robustness check by removing all honest and deceptive defensive IM items from the scales. The internal consistency of the honest IM scale improved very slightly ($\alpha = .67$, up from .66), and the reliability of the deceptive IM scale remained unchanged ($\alpha = .86$). ANOVAs comparing IM scores across response time conditions remained nonsignificant for both honest IM, $F(2, 182) = 0.89$, $p = .41$, and deceptive IM, $F(2, 182) = 0.59$, $p = .56$.

Data Availability Statement

The data and supplemental material for this study are available at: https://osf.io/ufpg2/?view_only=ea083bb2cef549b59228cfbf1093bc8e

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	Gender	.50	.50	-										
2	Age	20.71	3.24	.17*	-									
3	Education	.28	.45	.07	.41**	-								
4	Work Experience (months)	15.98	43.20	.16*	.40**	.08	-							
5	Interview Experience	2.39	4.80	.15*	.32**	.12	.22**	-						
6	AVI experience	.19	.67	.01	.11	.15*	.00	.24**	-					
7	Response time limit	2.01	.82	.02	.01	-.02	.06	-.17*	-.11	-				
8	Response Duration (seconds)	106.62	52.21	-.08	.07	.09	.03	-.07	-.06	.63**	-			
9	Interview Anxiety	2.69	.73	.33**	-.04	-.05	-.11	-.07	.00	.10	-.15*	-		
10	Honest IM	3.15	.58	-.12	.00	.17*	.01	.09	.13	-.04	.22**	-.38**	-	
11	Deceptive IM	2.26	.73	-.05	-.16*	-.01	-.17*	-.04	.00	-.06	-.08	.17*	.10	-
12	Interview Performance	3.19	.58	.03	-.01	.10	.08	.07	-.13	.10	.40**	-.23**	.28**	.06

N = 185. Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female; Education: 0 = High-school, 1 = University; AVI/Interview Experience = number of interviews experienced in the past, Response time limit: 1 = 1-minute limit, 2 = 3-minute limit, 3 = 5-minute limit, IM = Impression Management, $^{*}p < .05$; $^{**}p < .01$

Figure 1

Histogram of Speaking Time (in Seconds) by Response Time Limit Condition (1, 2, and 3 Minutes)

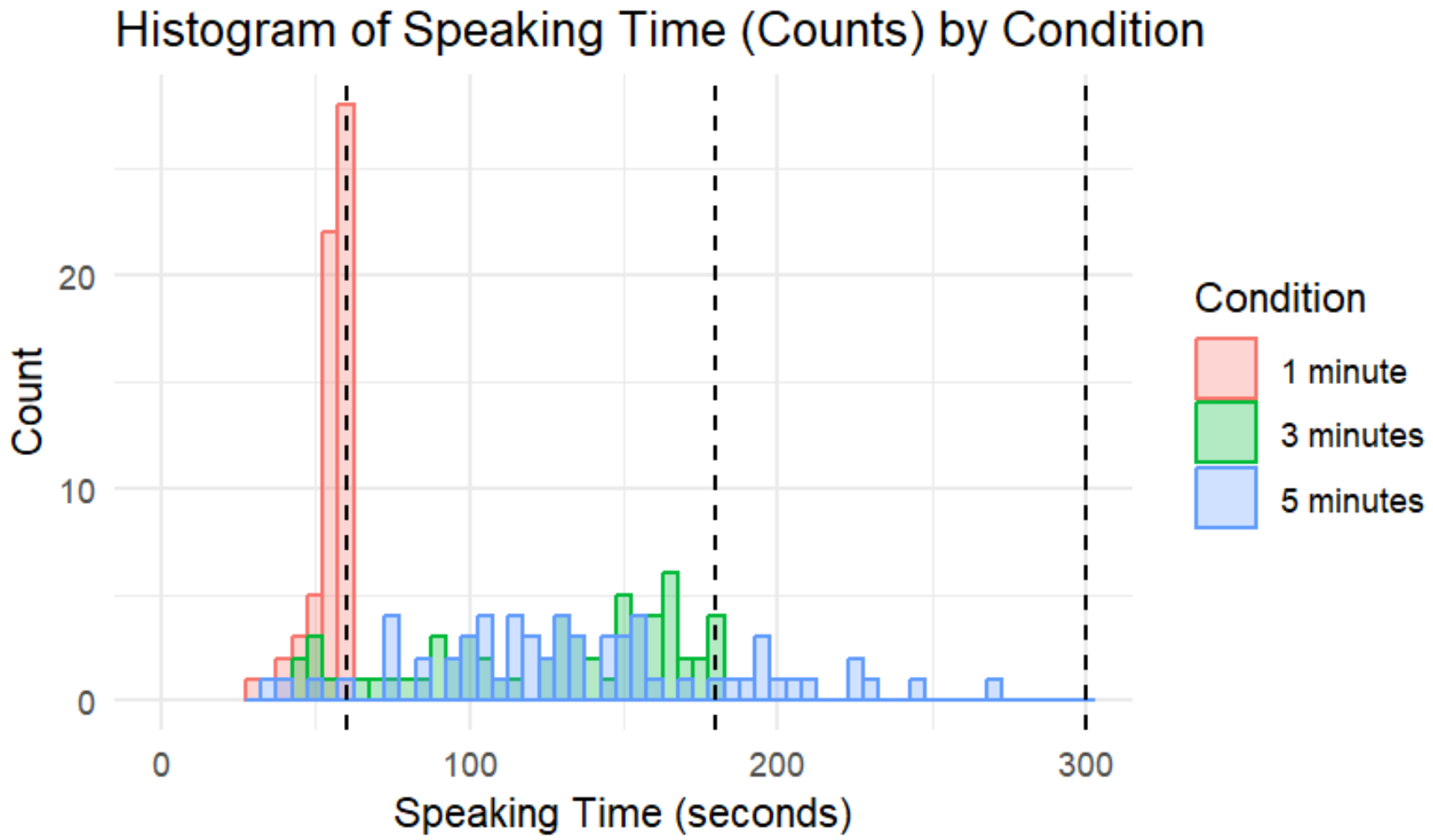
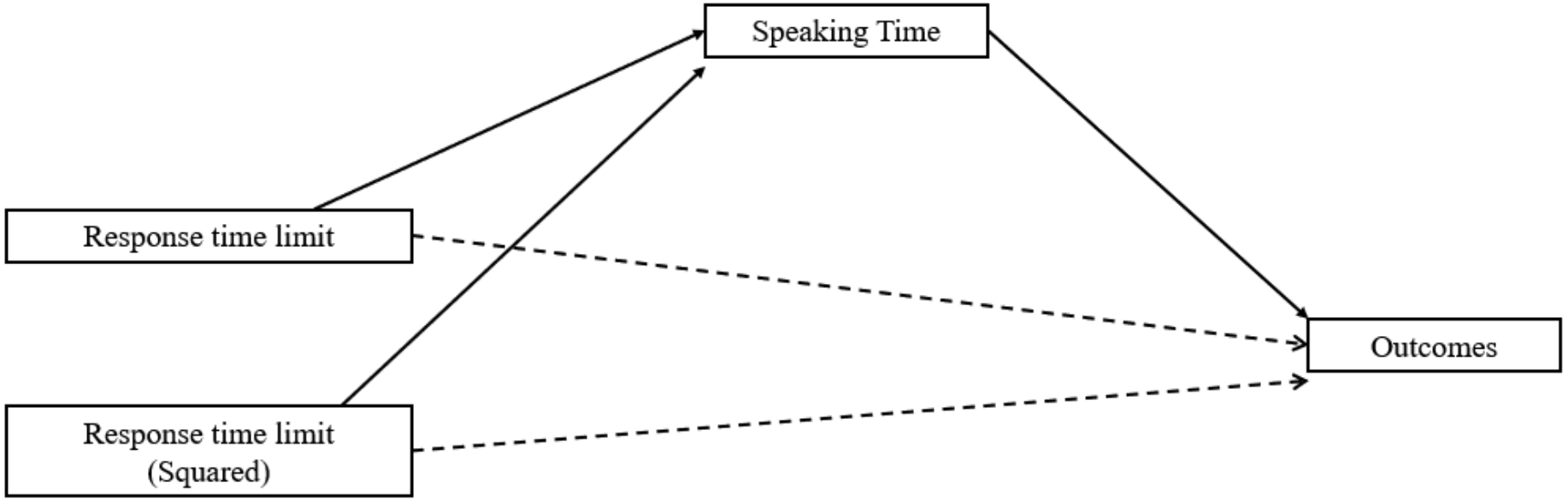


Figure 2

Mediation model showing direct and indirect effects of response time limit (linear and quadratic) on outcomes (anxiety, honest IM, deceptive IM, AVI performance), through speaking time



10.4 Study 4

Orji, K., & Bangerter, A. (2025). *Maximal responding in past behavior questions: The role of priming and preparation time in performance, storytelling and impression management*. Institute of Work and Organizational Psychology, University of Neuchâtel.

Status: The manuscript will be submitted to a journal shortly. We plan to submit the version included in this thesis.

Maximal responding in past behavior questions: The role of priming and preparation time in performance, storytelling and impression management

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This study is pre-registered as an anonymous AsPredicted form: https://aspredicted.org/v5wz-b6t8.pdf

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Abstract

Past behavior questions (PBQs) are common in selection interviews and invite interviewees to tell a story that showcases their competence. Yet few do so, and many responses reflect typical rather than maximal performance. This creates a selection risk when PBQ answers mirror day-to-day, routine performance instead of peak capability, leading raters to undervalue interviewees whose best performance exceeds their typical level. Recent work by Huffcutt et al. (2024) indicates that rewording PBQs to prime recall of peak experiences increases maximal responding. To address the limitations of the written answering format in their study, we replicate the manipulation in a more ecologically valid setting using an asynchronous video interview and oral responses, and we propose preparation time as another route to elicit peak performance. We also examine how priming for maximal performance affects response content. In a 2 × 2 experiment, participants took part in a mock asynchronous video interview (N = 274), answering three PBQs under limited or unlimited preparation and with traditional or primed wording. We measured interviewees' use of honest and deceptive impression management and self-reported job performance (task and contextual). Trained raters assessed interview performance. Responses were coded as stories or pseudo-stories, and tone was analyzed with LIWC-22. Priming improved interview performance, increased the share of stories, and produced more emotionally charged answers. Preparation time had no effect on performance or storytelling. Honest and deceptive impression management did not vary by condition. For validity, interview performance predicted contextual performance but not task performance. This relation was stronger with limited preparation and traditional PBQs, and weaker with unlimited preparation and primed PBQs. These findings indicate that PBQ wording affects how interviewees respond and how well responses align with job performance.

Keywords: selection interview; past behavior questions; priming; preparation time; maximal performance; storytelling; impression management.

Maximal responding in past behavior questions: The role of priming and preparation time in performance, storytelling and impression management

Introduction

Behavioral interviews are widely used in organizations and have high predictive validity (Culbertson et al., 2017; Levashina et al., 2014; Sackett et al., 2022). These interviews often include past behavior questions (PBQs; e.g., *Tell me about a time you had to manage multiple deadlines)*, which prompt interviewees to recount specific instances from their past work experience (Janz, 1982; Ralston et al., 2003; Roulin et al., 2012). PBQs encourage interviewees to tell a story, which can increase their perceived hireability (Bangerter et al., 2014). But telling a story is not always easy. Responding to a PBQ requires interviewees to search memory, select a specific episode, and organize it into a coherent story (Ralston et al., 2003). The process is cognitively demanding (Huffcutt et al., 2017), and under time pressure, many interviewees struggle (Bangerter et al., 2014; Brosy et al., 2020). They often fall back on generic descriptions of recurring situations, known as pseudo-stories (Bangerter et al., 2014; Brosy et al., 2020).

Interviewees also frequently fail to demonstrate maximal responding, i.e., to describe an episode reflecting their peak performance in a given situation (Huffcutt et al., 2020; Sackett et al., 1988). Instead, their answers tend to reflect typical performance, an everyday level of effectiveness maintained without special pressure or incentives, which is only weakly correlated with maximal performance and may not provide an accurate picture of their full potential (Huffcutt et al., 2020). To address this, Huffcutt et al. (2024) showed that question wording, specifically priming interviewees to recall their best performance, increased the likelihood of maximal responding. For example, a primed PBQ might be: *Tell me about a time when you handled multiple deadlines effectively at your absolute best.* In Huffcutt et al.'s (2024) study, interviewees responded in written form, and maximal responses were related to longer responses.

When interviewees have more time and feel less pressure to answer PBQs, they tend to recall different experiences than they do in traditional interviews, and these responses are often

rated more highly by interviewers (Huffcutt et al., 2017). Building on this, we examine whether preparation time and priming for maximal performance influence performance, storytelling, and impression management in answering PBQs. We propose that providing time to prepare before answering PBQs may help interviewees identify stronger examples and demonstrate maximal responding, especially when combined with priming.

Beyond these practical challenges, there is also a conceptual gap. Although Huffcutt et al. (2024) offer an initial solution by modifying question wording, they stop short of investigating the content of responses to maximal primed PBQs. We propose that storytelling itself may serve as a content-based marker of maximal responding. Although pseudo-stories are common in PBQ responses, they may reflect more than just a failure to meet the formal demands of the question. They are generic and based on recurring behaviors rather than a single, well-defined episode. Interviewees describe what they generally do in a type of situation rather than what they did in a specific instance. Typical performances are less distinctive in time frame and thus more likely to take a generic form. In contrast, maximal performances may stand out and be stored as unique episodes, and thus as stories. These require more deliberate retrieval and clearer sequencing. Since interviewees tend to choose examples that cast them in a positive light (Brosy et al., 2020; Stevens & Kristof, 1995), they may be more likely to select episodes that reflect strong performance. Primed PBQs may support this process by prompting interviewees to recall a specific moment of peak performance.

Still, how the response is said may also matter. Linguistic features that heighten emotional intensity, such as emotional framing, can influence how responses are perceived (Naim et al., 2015). We examine whether maximal responding emerges through storytelling, more emotionally charged language, or both. We also explore whether these experimental conditions influence how interviewees manage impressions. Maximal responding may signal an effort to present oneself favorably, which could increase motivation to engage in honest or deceptive impression management (Huffcutt et al., 2024). Finally, we test whether preparation

time and priming moderate the link between interview and job performance (Huffcutt et al., 2017; Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023).

This research contributes to the selection interview literature in three ways. Huffcutt et al. (2024) have established that priming interviewees to recall their best performance can increase maximal responding, but these effects have only been tested in written formats. These effects may not generalize to spoken interviews, where responses must be produced in real time, under greater cognitive load, and with limited opportunities for revision (Akinnaso, 1982). We build on this work by examining spoken responses in asynchronous video interviews (AVIs), digital interviews with no synchronous interaction, offering a more ecologically valid test of how interviewees actually respond. Second, this study introduces preparation time as a design feature that may support memory retrieval and help interviewees generate more specific, high-quality responses to PBQs (Huffcutt et al., 2017; Huffcutt et al., 2024). Third, this answers recent calls to investigate interview design as a source of variability in interview validity, with the aim of making interviews more consistent and informative for decision-making (Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023).

Maximal vs Typical Performance

The distinction between typical and maximal performance explains differences in work behavior (Sackett et al., 1988). Typical performance describes an individual's everyday level of effort, choice, and persistence. It represents what employees normally do when they are not closely monitored, receive no explicit instructions to maximize effort, and perform tasks over an extended period (Sackett et al., 1988). Thus, typical performance largely reflects individual differences in motivation (DuBois et al., 1993). Conversely, maximal performance occurs under specific conditions that elicit an individual's highest effort. Employees achieve maximal performance when they know their behavior is being evaluated, receive clear instructions to perform at their best, and are assessed over a short duration, allowing for sustained high effort (Sackett et al., 1988). Because motivation under these conditions is uniformly high, differences in maximal performance primarily indicate variations in ability rather than motivation (DuBois

et al., 1993). In short, maximal performance signals competencies, whereas typical performance reflects more about individual choice (DuBois et al., 1993). The correlation between typical and maximal performance is low (Beus & Whitman, 2012; Sackett et al., 1988), which matters for hiring. High performers often bring far more value than average ones, and this difference increases with job complexity (Hunter et al., 1990; Judiesch et al., 1992). Selection tools that fail to capture maximal performance risk overlooking interviewees with the highest potential.

Huffcutt et al. (2020) found that nearly half of interviewees' responses to PBQs reflected typical rather than maximal performance. Even when interviewees recalled stronger experiences, the definition of maximal was often broad and only slightly better than usual behavior. This raises questions about whether traditional PBQs prompt interviewees to recount what they can do at their best. Huffcutt et al. (2024) manipulated question wording, and their findings showed that priming maximal performance led to stronger responses, which were rated more highly by interviewers compared to standard PBQs. However, despite these improvements, only a few of the responses reached a rating consistent with maximal performance. This suggests that interviewees still face substantial cognitive demands when retrieving their best examples under pressure (Brosy et al., 2020; Huffcutt et al., 2017). Thus, further research is needed to find other ways to reduce cognitive load and help interviewees recall and deliver more consistently maximal responses.

This study

The primary goal of this study is to improve the assessment of maximal responding in behavioral interviews. While previous research has focused on question wording, priming interviewees to recall peak performance (Huffcutt et al., 2024), we propose that providing preparation time before responding to PBQs may offer an additional benefit. Giving interviewees time to think before speaking can reduce cognitive load and help them recall stronger, more relevant examples (Brosy et al., 2020; Huffcutt et al., 2017). We thus hypothesize[1]:

H1. Interviewees have higher interview performance when they have more preparation time than when they have less.

H2. Interviewees have higher interview performance when responding to primed questions compared to traditional questions.

H3. The positive effect of preparation time on interview performance is stronger for primed questions compared to traditional questions.

Investigating the content of responses to primed questions is just as important as finding ways to elicit one. If stories reflect peak performance (Bangerter et al., 2014), then helping interviewees access specific episodes rather than general ones may be key. Maximal priming may support this by narrowing interviewees' focus, especially when paired with preparation time (Brosy et al., 2020; Huffcutt et al., 2017). We therefore expect more stories and fewer pseudo-stories under these conditions. In particular, when preparation time and priming are combined, we expect their effects to reinforce each other. We hypothesize:

H4. Interviewees tell more stories when they have more preparation time than when they have less time.

H5a. Interviewees tell more stories when responding to primed questions compared to traditional questions.

H5b. Interviewees tell more pseudo-stories when responding to traditional questions compared to primed questions.

H6. Interviewees tell more stories when responding to primed questions compared to traditional questions, and this effect is stronger when they have more preparation time.

Still, telling a story may not be enough to convey peak performance. How interviewees respond, especially in terms of emotional framing, may also matter. Emotional framing may influence how responses are perceived, beyond their structure or content. Emotional language makes a story more vivid and persuasive (Nabi & Green, 2015). In selection interviews, emotional framing influences how interviewees are evaluated (Germanier et al., 2025; Naim et

al., 2015). Some answers may seem stronger not because they describe better behaviors, but because they are told in a more emotionally expressive way. Priming interviewees to recall their absolute best performance may prompt them to choose moments that felt more intense and describe a challenge followed by a successful outcome (Germanier et al., 2025; Reagan et al., 2016). Thus, question wording may influence emotional framing. Also, preparation time could amplify this effect. When interviewees have time to reflect, they may not only choose better stories but also tell them in a more emotionally expressive way. We ask:

RQ1. Does question wording influence emotional framing?

RQ2. Does preparation time moderate the effect of question wording on emotional framing?

Another important consideration is how priming and preparation time influence interviewees' IM, or the effort to influence how they are perceived (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). IM can be honest, like emphasizing real strengths, or deceptive, like inventing details (Bourdage et al., 2018; Levashina & Campion, 2006). Trying to show one's best performance may increase the motivation to use IM (Huffcutt et al., 2024). Honest IM is related to better interview performance (Bourdage et al., 2018; Peck & Levashina, 2017). When interviewees have a solid example in mind, they may use IM to emphasize their contribution, stress what went well, or select details that support how they want to be seen. But when they don't, the pressure to perform could push them to rely on deception (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021). Preparation time may play a role in both directions. It can help retrieve a real story or give more room to inflate it. We ask:

RQ3. How does preparation time influence the use of (a) honest and (b) deceptive IM tactics?

RQ4. How does question wording influence the use of (a) honest and (b) deceptive IM tactics?

Beyond these behavioral effects, an open question is whether these interview design choices ultimately affect validity, namely how well interview performance relates to actual work performance (Arvey & Campion, 1982). When interviewees have time to think, they recall different experiences, and those responses may predict job performance more strongly (Huffcutt et al., 2017). But PBQ wording may also matter. Traditional PBQs don't specify whether interviewees should describe a typical or peak performance, which creates variability in responses. Asking a maximal performance-primed PBQ may reduce this variance by helping interviewees focus on their best example (Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023). We ask:

RQ5. Is interview performance related to work performance?

RQ6. Do preparation time and question wording moderate this relation?

To answer these questions, we ran an experiment manipulating preparation time (limited vs. unlimited) and PBQ wording (traditional PBQs vs. primed PBQs) in a 2x2 between-subjects design. Participants acted as interviewees and answered three PBQs using an asynchronous video interview, where responses are recorded without live interaction. They also reported their use of honest and dishonest impression management and self-rated work performance. Responses were transcribed and coded manually for storytelling and automatically for emotional framing (positive and negative tone) using LIWC-22.

Method

Sample

We aimed to recruit 269 participants based on power analyses[2]. To accommodate possible exclusions, we initially recruited 292 U.S.-based participants through the crowdsourcing platform Prolific (Prolific, 2024). Eligibility criteria included U.S. residency, English fluency, and access to a functioning webcam and microphone. Of the initial sample, 19 participants were excluded due to unusable video data (e.g., absent audio or video, severe lag, or upload failure), and 17 were removed for extensive missing data. The resulting sample (N = 256) fell short of the required size, so 23 more participants were recruited before analyzing the data.

Excluding 5 more participants due to technical issues, we had a final sample of N = 274 participants.

Participants mean age of 41.61 years (SD = 11.94), with an average of 19.98 years of work experience (SD = 11.67) and 14.12 years of experience working with customers (SD = 10.45). They reported completing an average of 9.25 in-person interviews (SD = 16.55) and 3.77 asynchronous video interviews (SD = 15.13) as interviewees. The sample was gender-balanced (50.36% female, 49.64% male) and predominantly White (63.87%), with 17.15% identifying as Black, 6.93% as Asian, 8.76% as mixed, and 3.28% as other. Most participants held a university degree (79.62%). Participants received a $9 payment upon completion. The top 10%, based on interviewer-rated performance, received double pay.

Study Design

We manipulated two variables: preparation time and question wording. Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. For the preparation time manipulation, participants had either limited or unlimited time. In the limited condition, participants were given only enough time to read each question (12 to 27 seconds). This was based on average reading times from five individuals who read each question at a normal pace, with a few extra seconds added to account for potential loading delays. A countdown appeared on screen, and the recording started automatically when the time ran out. Importantly, participants could also choose to start recording earlier if they preferred. In the unlimited condition, there was no time limit. Participants were instructed to click *start recording* whenever they were ready. The AVI platform logged the actual preparation time spent before starting the response. Further, an independent samples t-test comparing the preparation time used in the two conditions revealed that participants with unlimited preparation used more preparation time (M = 48.47 seconds; SD = 70.2), than those with limited preparation time (M = 17.60 seconds; SD = 6.45), $t(140.42) = -5.16$, $p < .01$.

The second manipulated variable was question type. Participants responded to either three traditional PBQs or three maximal performance-primed PBQs. Traditional PBQs

resembled those commonly used in selection interviews. One example: *Tell me about a work situation where you were responsible for handling multiple tasks within a short timeframe. How did you organize yourself to manage it?* Maximal performance-primed PBQs were adapted from Huffcutt et al. (2024) and encouraged participants to recall moments when they performed at their absolute best. For instance: *Think about all the times you've had to handle multiple tasks within a short time frame. Try to identify one specific situation where you managed it particularly well and stayed organized under pressure. In other words, tell me about a time when you effectively balanced multiple demands and achieved a successful outcome. How did you approach it?*

Procedure

All procedures were approved by the research ethics commission of the University of Neuchâtel. Participants provided informed consent before beginning the study. Data were collected using an asynchronous video interview (AVI) platform. The platform was developed for research and has been used in prior work (e.g., Arseneault & Roulin, 2024).

Participants first read information about the study. On that page, they were informed of their reward and that the best performers would receive double the amount. After verifying their technical setup (microphone and webcam), participants reviewed a brief job description for a customer service manager position. They then received instructions based on their assigned preparation time condition and were informed of the response time limit of three minutes per question. Recording stopped automatically at the time limit, though participants could choose to end their response earlier. To increase incentive, we reminded participants to take the interview as seriously as possible, as the best performances would receive double the reward. The interview began with a warm-up presentation question, followed by three past behavior questions consistent with the participant's assigned condition. After the interview, participants completed measures of honest and deceptive impression management, self-rated job performance, and demographics. All responses were recorded but only the three PBQs were transcribed for analysis.

Measures[3]

Impression Management

Honest and deceptive IM were measured using the 11-item Honest Interview Impression Management short scale and the 15-item Interview Faking Behavior Short Scale, both slightly adapted for the AVI context (Bourdage et al., 2018). Honest IM included items for honest self-promotion (e.g., *I made sure I emphasized my skills and abilities*), honest ingratiation (e.g., *I discussed interests that I shared in common with the hiring organization*), and honest defensive IM (e.g., *I gave reasons why I felt I benefited positively from a negative event I was responsible for*). Deceptive IM included items for slight image creation (e.g., *I exaggerated my responsibilities on my previous jobs*), extensive image creation (e.g., *I invented some work situations or accomplishments that did not really occur*), deceptive ingratiation (e.g., *I tried to show that I shared the organization's views and ideas even if I did not*), and image protection (e.g., *I tried to avoid discussing my lack of skills or experiences*). Finally, we computed an average honest IM score (α = .82) and deceptive IM (α = .89) score. All responses were on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*).

Job Performance

Job performance was assessed using the Task Performance and Contextual Performance subscales from the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ; Koopman et al., 2015). The Task Performance scale included five items (e.g., *I was able to carry out my work efficiently*), and the Contextual Performance scale included eight items (e.g., *I worked on keeping my work skills up-to-date*). Participants were instructed to think about their work behavior over the past three months and to answer as honestly and accurately as possible. Items were rated on a 5-point frequency scale (0 = *Seldom* to 5 = *Always*), with an optional *Not applicable* response. Finally, we computed an average task performance score (α = .77) and contextual performance (α = .86) score. Higher scores indicated better job performance.

Interview Performance

Interview performance was assessed by one of the two trained research assistants who watched the video responses and rated each one on a 5-point behaviorally anchored rating scale (BARS; 1 = *poor*, 5 = *excellent*). We developed a scale for each interview question to evaluate whether the interviewee demonstrated the targeted skill. To ensure consistency, the BARS were reviewed and revised during a meeting with the raters and the lead author. After an initial calibration phase, raters independently scored all three PBQs per participant and any differences in ratings were discussed and resolved. Raters were blind to participants' experimental condition. Interrater reliability for independent ratings based on double-coding of 86 participants was high ($r = .95$, $p < .01$).

Stories

Two trained coders scored all responses for the presence of stories for each past-behavior question. A story was defined as "a set of events related to a unique past episode, characterized by a unity of time or action, with constituents often linked by temporal markers" (Bangerter et al., 2014, p. 6). Each participant had a story ratio score which was computed as the number of stories divided by the number of questions. Interrater agreement, based on double-coding of 90 participants, was high (Cohen's Kappa = .93, $p < .01$).

Pseudo -stories

We coded the presence or absence of pseudo-stories for each past-behavior question. A pseudo-story was defined as "a description of generic situation or recurrent set of similar situations, without unity of time or action. It differs from a story in that it is a description of several events rather than of a unique event" (Bangerter et al., 2014, p. 6). Each participant had a pseudo-story ratio score which was computed as the number of pseudo-stories divided by the number of questions. Interrater agreement, based on double-coding of 90 participants, was high (Cohen's Kappa = .83, $p < .01$).

Emotional framing - Tone analysis

We used LIWC 2022 with the English dictionary (Boyd et al., 2022) to automatically analyze emotional framing in interviewees' responses. LIWC returned the percentage of words classified as positive and negative tone for each response. Each response thus yielded two separate scores: one for positive tone and one for negative tone. We used tone categories instead of emotion categories (e.g., positive and negative emotion) because tone captures broader evaluative framing (Boyd et al., 2022; Boyd et al., 2020). Emotion categories detect overt expressions (e.g., happy, angry), while tone also picks up subtle cues. For instance, "I handled the situation well and stayed focused" would be coded as positive tone, even though it contains no explicitly emotional words. Positive tone and negative tone were computed as percentages of total words per response and then averaged across the three PBQs for analyses.

Results

Descriptive statistics and correlations among main study variables are included in Table 1, and estimated means and standard errors across experimental conditions are presented in Table 2. Participants, on average, used M = 33.32 seconds (SD = 52.51) to prepare, and being in the unlimited preparation time condition was positively correlated with actual preparation time (r = .29, p < .01). Participants engaged extensively in honest IM (M = 3.64, SD = 0.69) and less in deceptive IM (M = 2.26, SD = 0.73). Job performance was high overall, with task performance (M = 4.33, SD = 0.60) rated higher than contextual performance (M = 3.98, SD = 0.74). Preparation time was positively correlated with deceptive IM (r = .12, p = .05) and contextual performance (r = .15, p = .01) and negatively correlated with education (r = –.16, p = .01). Question wording was positively related to interview performance (r = .14, p = .02), stories (r = .13, p = .03), and both positive (r = .17, p = .01) and negative tone (r = .13, p = .03), and negatively related to age (r = -.13, p = .04), work experience (r = -.14, p = .02), and customer service experience (r = -.16, p = .01).

To answer H1–H6 and RQ1–RQ4, we conducted two-way ANCOVAs with preparation time (limited vs. unlimited) and question wording (traditional vs. maximal-primed) as between-

subjects factors. Preparation time used, work experience, client experience, age, and education were included as covariates. We preregistered exclusion rules and applied them before analysis. For continuous variables, extreme outliers were winsorized at ±2.5 *SD* to reduce the influence of extreme values and meet ANCOVA assumptions.

We first examined how preparation time and question wording influenced interview performance (H1–H3). The main effect of preparation time was not significant, $F(11, 262) = 1.41$, $p = .24$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. Participants in the limited preparation condition had a lower estimated interview performance ($M = 2.98$, $SE = 0.08$) than those in the unlimited condition ($M = 3.07$, $SE = 0.08$), but this difference was not enough to support H1. In contrast, the main effect of question wording was significant, $F(11, 262) = 5.19$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Participants with primed PBQs performed better ($M = 3.13$, $SE = 0.08$) than those who received traditional PBQs ($M = 2.92$, $SE = 0.08$), supporting H2. The interaction between preparation time and question wording was not significant, $F(11, 262) = 1.30$, $p = .26$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. These findings do not support H3.

We then examined how preparation time and question wording influenced storytelling in behavioral interviews (H4–H6). The main effect of preparation time on the proportion of stories was not significant, $F(11, 262) = 2.42$, $p = .12$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. There was no difference in story production between participants in the limited preparation condition ($M = 0.56$, $SE = 0.04$) and those in the unlimited condition ($M = 0.63$, $SE = 0.03$). This finding does not support H4. In contrast, the main effect of question wording was significant, $F(11, 262) = 4.57$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Participants told more stories when responding to primed PBQs ($M = 0.63$, $SE = 0.04$) than to traditional PBQs ($M = 0.55$, $SE = 0.03$), supporting H5a. However, question wording did not influence proportion of pseudo-stories, $F(11, 262) = 2.67$, $p = .10$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Participants who received traditional PBQs ($M = 0.37$, $SE = 0.03$) and those who received primed PBQs ($M = 0.30$, $SE = 0.04$) did not differ significantly, and this finding does not support H5b. The interaction between preparation time and question wording was not significant for stories, $F(11, 262) = .53$, $p = .47$, $\eta p^2 = .00$. These findings do not support H6.

To answer RQ1, we analyzed how positive and negative tone differed by question wording. For positive tone, the main effect of question wording was significant, $F(11, 262) = 7.64$, $p = .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Responses to primed PBQs included more positive tone-related words ($M = 2.53$, $SE = 0.11$) than those to traditional PBQs ($M = 2.16$, $SE = 0.11$). For negative tone, the main effect of question wording was also significant, $F(11, 262) = 4.33$, $p = .04$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$. Responses to primed PBQs contained more negative tone-related words ($M = 1.08$, $SE = 0.06$) than those to traditional PBQs ($M = 0.95$, $SE = 0.06$). Participants used both more positive and more negative emotional language when responding to primed PBQs. We then investigated interaction effects to answer RQ2. For positive tone, the interaction between preparation time and question wording was not significant, $F(11, 262) = 3.78$, $p = .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. For negative tone, the interaction was also not significant, $F(11, 262) = 3.53$, $p = .06$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Overall, participants used more tone-laden language (positive and negative) when answering primed PBQs, and this pattern did not vary by preparation time.

We then examined how preparation time and question wording influenced the use of impression management tactics (RQ3–RQ4). For honest IM, the main effect of preparation time was not significant, $F(11, 262) = 1.41$, $p = .24$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. Participants in the limited ($M = 3.64$, $SE = 0.07$) and unlimited preparation conditions ($M = 3.71$, $SE = 0.06$) reported similar levels of honest IM. For deceptive IM, the main effect of preparation time was also not significant, $F(11, 262) = 3.58$, $p = .06$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. Participants in the limited ($M = 2.20$, $SE = 0.07$) and unlimited ($M = 2.36$, $SE = 0.06$) conditions reported comparable levels of deceptive IM. For RQ4, we tested whether question wording influenced the use of honest and deceptive IM. For honest IM, the main effect of question wording was not significant, $F(11, 262) = 0.02$, $p = .90$, $\eta^2 = .00$. Participants in the traditional ($M = 3.69$, $SE = 0.06$) and primed conditions ($M = 3.66$, $SE = 0.07$) reported similar levels of honest IM. Deceptive IM showed a similar pattern, with no significant effect. $F(11, 262) = 1.37$, $p = .24$, $\eta_p^2 = .00$. Participants in the traditional ($M = 2.26$, $SE = 0.06$) and primed conditions ($M = 2.29$, $SE = 0.07$) reported similar levels of deceptive IM. In short, question wording did not influence the use of honest or deceptive IM.

To answer RQ5 and RQ6, we conducted two robust linear regression models predicting task performance and contextual performance. Each model included interview performance (centered), preparation time, question wording, and their two-way and three-way interaction terms. We also included the same covariates as the previous ANCOVA analyses. Robust regression (using MM-estimation) was used due to the right-skew in the dependent variables. For task performance, the overall model explained little variance (adjusted R^2 = -.01). Interview performance did not predict task performance (B = 0.13, SE = 0.11, p = .22). Neither preparation time (B = .01, SE = .11, p = .94) nor question wording (B = -.06, SE = .12, p = .62) had any effects. None of the two-way interactions were significant: interview performance × preparation time (B = –.17, SE = .10, p = .17), interview performance × question wording (B = –.18, SE = .16, p = .23), or preparation time × question wording (B = .08, SE = .16, p = .61).

For contextual performance, the model explained 8.6% of the variance (adjusted R^2 = .09). Interview performance predicted contextual performance (B = .44, SE = .12, p < .01). Neither preparation time (B = .16, SE = .13, p = .22) nor question wording (B = –.04, SE = .14, p = .75) had a significant effect. However, two interaction effects were significant: interview performance × preparation time (B = –.45, SE = .15, p < .01) and interview performance × question wording (B = –.52, SE = .18, p < .01). The interaction between preparation time and question wording was not significant (B = –.09, SE = .18, p = .62). Interview performance thus is related to contextual performance (but not task performance), and this relation is moderated by preparation time and question wording: the relationship between interview performance and contextual performance was stronger under limited preparation time and with traditional question wording.

Discussion

This study examined how preparation time and question wording influence interview performance (H1–H3), storytelling (H4–H6), and emotional framing (RQ1–RQ2), as well as the use of honest and deceptive IM (RQ3–RQ4). We also investigated validity through the relation between interview performance and self-rated job performance (RQ5), along with the

moderating role of preparation time and question wording (RQ6). We controlled for demographic covariates associated with the manipulations. As expected, participants with unlimited preparation spent more time preparing than those with limited time. Given evidence that how interviewees actually use AVI design options matters (Dunlop et al., 2022; Roulin et al., 2022), we included actual preparation time in the analyses.

Turning first to interview performance, the results offered mixed support for our hypotheses. As predicted (H2), participants performed better when responding to primed PBQs than to traditional ones. This aligns with work showing that interview design features, including question wording, can influence performance (Huffcutt et al., 2024; Huffcutt et al., 2011) and with research that prompting/follow-ups can support memory retrieval and boost responding (Brosy et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2024). In contrast, we found no effect of preparation time (H1), nor interaction effect (H3): participants who had unlimited time did not perform better than those with limited time. This diverges from earlier AVI and face-to-face interview studies, where more preparation time has been shown to help interviewees achieve higher performance (Basch et al., 2021; Huffcutt et al., 2017; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Roulin et al., 2022). The priming effect makes this result more puzzling. One possible explanation is that the two manipulations offered different kinds of contextual cues. Priming provided a more targeted cue that helped narrow interviewees' focus and clarified what kind of episode to recall. Preparation time, by contrast, simply created an opportunity to think, without offering any indication of what to focus on.

Concerning storytelling, participants told more stories when responding to primed PBQs compared to traditional ones (H5a), consistent with the idea that performance-oriented cues can support more specific and anchored recall (Huffcutt et al., 2024). While few interviewees tell stories when answering traditional PBQs, prompting them to recall a specific moment seems to ease the process by removing a common obstacle: finding an appropriate example (Brosy et al., 2020). Priming may reduce this difficulty by narrowing the search space and making a suitable story easier to access. This effect did not extend to pseudo-stories. The proportion of

pseudo-stories remained similar across conditions (H5b), suggesting that interviewees often default to describing recurring or general experiences, regardless of how the question is framed (Bangerter et al., 2014). Still, in many responses, interviewees began with a generic description and shifted toward a concrete episode when the question explicitly asked for a best-case example. This suggests that priming may influence not only what gets retrieved, but also how interviewees monitor and adjust their answers in real time.

Preparation time, by contrast, did not affect storytelling (H4 not supported). Although participants with unlimited time used it, they did not tell more stories. This mirrors the null effect on interview performance and suggests that time alone is not helpful unless interviewees know how to use it. We also found no interaction between preparation time and question wording (H6 not supported), suggesting that more time did not amplify the effects of priming. Overall, the findings point to a persistent reliance on pseudo-stories, but also to the role of a clear prompt in helping interviewees move closer to what PBQs are meant to elicit - stories. In this study, storytelling was also positively related to interview performance (r = .31), in line with Bangerter et al. (2014), while pseudo-stories were not.

How a response is told also seemed to matter. Responses to primed PBQs included more positive and negative tone-related words than those to traditional ones (RQ1). This suggests that priming led interviewees to recall more emotionally charged experiences. Describing a peak moment may often involve a high-stakes or difficult situation. These situations are likely to contain a mix of negative tone (to signal challenge) and positive tone (to emphasize resolution or success). This pattern is consistent with story arcs that move from difficulty to success (Germanier et al., 2025; Nabi & Green, 2015; Reagan et al., 2016). Positive tone was related to interview performance (r = .18), but negative tone was not (r = .11), consistent with prior work showing that upward emotional trajectories are linked to higher interview performance (Germanier et al., 2025; Naim et al., 2015). Preparation time did not moderate these effects (RQ2). Tone patterns appeared to depend more on the event retrieved than on extra time to

prepare. A prompt to describe one's best performance may have been enough to evoke a more intense tone profile.

Concerning impression management, neither preparation time nor question wording significantly influenced the use of honest or deceptive tactics (RQ3–RQ4). Participants reported similar levels of honest IM across conditions. This null effect adds to a mixed literature on preparation time and IM in AVIs: Basch et al. (2021) observed higher honest IM with added preparation time, whereas other studies report limited or inconsistent effects ((Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Roulin et al., 2022). Interestingly, honest IM was positively related to storytelling and negatively related to pseudo-stories, suggesting that interviewees may use stories to present themselves more favorably (Stevens & Kristof, 1995). Deceptive IM was weakly correlated with preparation time, but this effect disappeared once we controlled for demographic variables. This aligns with earlier findings, which generally found no relation between preparation time and deceptive IM (Basch et al., 2021; Lukacik & Bourdage, 2025; Roulin et al., 2022). Question wording also had no effect on deceptive IM. Although prompting interviewees to recall their best performance might increase pressure to impress (Ho, Perossa, et al., 2021), it did not lead to more deceptive IM. One possibility is that the prompt directed attention toward memory retrieval rather than impression management.

Concerning predictive validity, interview performance was related to contextual performance but not to task performance (RQ5). This is compatible with the view that PBQs can tap motivational tendencies and extra-role behaviors (Klehe & Latham, 2006). Contextual performance involves efforts like helping others or keeping skills up to date, which often align with how interviewees present themselves. Task performance, in contrast, may rest more heavily on procedural knowledge or execution (Koopmans et al., 2015). The content of the questions may also play a role, as the PBQs in this study focused on planning and interpersonal competencies (e.g., managing multiple deadlines), which plausibly align more with contextual performance.

Importantly, the relation between interview and contextual performance was stronger under limited preparation and with traditional PBQs (RQ6). When interviewees had more time and received primed questions, this link weakened. A plausible interpretation is that priming steers interviewees toward peak episodes closer to maximal performance, which diverges from our criterion (self-rated job performance), a proxy for typical performance (Klehe & Latham, 2006; Sackett et al., 1988). The greater variance in preparation time in the unlimited condition may signal increased heterogeneity in retrieval strategies, mixing typical and maximal responding and thus weakening alignment with a typical-performance criterion (Huffcutt et al., 2020; Klehe & Latham, 2006).

These findings reinforce that interview design can influence not only how people respond, but how well those responses predict later performance (Huffcutt & Murphy, 2023). Supporting this, we found that honest IM was positively related to both task and contextual performance, whereas deceptive IM was not. This adds to recent evidence that honest self-presentation contributes to valid assessment, while deceptive IM relate less to job performance (Bourdage et al., 2018; Ho, Powell, et al., 2021; Melchers et al., 2020; Peck & Levashina, 2017).

These findings point to a practical trade-off. Priming helped applicants tell stories, with richer emotional framing and boosted interview performance, but at a cost: responses became less predictive of contextual job performance. Also, unlimited preparation time had no benefit on its own. Overall, these results suggest that cues like question wording help applicants perform better, but not necessarily more informatively. Organizations should also know the criterion aimed before choosing design features, to avoid a mismatch and lower validity.

The main limitation of our study is the low-stakes setting of mock AVI, based on an online sample of participants. Even though interviewees were paid for the completion of the study with a possible bonus based on interview performance, they faced no consequences in terms of selection. This limits generalizability to actual selection contexts. That said, interviewees reported average to high levels of honest IM use and this could be a sign of investment in the study. We also imposed a response time limit. While this reflects typical AVI

practice (Dunlop et al., 2022), it differs from face-to-face interviews, where time pressure may be experienced differently. Studying real interviewees could improve external validity but raises ethical concerns. If certain designs give interviewees an advantage or create a poor experience, this can harm both fairness and organizational reputation (Hausknecht et al., 2004). Also, job performance was self-reported, which is prone to upward bias. The high job performance mean in the sample suggests that such inflation may have occurred. We used robust regression to mitigate skewness, but self-reports are not equivalent to external ratings; meta-analytic evidence shows only modest convergence between self and other ratings (Mabe & West, 1982). Future studies should include supervisor ratings or objective indicators such as a work sample for a more accurate assessment of maximal performance. Finally, future research should explore other ways to elicit maximal responding. In this study, preparation time did not help interviewees reach their best performance. Future work could test whether giving more time with guidance on how to use it, or automated follow-up prompts, helps interviewees develop fuller answers (Brosy et al., 2020; Huffcutt et al., 2017; Patel et al., 2024) and reinforces the effect of question wording without compromising predictive validity.

Endnotes

[1] https://aspredicted.org/v5wz-b6t8.pdf

[2] We determined the required sample size using an a priori power analysis for a two-way ANOVA with four groups, assuming an average effect size of $f = 0.25$ and a power of 0.80 (G*Power; Faul et al., 2009).

[3] All materials, code, and de-identified data are available at https://osf.io/pfz9k/?view_only=46b4491e3d93489d9ea2eec8ded9c0b0.

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Table 1

Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables

		M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	**Preparation Time**	0.51	0.50	-																		
2	**Question Wording**	0.49	0.50	.02	-																	
3	**Preparation Time Used**	33.32	52.52	.29***	-.02	-																
4	**Interview Performance**	2.98	0.83	.07	.14*	.09	-															
5	**Stories**	0.62	0.37	.09	.13*	.08	.31***	-														
6	**Pseudo-stories**	0.33	0.36	.00	-.10	-.02	.01	-.62***	-													
7	**Positive Tone**	2.38	1.23	.09	.17**	.02	.18**	.07	-.10	-												
8	**Negative Tone**	1.02	0.62	.09	.13*	.07	.06	.21***	-.13*	.04	-											
9	**Honest IM**	3.64	0.69	.07	.00	.07	.11	.21***	-.21***	.10	.07	-										
10	**Deceptive IM**	2.26	0.73	.12*	.07	.04	-.07	.00	-.04	.05	.00	.21***	-									
11	**Task Performance**	4.33	0.6	.06	-.02	-.02	.02	.02	-.07	.02	.04	.28***	-.10	-								
12	**Contextual Performance**	3.98	0.74	.15*	-.05	.12	.11	.06	-.09	.04	.08	.29***	-.06	.52***	-							
13	**Interview Experience**	9.25	16.55	.04	-.05	.13*	.02	.07	.00	.05	.04	-.05	.05	-.10	-.05	-						
14	**AVI Experience**	3.77	15.13	.06	-.05	.03	.01	.06	-.05	-.02	.05	.03	-.01	.01	-.05	.55***	-					
15	**Age**	41.61	11.94	.06	-.13*	-.11	-.16**	-.16*	.02	.00	-.08	-.07	-.25***	.12	.04	-.02	-.09	-				
16	**Gender**	1.50	0.5	-.01	.11	-.02	-.08	.05	-.13*	.00	-.06	.09	.04	-.05	.07	.11	.01	.03	-			
17	**Work Experience**	19.98	11.67	.05	-.14*	-.11	-.12*	-.14*	.08	-.03	-.12	-.12	-.32***	.11	.01	.01	-.10	.86***	.03	-		
18	**Customer Experience**	14.12	10.45	-.03	-.16**	-.09	-.09	-.15*	.08	-.07	-.11	-.09	-.31***	.11	.05	.09	-.06	.68***	.01	.79***	-	
19	**Ethnicity**	0.64	0.48	-.01	-.05	-.07	.00	-.12*	.06	-.06	-.05	-.08	-.07	-.02	-.11	-.16**	-.14*	.20***	-.12*	.20***	.12*	-
20	**Education**	0.77	0.42	-.16**	.06	-.03	-.05	.11	-.02	-.01	-.01	-.09	-.09	-.07	-.12	-.22***	-.16**	-.16**	-.01	-.05	-.06	0.09

N = 274. IM = Impression Management, AVI = Asynchronous Video Interview; Gender: 1 = male, 2 = female. Ethnicity: 1 = White; 0 = Non-White; Education: 1 = College/University, 0 = Not College/University. All coefficients are Pearson, two-tailed, pairwise. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

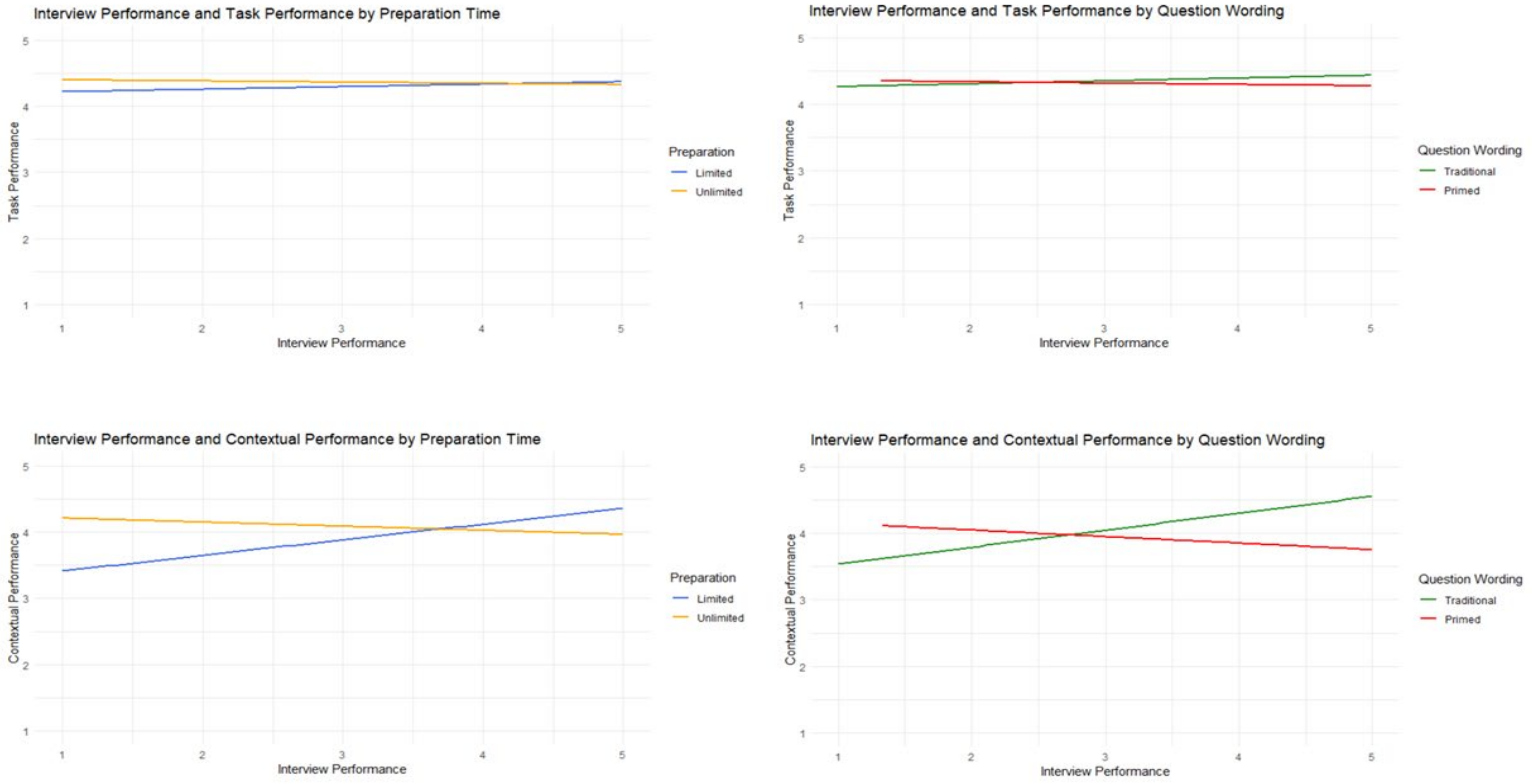
Interviewee behaviors and outcomes across experimental conditions

	Limited preparation				Unlimited preparation			
	Traditional PBQs		Primed PBQs		Traditional PBQs		Primed PBQs	
	M	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*	*M*	*SE*
Interview Performance	2.82	0.11	3.15	0.11	3.02	0.10	3.12	0.10
Stories	0.50	0.05	0.61	0.05	0.61	0.05	0.65	0.05
Pseudo-stories	0.40	0.05	0.28	0.05	0.34	0.05	0.34	0.05
Positive Tone	2.23	0.15	2.32	0.16	2.09	0.14	2.73	0.14
Negative Tone	0.88	0.08	1.10	0.08	1.07	0.08	1.07	0.07
Honest IM	3.7	0.09	3.59	0.10	3.69	0.09	3.73	0.09
Deceptive IM	2.21	0.09	2.18	0.10	2.32	0.09	2.4	0.09
Task Performance	4.36	0.08	4.30	0.09	4.36	0.08	4.39	0.08
Contextual Performance	4.00	0.10	3.96	0.10	4.16	0.09	4.03	0.09
Preparation time used	13.5	2.32	22.1	6.49	55.1	84.6	41.7	51.4

N = 274. IM= Impression Management, PBQs = Past behavior questions

Figure 1

Interview performance and job performance by preparation time and question wording



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