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# Are Video Resumes preferred by job applicants? Information Technology in Recruitment

Apoorva Goel <sup>1</sup>[0000-0001-7744-381X] and Richa Awasthy <sup>2</sup>[0000-0001-8866-8563]

<sup>1</sup>Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600036, India

<sup>2</sup>Ambedkar University Delhi, Lothian Road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi 110006, India

ms19d039@smail.iitm.ac.in

**Abstract.** In this work, we have analyzed the perceptions of Master of Business Administration (MBA) enrolled job-seekers towards video resumes along with determining the reasons for preference and non-preference for it. We administered 210 semi-structured self-designed questionnaires among MBA enrolled candidates looking for internships or final year placements of various Indian Universities. They were asked to use a video resume platform followed by filling up a semi-structured questionnaire focussed on gathering viewpoints about the perceived interface features, fairness, validity, privacy. Qualitative data analysis was also done to determine the reasons affecting user's adoption of platform driven services. Video resumes hosted on video-sharing platforms offer a unique opportunity to both the sides concerned i.e. the job applicant as well as the recruiter. Research on determining video resumes from job applicants' viewpoints is scarce and this study will add to the paucity of research pool on this topic. Moreover, this is the first study to highlight the issue of security and privacy of video resume platforms and, provide technical recommendations to these platforms from the applicants' perspective. With this study we hope to reach out to recruiters (practitioners), job-seekers, researchers and information system application developers for better acceptability of the product.

**Keywords:** Privacy, Recruitment, Video resume.

## 1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about many significant and unexpected changes in all realms of life. The entire global economy is going through major complications and transformations. Those who are in search of their first jobs may face difficulties in finding one. Even though the concept of a resume is familiar to everyone in the job market, the preparation of an up-to-date resume in this pandemic situation is all the more significant. While imposing great challenges, COVID-19 makes us learn new ways of surviving and succeeding and that includes a new approach to resumes as well, which attracts the attention of the recruiter and helps one stand out of the great number of other job-seekers. The social distancing and quarantine make the technological part of a resume extremely important, together with the visual element. In a time where in-

person interviews can barely be conducted, video resumes can help in the initial screening. No matter how much video resumes are perceived to be important or useful, their acceptance by the job applicants is of prime importance for its widespread usage and is much unexplored in research. Some questions which need to be answered are, “Do job applicants prefer to use a video resume?”, “What encourages or discourages them to use it?”, “What future remedies are available to make it more acceptable?”.

A video resume can be defined as a short video-recorded message where job applicants present themselves to potential employers [18]. In comparison to the traditional paper resumes, video resumes reveal a lot about the person beyond just the educational background and work experience [18]. Also, they offer the person the flexibility to highlight their skills, learnings, potential, personality, communication abilities, and the reasons why they are better than the rest for a particular job or company [8, 32]. The recent technological developments and its widespread availability present new opportunities for the study of video resumes. A literature search in Web of Science and Scopus on video resume shows that there has been limited research done on it. The majority of it has been done in the last few years, indicating recent research attention to video resumes. However, this growth in research is still limited and disproportionate when compared to the use of video resumes in practice. This urges more research in this area. Even though some studies have highlighted the importance of applicants’ perspectives in the adoption of this new technology in selection [27], however less is known in detail about their perspectives when compared to the traditional hiring tools. Despite the numerous benefits and the latest technological infrastructure available for video resume, the previous studies have not been able to study the views and perceptions of job-seekers who are the users of this new recruiting tool.

The main contributions of this work are the following: First, this study related to examining video resumes from a job applicant’s viewpoint will add to the paucity of research on this topic. Second, this study constitutes the first attempt to infer perspectives related to validity, fairness, discrimination, and impression towards video resumes, qualitatively. Third, this study highlights the element of the ‘privacy’ of video resumes, which is much unexplored. Fourth, this is the first study to provide recommendations based on responses gathered, to the video resume platforms to incorporate changes to cater to the various challenges faced by the users. Last but not the least, we have collected data from a diverse set of MBA candidates spread across various universities in India, geographically to gather diverse viewpoints.

This paper is structured as follows. Next, we discuss the Literature review. We then explain the method used for data collection and analysis. Later, we present the results and findings. In the next section, we arrive at the inferences. Consequently, we discuss the recommendations, limitations, scope of future research and, theoretical and practical implications. We finally conclude in the last section.

## **2 Literature Review**

Despite the rise of video resumes and video interviewing platforms as a new mechanism for workforce recruitment, scholarly publications on this subject are still rare. The digital advancements are changing the landscape of workforce recruitment [29, 31]. Until recently, paper resumes were among the most utilized instrument for the screening of job candidates in the workforce selection process. With the increased emergence of inexpensive sensors (webcams, microphones) and the success of online video resume platforms have empowered the introduction of another sort of resume, the video resume [15]. These platforms bridge the gap between job applicants and prospective employers. Videos recorded by the users become a part of their profile which can be shared, accessed by others and are not available to any company in particular.

The following parameters are being considered in this study to assess the perceptions of the respondents towards video resumes. These are:

### **2.1 Validity**

Validity refers to the accuracy and value attached to video resumes in comparison to the other methods of recruitment [9, 28]. The validity being referred here is the predictive validity, which measures whether the job applicants believe that this tool (video resume) will help them attain the expected outcome (job) [21]. The predictive validity of video resumes may be increased by greater consistency of the types of questions answered and their responses [20].

### **2.2 Impression**

The medium (video vs paper) influences the type of impression formation and hiring decision making. The same individual may leave a positive impression on the recruiter in a video resume at the same time leaving a negative impression in case of a traditional paper resume and vice-versa [18]. Job applicants are concerned with the fact that their video resumes may create a positive or negative impression on the recruiter based on their vocal cues such as voice pitch [12], recruiter's language attitude and accent understandability, which can ultimately alter the hiring decision.

### **2.3 Preference**

Preference is based on the influence of the format (e.g., a highly structured, predefined format with content requirements vs. an unstructured format in which the content is determined by the applicant), the medium (paper vs. video vs. interview), and, individual differences (e.g., educational level, ethnicity, personality) on applicant's and recruiter's perceptions [18]. Technological developments have made possible the creation and sharing of video resumes. Such facilities are available and accessible to most

applicants. Hence, they find it more convenient, up-to-date to use a video resume, and may prefer it more over the traditional resumes [18].

## **2.4 Discrimination**

New selection techniques such as video resumes may be regarded more positively by applicants as compared to the traditional paper-and-pencil versions in terms of overall fairness [7, 25]. Therefore, these innovative tools for selection can be said to not necessarily leading to a negative applicant perception [3] and can even lead to a more favorable perception [25]. Research shows that paper resumes are prone to ethnic discrimination [4]. Hence, ethnic minorities are likely to welcome video resumes more due to a more personalized and competency-based approach [24]. On the other hand, empirical evidence also states that e-recruitment practices are perceived to be unfair and may lead to negative applicant reactions due to a tendency to 'self-select out' [1]. They may discriminate against a person based on the stigmas such as religious attire, disability, and disfigurements [22].

# **3 Methodology**

## **3.1 Research design**

The research adopts both exploratory and descriptive research designs. The exploratory research design was used to focus on the discovery of more insights related to the subject. Since the problem is relatively new hence exploratory research method was used to incorporate some of the fresh viewpoints and achieve a better understanding of the topic [5]. To find answers to questions like what, how and why, grounded theory approach was applied. The descriptive research was used to define opinion, attitude, and behavior of the respondents towards video resumes. It was also done to describe video resume perspectives in more detail, filling in the missing parts and expanding the understanding. Secondary research and survey technique were made use of to study trends, opinions and behavior of future job applicants with respect to video resumes in their job-related process.

## **3.2 Data Collection**

Participants were contacted through telephonic calls and electronic mails (e-mail) to participate in the study which aimed to determine their perceptions regarding the emerging concept of video resumes. They were further instructed to use a video resume platform which they could either find over the internet or choose any from the three links (randomly chosen) of video resume platforms provided to them in the e-mail, for their convenience. After using a platform, they were then required to complete the self-designed semi-structured questionnaire [6], provided in the e-mail. The questionnaire had two parts: close and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions were aimed to gather facts about video resumes on dimensions of validity, preference, impression,

and discrimination [18]. The open-ended question was used to gather any thoughts they had regarding video resumes. Quantitative data analysis was used to analyze data on percentage of responses which are in-favour or against or neutral on each of the pre-decided dimensions. A content analysis which is used to make valid inferences by interpreting and coding textual material [19] was used for qualitative data obtained from open-ended responses to determine the reasons of favourability and unfavourability towards video resumes. Recommendations were then suggested from the responses obtained to the existing video resume platforms using primary and secondary research.

### 3.3 Participants

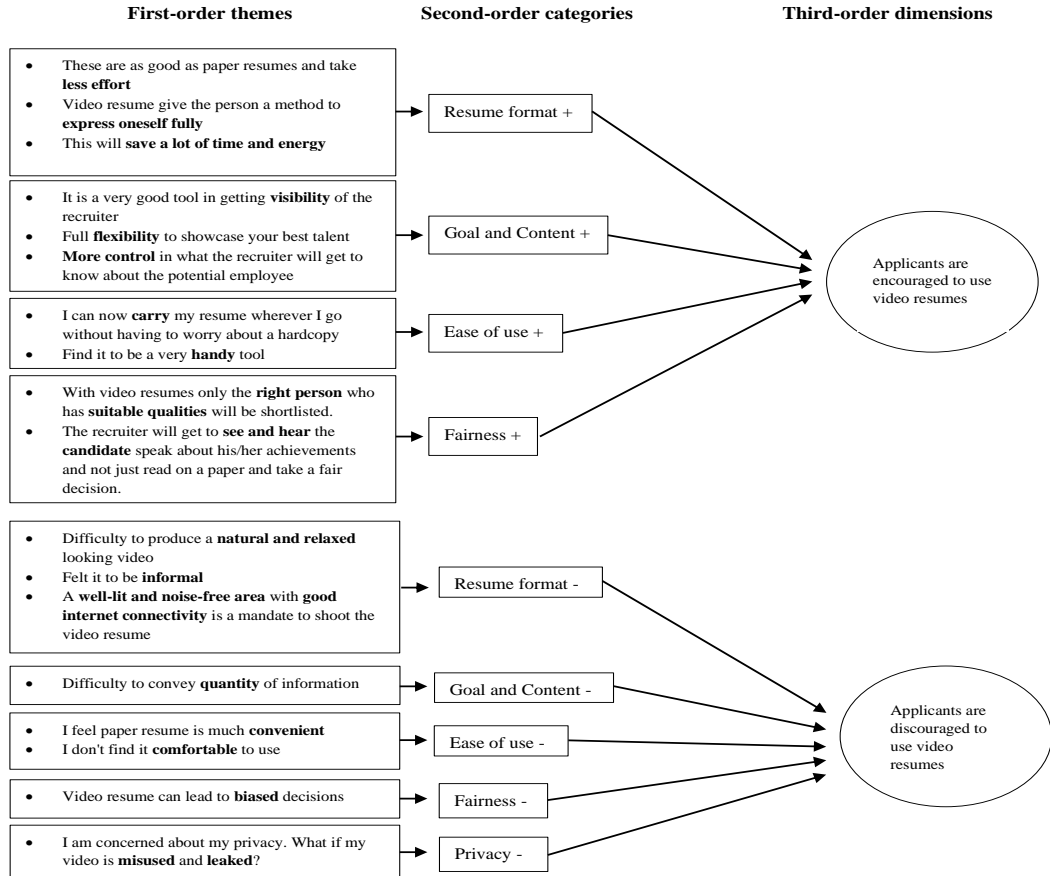
Participation in this study was solicited from MBA students either in the first year or the second year of the course enrolled in various Indian Universities. Convenience sampling [23] technique was deployed. A total of 210 individuals participated in the study. This sample size is based on the number of different Universities and the available target respondents in each University. An effort was made to obtain an approximately equal number of responses from each University to avoid skewness and ensure diversity. Of the 210 participants who completed the survey, 4 responses were eliminated due to incomplete information. Therefore, the participation rate was 98.1%. Of the 206 usable responses, 48% were from females and 52% from males. Additionally, 32% of participants had at least one year of work experience.

## 4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is drawn on the coding paradigm of Grounded Theory [10], including the phases of open, axial, and selective coding. The coding was done mainly by the first author and then discussed and verified by the second author to eliminate any biases and improve reliability and validity of qualitative data [2]. The codes were comprehensively reviewed and scrutinized by asking whether they are relevant and represent the interpretations of encouraging or discouraging the use of video resumes.

In the phase of open coding, we broke down the data so obtained into characteristics related to video resumes. The resulting codes were then aggregated into themes, categories, and theoretical dimensions for each case. We found many overlapping sentences hence; we merged and eliminated the rest. In the phase of axial coding, we looked more closely for statements encouraging or discouraging the use of video resumes. This was utilized for establishing connections between categories and dimensions inducted in the first phase. In the final phase of selective coding, we reduced the data into the most important categories which could explain why applicants are encouraged or discouraged to adopt the usage of video resumes. Figure 1 illustrates the resulting data structure. Here, resume format refers to characteristics including the communication code (verbal vs. nonverbal), the administration duration, the number of actors involved, the direction of communication (one-way vs. two-way) the degree of surveillance. Goal and content refer to the type of information that is exchanged. Ease of use refers to user

convenience. Fairness refers to non-judgmental outcomes. Privacy refers to the security of personal information.



**Fig. 1.** Proposed relationship model (where '+' signifies in favor and '-' signifies not in favor)

## 5 Findings

The following section on findings presents the statistics of responses obtained from the close-ended questions in our survey based on the dimensions of validity, impression, preference, and discrimination. We also explain the reasons behind their encouragement or discouragement to use video resumes based on close and open-ended responses.

### 5.1 Validity

Validity refers to the accuracy in hiring decisions. Regarding the validity of the video resume, 76.7% (majority) of respondents consider it to be valid for a job applicant and solves its purpose of creation while 23.3% oppose this view. Video resume offer a short and precise platform for applicants to portray themselves to the recruiter. Some of them may consider it very useful for their purpose of securing a job and some may not, questioning its validity.

### 5.2 Impression

Impression refers to the opinion formed about someone based on some evidence. For this dimension, 72.3% (majority) of respondents hold the view that video resumes lead to a positive impression of the applicant on the recruiter whereas 17% are against this. Moreover, 9.7% of respondents say it won't create any impression. These impression views are more inclined to each applicant's personal reasons such as personality.

### 5.3 Preference

Preference refers to a greater liking for one alternative over another. Around 54% (majority) of respondents prefer video resumes equally as paper resumes whereas 27.2% prefer video resumes less and 18.8% prefer video resumes more. Some applicants may prefer a video resume above, equal or below a paper resume due to reasons personal and unique to each.

### 5.4 Discrimination

Discrimination refers to the unjust treatment of different categories of people based on different grounds. From the data collected, the order of discrimination in hiring due to video resumes is derived to be as follows: (Where '>' signifies followed by) Attractiveness> Disfigurements> Personality> Disability> Gender> Age Majority of the respondents are of the opinion that attractiveness of the person can create the maximum halo effect [14] on the recruiter, which means that the recruiter will only notice the good qualities in a person while disregarding any flaws and disfigurements no matter how small they may be, can create the maximum horn effect [30] on the recruiter, which means that the recruiter will only notice the flaws in a person while disregarding any good qualities.

#### **Applicants are encouraged to use video resume platforms**

. The above data reveals that a major proportion of respondents are in favor of video resumes which encourages them to make use of it for their job hunt process. Several varied reasons play an instrumental role in this perceived usefulness. According to Daft and Lengel's [11] media richness theory, types of media differ from one another in terms of 'information richness' based on four factors. These factors are capacity for immediate feedback, several cues (text, sound, and image) which can be transmitted

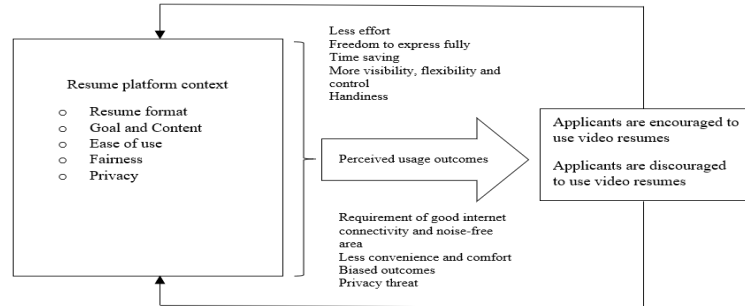


through the medium, personalization (ability to convey with personal focus), and language variety (simple vs complex). These respondents perceive video resumes in a much broader sense which allows them to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics, such as career objectives and motivation. Video resumes provide a platform to present themselves in a tailor-made way to highlight as well as explain their interests and achievements which suit the requirements of a particular job. This grants them an opportunity to present themselves more flexibly than just a paper resume which has a rigid format and deters them to express freely, making video resumes score higher in information richness. Video resumes are also considered by them as a handy tool. The videos can be taped in their smartphones and sent across to the recruiters anytime and anywhere.

### **Applicants are discouraged to use video resume platforms**

. Our data also conveys that some of the respondents, who are a part of the job applicant pool are apprehensive of using video resumes for obtaining jobs or internships. This can be explained with the help of the realistic accuracy model [13]. This says that applicants consider information to become more salient in information-rich video platforms such as their look and appearance. Our respondents also worry that according to them, the recruiters are more likely to pay more attention to the applicants who are perceived to be more attractive. The perceived physical attractiveness by the recruiters will lead to biased job-related outcomes. This perceived attractiveness also impacts the validity (accuracy) of the purpose of video resumes and also its reliability for the applicants. The other major inhibiting factor for the adoption of video resumes by some of the applicants is the hardware requirements necessary to support its format. Video resumes require a well-lit and noise-free area for effective recording. Even though this isn't a mandate but is much required to eliminate any background flaws in the video. Also, the requirement of good internet connectivity to shoot a video and send it across to the targeted recruiters is a drawback for the applicants residing in areas where internet connectivity is slow or even absent. Data from open-ended questions led to the identification of an unexplored category which is 'Privacy'. Westin [33] defined privacy as, the claim of individuals, groups, or institutions to determine for themselves when, how, and to what extent information about themselves is communicated to others. It is one of the reasons for the unfavorability of video resumes due to the apprehension of the video going viral and may getting misused for unforeseen reasons. This can be inferred from one of the respondents who says, "what if my video is misused and leaked?". This element is one of the major roadblocks for the acceptability of video resumes and hence we have tried to suggest recommendations for the same.

Summarizing the findings of both sets of data collected with the help of open and close-ended questionnaire [16], we see that the overall dimensions influencing the adoption of video resumes are validity, impression, discrimination, resume format, goal and content, fairness and privacy. In figure 2, we thus outline relevant contextual characteristics and their influence on dis/encouraging using video resume platforms. We identified resume format, goal and content, ease of use, fairness, and privacy as five relevant contextual factors either facilitating or restricting video resume usage. These first-order themes act as a feedback loop to the video resume platforms for their modifications.



**Fig. 2.** Contextual characteristics and their influence on encouraging or discouraging video resume usage.

## 6 Discussion

The purpose of this paper was two-fold. Regarding our first research goal, results have shown that the majority of the respondents are in favor of this newly emerging recruitment tool but they along with those not in favor of it have some common concerns which when taken care of can result in wider acceptability. Focussing on the second major goal of this study, we have suggested some recommendations in the platforms based on the open-ended responses of the participants. We have taken the utmost caution to address each of their concerns.

### 6.1 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations for video resume applications (apps)/platforms, based on the responses gathered:

**Uniformity of Background:** There must be a provision in the form of a technical feature that can remove the existing background of the candidate and replaces it with a pre-selected one out of the specified background themes available for uniformity and better visual quality of videos. This will help in removing any distractions due to the background where the video is being shot. This, in turn, will ensure that the job applicant is not being judged or unfavoured due to the unavoidable background distraction(s).

**Noise cancellation:** Noise cancellation feature in a video resume platform will allow for minimal background noise and hence a better audio quality of the video. This can be achieved by filtering the noise signals from the candidates' end before reaching the employers' side. Otherwise, in the case where there is too much unavoidable noise from the applicant's side, the recruiter (viewer) may just stop and move on to the next video.

This may seem to be unfair for the applicant and the recruiter may even lose a potential candidate.

**Ability to shoot video on the platform even without internet connectivity:** Ability to keep recording the video even if internet connectivity goes off temporarily. This is an effective solution especially for areas where high-speed connectivity is still not available and also for cases where internet connection may disappear momentarily due to unavoidable reasons. In such an adverse situation, the candidate will not have to re-shoot the video, instead, it can continue shooting and upload when the internet connection is regained.

**Eye detection feature:** Eye detection feature to enable the candidate to maintain eye contact with the viewer (Employer). In the case of there is no eye contact, the entire purpose of a video resume is meaningless due to a lack of effective delivery of content. It is a very important feature and can be made possible with the help of the iris detection feature available in almost all smartphones.

**Development of a mobile application (app):** In a time where a majority of the people use their mobile phones for every task, providing a seamless candidate experience in the form of an app (independently or in addition to a website) is the need of the hour. This will attract more job applicants towards the platform.

**Handling of privacy issue:** It may happen that a recruiter who receives the video resume of a candidate may not find him fit for a job role in his/her organization but may want to recommend it to someone known and he/she will forward the link of the video. In this process, there is a possibility that the video is misused or leaked. Hence, a solution for this is to make the video resume link of a candidate his/her property which can be forwarded only by requesting permission from the concerned person for forwarding so that the person can keep a track where the video is being forwarded and who else is viewing it.

## 6.2 Research Limitations

Our study was done with a limited number of students enrolled in the MBA course in India. Hence, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to the entire job applicant population. Our participants were unemployed job seekers, who may welcome video resumes more than other (employed) applicants because of their inexperience and low understanding of the labor market. Also, the fairness and procedural justice perceptions of video resumes may be related to participants' ethnic backgrounds, knowledge, skills (language proficiency, education), and attitude (ethnic identity) than to actual career outcomes. Hence, different respondents may have different perceptions relating to it.

## 6.3 Future research

There is a scope of research in this field related to the fairness of video résumés for a broader array of subgroups such as disabled applicants, different vocal characteristics,

different educational and ethnic backgrounds, job roles, and from different countries to have a cross-cultural perspective. Future research may also focus on privacy issues in video résumé screening since there is apprehension in the users of video resumes regarding the inappropriate use of their videos when circulated. An extraverted and outspoken person may likely prefer video resumes more than that of a person of the opposite personality type. Hence, future studies may attempt to correlate the personality type and gender of an individual with their tendency to be in-favor or not in favor of video resumes. We have limited our examination to limited contextual factors, future studies could study additional factors such as types of jobs and industries for the suitability of a video resume over a paper resume.

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