

**Office Workers' Perceptions of Videoconferencing Compared to Onsite Conferencing  
for One-way and Dynamic Meetings.**

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### **Abstract**

Videoconferencing became the primary communication medium during the COVID-19 pandemic and changed how office workers communicate. Research on videoconferencing is mixed, and three ideas are currently popular. Optimists argue that videoconferencing is a better version of onsite conferencing; sceptics dispute that and claim that onsite conferencing cannot be replaced. Finally, integrationists bridge the two sides by arguing that videoconferencing can be used in businesses for specific meeting types. This study investigates office workers' perceptions of videoconferencing, compared to onsite conferencing, for one-way and dynamic meetings. Eight qualitative interviews were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. The findings suggest that videoconferencing has distinct benefits (efficiency, practicality) and challenges (lack of socialisation, decreased mental presence) compared to onsite conferencing. Furthermore, participants preferred videoconferencing for specific meeting types based on their communication activity (active or passive). We conclude that videoconferencing has a place in businesses. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

*Keywords:* videoconferencing, onsite conferencing, communication

## **Office Workers' Perceptions of Videoconferencing Compared to Onsite Conferencing for One-way and Dynamic Meetings.**

Videoconferencing (VC) is a communication medium that enables remote transmission of auditory and visual information (Zack, 2011). Although its first business use was in the 1990s, VC was not widely adopted until 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns necessitated work from home and accelerated the transition to video communication (Patrizio, 2021). In the future, researchers expect VC to continue being a popular communication medium for companies (Barrero et al., 2021; Bartik et al., 2020; Standaert et al., 2021).

Literature on VC has almost doubled since the pandemic started (Karl et al., 2021). Currently, the literature includes three main arguments: optimistic, sceptical, and integrationist. Optimistic arguments present VC as an improved version of OC. They suggest that through VC, office workers can transmit the same information as through OC (e.g., auditory, and visual) while enjoying more flexibility and efficiency (Denstadli et al., 2011; Miyamoto et al., 2021; Standaert et al., 2022). In contrast to these arguments, sceptical claims support that VC cannot transmit visual information at the same level as OC, and its adoption may hinder group performance and socialisation. Integrationist ideas bring these sides together and argue that businesses can use VC for specific meeting types based on their objectives (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995). Furthermore, they argue that communication media have different distinct capabilities that make them suitable for specific meeting types based on their needs (Standaert et al., 2021).

The general purpose of this qualitative study is to present office workers' perceptions of VC for different meeting types. In the context of this study, I distinguish between one-way and dynamic meetings based on participants' roles in communication. Specifically,

participants are active senders and receivers of information in dynamic meetings. In contrast, their role in one-way meetings is limited to receiving information from others.

### **Literature Review**

Previous research on VC focuses on its benefits, challenges, and appropriate use based on contextual factors like meeting objectives, group size, and duration (Standaert et al., 2022). The benefits of videoconferencing include increased flexibility (Karl et al., 2021), perceived efficiency (Lantz, 2010), perceived autonomy (Miyamoto et al., 2021), and information transmission (Zack, 2011). In addition, VC optimists point out OC's challenges. For example, based on the Media Richness Theory, transmitting more information (e.g., nonverbal cues) may distract meeting participants and lead to reduced attention and engagement (Standaert et al., 2021; Fosslie & Duffy, 2020). Furthermore, in some meetings, processing nonverbal information is not essential (Daft et al., 1987); therefore, OC may not be appropriate in every situation (Standaert et al., 2021).

In response to criticism of OC, VC sceptics argue that the Media Richness Theory is not empirically tested (Denstadli et al., 2011) and that during VC, people tend to speak more and see multiple faces and backgrounds at the same time, so the cognitive load is higher in VC (Karl et al., 2021; Sneddon et al., 1997). Moreover, they argue that the increased flexibility that VC brought to office workers also increased the number of meetings they attend and thus increased their total workload (Richter, 2020). Furthermore, office workers perceived VC as more efficient, partly due to their ability to multitask (Fosslie & Duffy, 2020). However, although office workers perceive multitasking positively, evidence shows that it may hinder productivity and quality of task execution (Fosslie & Duffy, 2020). In addition, sceptics argue that VC was a means of autonomy before COVID-19; however, during the pandemic, there was no sense of autonomy since the switch to VC was a necessary

adaptation (Miyamoto et al., 2021). As a result, VC gives workers a sense of autonomy; however, this may change based on contextual factors. Moreover, despite VC's ability to transmit auditory and visual information, Bailenson (2021) questions the quality and extent to which it accomplishes this. He suggests that computer cameras only capture participants' faces and shoulders, and this limited access to nonverbal cues may lead to an overreliance on facial expressions, which in turn may increase miscommunication.

Adding to the counterarguments of VC, sceptics mention two novel challenges of VC. First, VC fatigue (Bennett et al., 2021; Gallo, 2020; Karl et al., 2021), the perception of feeling exhausted after a period of online meetings became a popular term in the initial stages of VC implementation during the first COVID-19 lockdowns (Brucks & Levav, 2022; Wiederhold, 2020). This feeling includes increased tiredness, worry, and work-related anxiety, which relates to lower job performance and voluntary turnover (Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). Second, a lack of social and informal conversations during VC can hinder group connectedness and relationship building (Karl et al., 2021; Olien et al., 2015; Standaert et al., 2021; 2022), factors that are especially challenging for new group members (Denstadli et al., 2011).

Although most research on VC emphasises its limitations, there is a growing number of research that indicates that VC may be appropriate for specific meetings based on their objectives, group size, and duration (Fosslien & Duffy, 2020; Goodhue & Thompson, 1995; Karl et al., 2021; Standaert et al., 2022). This indicates that VC can potentially be used as an effective means of communication in businesses. Namely, group size and duration do not influence communication medium appropriateness (Standaert et al., 2022); however, meeting objectives do. Researchers distinguished meetings based on different criteria. For example, Standaert et al. (2022) distinguished four meeting types based on their objectives: information exchange, decision making, sentiment communication, and relationship building. They

suggest that VC is a better fit for information exchange and decision-making meetings due to their straightforward character. Furthermore, they argue that OC is better for relationship building and communicating sentiments. This is because individuals have better access to nonverbal cues and can feel the presence of coparticipants. Others distinguish between meetings with high and low levels of communication (Lu & Peeta, 2009). They suggest that OC is better for high-level communication meetings, VC is better for low-level communication meetings (e.g., information exchange), and short and repetitive meetings.

Research on VC and its appropriateness for specific meeting types primarily uses quantitative reports and theoretical analyses, while qualitative reports are scarce. The aim of this qualitative study is twofold; first it aims to address the qualitative knowledge gap by developing a deeper understanding of office workers' experiences with VC for one-way and dynamic meetings through in-depth analyses of qualitative interviews. By distinguishing between one-way and dynamic meetings, we give participants the ability to direct the conversation on what they consider more important, specific meeting objectives (Standaert et al., 2021) or the levels of communication (Lu & Peeta, 2009). To address these topics, I ask the following research question: 'How do office workers perceive videoconferencing, compared to onsite conferencing, for one-way and dynamic meetings?'

### **Method**

I used reflexive thematic analysis to analyse data, which helped me identify patterns of shared meaning that emphasise participants' experiences (Braun & Clarke 2013). An interpretive-constructivist philosophy guided this qualitative research. This approach suggests that humans construct reality socially and psychologically (Gelo et al., 2008, p. 270) and that researchers are active meaning makers in the analytical process (Young, 2014). This meant treating participants' accounts with respect to contextual factors (e.g., increased self-consciousness during the interview). In addition, previous VC-related experiences influenced

some participants' accounts. For example, some of them started using VC before the pandemic, while others stated that they had read research on the effects of VC on office workers in the past. These factors contributed to the generation of participants' accounts.

### **Study Design**

Participants' experiences with VC were collected through semi-structured interviews (Appendix), which were later transcribed verbatim and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Semi-structured interviews helped me explore participants' perceptions in an open-ended manner (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Namely, this structure enabled me to receive input on essential areas of my research (e.g., benefits and challenges) while following participants' accounts to generate novel input (e.g., participants distinguished between meeting types differently) (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Furthermore, my role during interviews was active, which meant that I probed and explored participants' comments to understand their accounts further.

### **Participants**

Eight participants from our thesis group's networks (3 females, 5 males, Mage = 36.5, age range: 22-46 years) were interviewed. Seven of them were working in Europe and one in Australia. They were all educated and held high-ranking positions in their organisations. Two participants had experience with VC prior to the pandemic. Reports suggest that perceptions of VC before the pandemic were more favourable than those during the pandemic (Miyamoto et al., 2021). Thus, the two participants' perceptions of VC could be influenced by the different contexts in which they became familiar with VC. Furthermore, they are more experienced with VC than the rest of the sample, which may influence their reports. The participants received no compensation for their contributions.

### **Procedure**



Office workers who fulfilled four inclusion criteria were invited via email for online or in-person individual interviews. Namely, they had to be working for the same company for at least three years, they needed to have experience with videoconferencing within their workplace, and they must have participated in one-way and dynamic meetings. Finally, moderate English proficiency was necessary, as the interviews were in English. Our thesis group facilitated the interviews, all of us had theoretical knowledge but little practical experience with semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the sample came from our networks, which raised the risk of selection bias, but helped us establish trust and facilitated disclosure.

Participants filled in a survey with their demographic data, followed by an (online or in-person) semi-structured interview. This means that we prepared a questionnaire that included items that guided our interviews (Whiting, 2008); however, we adapted to the content of each interview. The interviews included open and closed questions about office workers' perceptions of VC, how they perceive it for one-way and dynamic meetings, and topics they would improve on VC or keep the same. In addition, it included non-leading paraphrases and additional probing questions when needed. Interviews lasted 25-60 minutes, with an average interview time of 45 minutes.

Interviews and transcriptions were completed within three weeks. Online interviews were recorded using the "Open Broadcaster Software." For in-person interviews, mobile phones were used. In both cases, only audio was recorded. Moreover, interviews were transcribed using the "Otter.ai" software. Finally, interview analyses took an additional week and were conducted manually, with the support of software.

## **Analysis**

Reflexive thematic analysis guided the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I followed an inductive approach to ensure that no areas in the interviews remained uncovered (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In line with reflexive thematic analysis, I followed a six-step process. First, I familiarised myself with the data by listening to the interviews and transcribing them and noting and identifying parts that stand out. Then, I processed the text line-by-line and generated the first codes. After that, I looked for statements related to the advantages and challenges of VC and how it compares to OC, as well as testimonials related to their experiences with VC for one-way and dynamic meetings. Then, I grouped codes that described similar concepts into themes. After grouping codes, I reviewed the themes and adjusted them where necessary. This process included the creation of subthemes, concepts that were related to the bigger themes but were reoccurring on their own. Then, we named and defined the final themes, and finally, we reported them.

### **Ethics**

Participants signed informed consents before the interviews. We removed identifying information from the transcripts and replaced participants' names with numbers. This allows us to distinguish them when reporting their quotes. The ethics committee of Behavioural and Social Sciences approved this research.

### **Ensuring Quality**

The qualitative principles of trustworthy research guided the study. These include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bowen, 2015). Credibility refers to accurate and correct production information. In this study, credibility was built through the practice of theoretical triangulation, persistent observation, and member checks. Theoretical triangulation was achieved by bringing together contrasting theoretical perspectives on VC in the workplace. Moreover, persistent observation was established through adaptation and in-

depth exploration of participants' experiences during the interviews. Finally, in the week after the analysis was conducted, I reached out to participants, when possible, to check if they agreed with my interpretation of their interviews and adjusted when necessary.

Research is transferable when its findings in one context can transfer to other contexts (Bowen, 2005). In this study, the sample consisted of office workers who worked for different companies and in different countries. The fact that they agreed on many points regarding VC indicates that the research is transferable and may apply in other countries and corporate cultures.

Finally, dependability (Bowen, 2005) is the stability of the inquiry process over the entire research. Although mistakes due to lack of experience are possible, if not unavoidable, the approach of this paper is thoroughly planned and argued. The methods that I used suit my research questions and agree with the input from my thesis instructor and the group, who functioned as an audit.

## **Findings**

Participants consistently showed a preference for OC over VC. However, their reports were also consistent on the improvement of their VC experience since its implementation and their desire for it to remain as a communication option in the workplace, especially for specific types of meetings. I report six themes related to VC that developed in the analysis: (a) the benefit of efficient work, (b) useful collaboration and communication elements, (c) challenges in workers' socialisation, (d) lower perceived mental presence, (e) higher perceived workload, (f) OC benefits for relationship building, and (g) meeting-specific preferences. These themes fall under four topic summaries (Brown & Clarke, 2022, pp. 79-81): 'Benefits of VC,' 'Challenges of VC,' 'Benefits of OC,' and 'Integration of VC.' We discuss these topic summaries and their themes below.

## **Videoconferencing**

### ***Benefits of Videoconferencing***

Regarding VC benefits, participants evoked two themes consistently. First, they perceived VC as a communication medium that allows them to work time efficiently. Namely, commenters suggested that they saved time by attending meetings online.

P5: There's no travel time, you do not need to get in your car and go somewhere, there's no traffic jams you have to worry about or waste your time.

P7: Yes, one positive thing is maybe, you don't have to listen to 100% of the meeting. Because, you know, what, what is part of the information you need to know. And yes, maybe you can, then do some work parallel.

In the context of efficiency, commenters also mentioned that with VC, they expended less effort in commuting and business traveling.

P6: When I am meeting from home, I'm very efficient for the work part. Because I wake up early, I do not have to travel, I can go from meeting to meeting without having to move from meeting room to meeting room. That works very, very efficient.

P6: The great thing about video conferencing is location is no longer important.

These accounts indicate that office workers in our sample consider resource allocation in evaluating VC. Multitasking is a form of time-allocation in which participants decide on which tasks to engage during VC and is related to increased perceived autonomy (Claessens et al., 2007). Perceived autonomy is linked to higher job satisfaction and lower work-related stress. Furthermore, participants spoke about commuting, business traveling, and venue preparation as negative side-tasks of their jobs. In this context, they may appreciate their

ability to allocate effort to tasks that they perceive as more meaningful. Participants' positive affirmations of VC as related to efficiency are related to their increased ability to allocate their resources which increased their perceived autonomy.

Furthermore, participants had positive thoughts about VCs collaboration tools. Specifically, they valued record-keeping and screen sharing.

P7: Yes, it is also a pro that you can that one person who can take notes for everyone. So, you can keep track on what the other people are doing after the meeting.

P6: But yes, that is more effective. I can also for that matter, I could also just tape my video and send it and people can watch it anytime.

P6: We can do screensharing. Yes, it is not only the fact that we have videoconferencing, but we have much more digital collaborative tools. And there we can work at the same time in the same documents in real time.

Drawing input from all participants and focusing on the same objects through live collaboration are positively valued by office workers. Interestingly, both functions are not built to simulate onsite meetings, indicating that VC succeeded in making up for OC's challenges instead of mimicking its benefits.

### ***Challenges of Videoconferencing***

When reporting challenges of VC, participants focused on socialisation, mental presence, and perceived workload. The first challenge, lack of socialisation, relates to the decreased access to nonverbal cues compared to onsite conferencing, which was considered necessary by all participants.

P4: I think the cons are, it is more difficult to read body language, especially if there's multiple people in the in the call, I think our brains struggle with, you know, not being able to exactly read what people are saying, especially when you're presenting as well.

Some argue that even the presence of collocation makes socialisation easier.

P4: For pros, you can feel you know, you can kind of feel the presence of that other person, which you cannot do virtually.

Finally, participants suggest that VC makes communication more formal, which results in fewer social conversation exchanges.

P3: It is really hard to get someone to know someone and you know, to develop a rapport and a relationship with someone if you only ever meet them on video calls. So, I think that is a big con, of video calls.

P4: The main constraints of this kind of methods is you do not have more non formal interaction, for instance the coffee corner chats.

P6: I think (videoconferencing) it is more challenging because you miss a bit the social connection.

Overall, participants experience meetings not only as sights of collaboration and task coordination but as sights of social engagement and relationship building. They report that VC lacks foundations that facilitate the social aspects of meetings, taking away a function reported as necessary in meetings. Furthermore, nonverbal communication is essential for business meetings because participants can perceive these discreet cues and adjust their behaviour (P5). Based on this, it can be argued that all onsite meetings have a dynamic aspect because communication flows from all parties, either with words or with nonverbal cues.

A second aspect that participants consider challenging when using VC is their attention and engagement. In the context of meeting attendance, attention and engagement refer to the extent to which participants can concentrate and focus on their meeting tasks without getting distracted by other unrelated tasks. To this end, participants report that they are more prone to turning the cameras off to multitask during VC.

P3: Well, (attention) it is a lot lower online, I, I will check my emails during meetings, I will work on something during meetings, I will literally tune it out completely. If I think it is not worthy of listening to in that moment, because not every meeting is, is relevant to me, but I'm invited to a lot. So, whereas in person, you cannot ignore it as you have to pay attention.

Although participants evaluated multitasking as a benefit of VC, they reported negative impressions when they believed others engaged in multitasking (P6) and were more prone to disengage themselves. One participant argued that multitasking became necessary because of the increased number of meetings that came with VC (P7). This increase filled participants' schedules with meetings; a concept that relates to the next theme.

Overall, participants reported that VC had increased their workload and the number of weekly meetings they attend. Some even indicated that they need to dedicate entire days to meetings.

P7: It is just that you have to do things parallel, because you don't have enough time to do the things you need to do. So, you then can do things parallel. I would not say that it's a positive thing because you have to do it since there is not enough time. Maybe it is also a negative thing because the workload is higher.

P7: Maybe the amount of meetings increased. At my first year, we have maybe like, one or two meetings a day [...] one big negative point is that the meetings are more

that there are more meetings, and that they take longer. I have some days where I just sit at my desk and join meetings.

The increased workload can be related to the increased accessibility VC brought to the workplace. As P7 suggests, managers have higher attendance expectations because it is easier to join meetings via VC. This increased expectancy may influence office workers into taking part in meetings which they do not consider important for them (P1), and in those meetings, they may be more prone to disengage and multitask.

## **Onsite Conferencing**

### ***Benefits of Onsite Conferencing***

Participants reported two benefits of OC. First, in OC communication meeting participants can share nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is an important aspect of interpersonal communication, and the office context is no exception to that.

P1: So, you see the body language, you establish like a, a rapport faster, especially if there are meetings that uh people in the meeting that let's say they're gladly collaborating.

In addition, participants' perceived attention during OC meetings was higher, compared to their attention during VC meetings.

P3: If I think it's not worthy of listening to in that moment, because not every meeting is, is relevant to me, but I'm invited to a lot. So, whereas in person, you cannot ignore it as you have to pay attention.

Nonverbal communication and attention are linked to higher relationship quality and rapport (Bonaccio et al., 2016). As discussed earlier, relationship building is considered an important



function of business meetings (Denstadli et al., 2011); therefore, in the context of these data, an explanation for the importance of access to nonverbal communication and attention during meetings may be related to a need to increase the quality of relationships in the workplace.

### **Integration of Videoconferencing**

Participants indicated their preferences on communication media (VC and OC) for two types of meetings, one-way and dynamic. All office workers in our sample preferred VC for one-way meetings. They argue that since they are only receivers of information, it is possible to pay attention and multitask simultaneously, drawing more value for their time.

Furthermore, they consider that during such meetings, there is little to no need for social interaction (P7). Therefore, even audio conferencing is positively evaluated. It seems that despite its shortcomings, the efficiency that VC provides is enough for office workers to prefer it for one-way meetings.

P3: It is a lot easier for people to attend if it's a video conference, because they can do it while doing other stuff or on the move. Whereas in person, everyone has to be in the same room, you'll have to fit in the same room. And then someone has to set up the technology so everyone can see. See the screen and stuff like that. So, it is probably less fun and less engaging, maybe, but it's better.

Interestingly, all participants emphasised specific meeting types based on their goals. In the context of one-way meetings, they especially preferred VC for routine information exchange meetings (P1) and conferences that would otherwise require much traveling (P4). An exception to this is networking conferences; participants indicated that for networking, they prefer OC due to its social character (P1).

Participants also had a clear preference in the context of dynamic meetings, but this time for OC. In dynamic meetings, high-level communication is more important (Lu & Peeta,

2009), which makes nonverbal cues necessary. Furthermore, participants reported that connecting with groups is difficult via VC, especially for new teams.

P1: Um, I would say for online, uh, for dynamic meetings, it's much easier to be face-to-face um, it helps in the communication of the team and helps because, you know, there's, there are other types of communicating other than words, so you see the body language, you establish like a, a rapport faster, especially if there are meetings that uh people in the meeting that let's say they're gladly collaborating. Um, so certainly like it is much better from my point of view when it's face-to-face.

Like with one-way meetings, participants also distinguished between different dynamic meetings and their appropriateness for VC implementation. Again, participants agreed that VC is inappropriate for brainstorming and relationship-building meetings. However, some pointed out that decision-making meetings are acceptable to be conducted onsite (P2). This is consistent with participants' statements on VC's pros and cons, with many emphasising its reduced social capabilities, which are important in both types of meetings (Standaert et al., 2021; 2022).

Throughout the interviews and the analytic process, I used my subjectivity as a resource (Gough & Madill, 2012). It helped me better understand participants' accounts and meanings in the context of my knowledge of the topic. Smith and Shinebourne (2012) argue that researchers can create meaning from participants' stories only if they relate them to their phenomenology. Thus, it is important to clarify my individual experiences and assumptions.

I had a negative impression of VC before engaging in the topic. I considered it a means of communication that did not connect participants and made communication difficult. Although reading confirmed some of my biases, my overall opinion changed towards an integrationist point of view. During the interviews and the analytic process, I had two

opinions. The first was that VC and OC are communication media with distinct benefits and challenges, and the second was that they are proper for specific meeting contexts.

### **Discussion**

In this qualitative study, I investigated the perceptions of office workers with VC for one-way and dynamic meetings. Overall, participants share consistent perceptions of VC and report a slight preference for OC over VC. Findings support and challenge arguments from the optimistic and sceptical sides; however, they strongly support integrationist positions.

Participants identify some benefits of VC that make them want to maintain it as a communication medium in their workplaces. For example, they consider VC more efficient in saving time and effort than OC. This is in line with research before the pandemic (Lantz, 2010), in which office workers suggested that they perceive VC as a more efficient communication medium. Furthermore, evidence shows that efficiency promotes autonomy through time and effort allocation (Claessens et al., 2007). This interpretation clarifies the argument of Miyamoto et al. (2021), which indicated that office workers perceived VC as a communication medium that promoted autonomy only before the pandemic. Interestingly, a second benefit was reported, which has not been studied before and relates to participants' positive experiences with VC collaborative tools (e.g., screen-sharing and record-keeping).

Regarding VC challenges, participants suggested that VC makes group socialisation difficult, especially for new members, which agrees with previous reports (Denstadli et al., 2011; Karl et al., 2021, Standaert et al., 2021; 2022). Furthermore, office workers in our sample reported that their attention is lower during VC meetings than during OC meetings. This stands against Media Richness Theory, which supports that onsite conferencing may transmit too much information (e.g., nonverbal cues) for some meetings, resulting in distraction and loss of engagement. Furthermore, it supports the argument of sceptics,

concerning the increase load of information that meeting participants must process during VC, including multiple coparticipants' faces and their backgrounds. Finally, participants reported that since the pandemic, when VC was widely implemented, their workload and number of meetings have increased. Interestingly, some participants considered attending more "useless" meetings online, which may relate to their reduced attention. Of course, the evidence from this paper was not clear about all aspects of office workers' perceptions of VC.

One interesting grey area in the data is related to multitasking. To this end, optimists and sceptics are represented in the participants' reports. On the one hand, commenters made positive remarks about the ability to multitask and work more efficiently. On the other hand, they considered multitasking necessary because VC increased their overall workload. This supports optimistic (Lantz, 2010) and sceptical (Fosslien & Duffy, 2020) accounts.

As stated earlier, the analysis shows support for integrationist arguments. Specifically, they argued that VC is more appropriate for meetings in which their role is more passive (one-way) and less for meetings in which their role is active (dynamic). Furthermore, they supported that meeting objectives should also determine which communication medium is used, with routine, information exchange meetings favoured for VC and complex, brainstorming, and relationship-building meetings favoured for OC. These findings support both approaches in distinguishing between meeting types based on their communication level and objectives (Lu & Peeta, 2009; Standaert et al., 2021).

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Readers should take two limitations into account when interpreting this study. First, the sample consists of office workers who have regularly participated in VC meetings as part of their work. Therefore, the findings may not transfer to contexts outside of office work. Furthermore, we interviewed office workers who have spent at least the past three years in the

same company. Therefore, we did not consider the experiences of new group members, which may be worse (Shockley et al., 2021).

Although the questionnaire included items on office workers' perceptions of VC before and during meeting attendance, we did not focus on their experiences after VC. Given the depth of literature on VC fatigue, which occurs because of prolonged VC engagement, it is possible that we missed important input. Future research can consider the post-meeting perceptions of office workers using VC and attempt to understand VC fatigue better.

A few interesting ideas for future research come from this study. First, investigating office workers' perceptions of multitasking compared to their level of performance will shed light on this area of debate between VC optimists and sceptics. Furthermore, considering the experiences of new group members may help meeting organizers consider meeting members' relationships between selecting a communication medium. Finally, more research on office workers' post-VC experiences will generate a holistic understanding of their perceptions before, during, and after VC meetings.

### **Strengths**

In this study, I aimed to shed light on an underexplored area in VC research, which relates to office workers' perceptions of VC as a communication medium for one-way and dynamic meetings. Using reflexive thematic analysis to analyse individual semi-structured interviews, I developed shared meaning from participants' unique experiences on benefits, challenges, and appropriate use of VC in the workplace. Furthermore, the sample came from a variety of cultures. This makes the findings more transferable to workplaces in different countries.

### **Implications**

Theoretically, this paper contributed to an ongoing debate between optimists, sceptics, and integrationists of VC, using an approach that has not been previously used in this topic. From a practical standpoint, managers and meeting organisers can learn more about the importance of communication media in meetings and attempt to use VC and OC in contexts they fit. Considering the importance of meetings in workers' perceived well-being, job-related stress, and voluntary turnover (Karl et al., 2021; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998), adopting policies that promote effective use of communication media for different meetings will satisfy office workers and enhance companies' bottom line.

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## Appendix

### Interview Questions

How have you experienced video conferencing over the last few years?

- a. How would you compare it to offline meetings?
- b. Can you identify some pros and cons?
- c. Does the way you prepare for meetings differ?
- d. Do you prefer online meetings or in person meetings? Why?
- e. How would you describe your skill level regarding video conferences?

What kind of work-meetings have you experienced in the last few years, regarding whether they are more dynamic/ democratic/ sharing-information type or more one-way/ hierarchical?

Which ones do you react better to when contrasting offline meetings and online ones?

Please share your experiences (positive and negative) of online meetings for the purpose of one-way (low engagement) meetings?

- a. How would you compare them to offline meetings?
- b. Can you identify some pros and cons?
- c. How do you react to the leader's behavior in these types of meetings?

Please share your experiences (positive and negative) of online meetings for the purpose of dynamic (high engagement) meetings?

- a. How would you compare them to offline meetings?
- b. Can you identify some pros and cons?
- c. How do you react to the leader's behavior in these types of meetings?

What would you change about video conferencing? What would you keep the same?

## Engagement/ Attention

How does your attention during online meetings compare to your attention during physical meetings?