

## EXAMINATION OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ONLINE AND FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS DURING A RECRUITMENT PROCESS IN TERMS OF CANDIDATES' SELF-EFFICACY LEVELS

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### ABSTRACT

In today's work conditions, time constraints and physical boundaries make it difficult to use face-to-face interviews during the recruitment process. Online interviews give the chance to cope with time and place limitations, but the interaction between the candidate and the interviewer is different than the case of sharing the same place. The aim of this study is to examine the differences between self-efficacy levels of participants, depending on their preferences about the type of recruitment interview. The results of the study showed that the participants preferring an online interview have significantly higher self-efficacy levels than participants preferring a face-to-face interview. In terms of gender, women preferring online interview have higher self-efficacy levels than men with the same preference. They also have higher self-efficacy than women and men preferring face-to-face interview. Findings regarding the differences in preference of the type of recruitment interview are discussed.

**Keywords:** Online Interview; Face-to-face Interview; Self-efficacy.

### İşe Alım Sürecinde Çevrimiçi ve Yüz Yüze Mülakatlar Arasındaki Farkın Adayların Öz-Yeterlilik Düzeyleri Açısından İncelenmesi

#### Özet

Günümüzün çalışma koşullarında, zaman kısıtlamaları ve fiziksel sınırlar, işe alım sürecinde yüz yüze görüşmelerin kullanılmasını zorlaştırmaktadır. Online mülakatlar, zaman ve mekân sınırlamalarıyla başa çıkma şansı verir, ancak aday ve görüşmeci arasındaki etkileşim, aynı yerin paylaşılması durumundan daha farklıdır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, katılımcıların görüşme tercihlerine bağlı olarak, öz-yeterlilik düzeyleri açısından ortaya çıkabilecek farklılıkları incelemektir. Araştırmanın sonuçları, çevrimiçi görüşmeyi tercih eden katılımcıların, yüz yüze görüşmeyi tercih eden katılımcılara göre daha yüksek öz yeterlilik düzeylerine sahip olduklarını göstermiştir. Cinsiyet açısından bakıldığında ise, çevrimiçi görüşmeyi tercih eden kadınların öz-yeterlilik düzeylerinin, aynı tercihe sahip erkeklerden daha yüksek olduğu gözlenmiştir. Aynı zamanda, yüz yüze görüşmeyi tercih eden kadın ve erkeklerden de daha yüksek öz-yeterliliğe sahiptirler. İşe alım sürecindeki görüşme türünün tercih edilmesinde öz-yeterlilik düzeyine bağlı olarak oluşan farklılıklara ilişkin bulgular tartışma kısmında irdelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Çevrimiçi Mülakat; Yüz Yüze Mülakat; Öz-yeterlilik.

### INTRODUCTION

Recruitment interviews are of vital importance for people who look forward to find a job. The candidates are usually engaged in displaying a good image during the interview. With the new technologies, it is also possible to make the interview online. Online or face-to-face interviews have their own advantages and disadvantages. In both cases, there are many factors forming the interaction between the interviewer and the candidate. Some of them are difficult to control, like the individual characteristics of the candidate or the interviewer. Self-efficacy of the candidate is an important determinant in a recruitment process. This study aims to

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provide a basis for understanding the relation between candidate's self-efficacy and his or her preference for an online or a face-to-face interview during the recruitment process.

The effects of computer mediated communication are investigated in terms of text messages through social information processing theory (Walther 1992) and the hyper-personal model (Walther 1996). Walther (1992) pointed out that despite computer mediated communication doesn't involve non-verbal cues, it can transmit adequate information as well as face to face communication provides. In hyper-personal model, Walther (1996) emphasized some advantages of computer mediated communication, including the possibility of having greater control on the information shared with other people. While these theories deal with text messages, there are limited studies about online interviews and their effects on communication. Opendakker (2006) compared face-to-face, telephone, mail and MSN Messenger interview technics and determined that when social cues of the interviewee are not important for the subject, the interview can be carried out via telephone, mail or MSN Messenger. If the social cues are important for the interviewer than a face to face interview bring better results.

For being able to get successful results from a job interview, Huffcutt (2011) proposed a model, which indicates that there are three main sources of construct-related variance in interview ratings: Job-related interview content, interviewee performance and demographic characteristics. Interviewee performance contains some signs of a social effectiveness, such as impression management tactics or interpersonal presentation. Research show that the ability to use effective verbal or non-verbal communicating tactics and to perform an active social engagement during an interview is associated with greater self-efficacy (Hall et al. 2011; Tay et al. 2006). With text messages, the individual has much more control over the information transmitted to the others (Walther, 1992). It is difficult to compare a virtual communication, like face-time, and a face-to-face communication. In both cases the individual has the possibility to follow the social cues more than a text message, but the interaction should be different in case of sharing the same place, with a specific social distance. It is obvious that individuals have more access to social cues in a face-to-face interview compared to an online interview. It can be argued that people tend to be more comfortable in online or face-face interviews, depending on different factors. This study examines whether there is a difference in terms of the candidate's self-efficacy levels depending on their preferences for the type of recruitment interview, namely an online interview (like a face-time or skype interview) or a face-to-face interview.

## **I. RELATED LITERATURE**

### **A. SELF-EFFICACY**

Individuals' believes about their capabilities are more important than what is actually the case (Bandura, 1995, p.2-3). Their actions, affective states, motivations are shaped by these believes. Efficacy is a generative capability, which includes interrelated sub-skills such as cognitive, social, emotional and behavioral skills (Bandura, 1997, p. 36-37). People with high self-efficacy can handle difficult situations easily because they see them as opportunities for improving themselves. On the contrary, people with low self-efficacy see challenging situations as personal threats and they prefer to stay away from them (Bandura, 1994).

Individuals' self-efficacy beliefs have also an effect on what they are interested in. Niemivirta and Tapola (2007) found that higher self-efficacy was related to higher interest in a specific task. People tend to show greater interest in tasks which they think they are capable to do. In this context individuals' performance is also accessible. Judge and Bono (2001) showed in their meta-analysis that there is a positive relationship between generalized self-efficacy and job performance. But several research, on the other hand, produced some conflicting results in terms of the relation between self-efficacy and performance (Vancouver & Kendall, 2006; Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner, & Putka, 2002). Schmidt and DeShon (2010), showed in their study that self-efficacy was positively related to performance only when performance ambiguity is low. In a high ambiguity condition, the relationship between self-efficacy and performance becomes negative. They explain these results with the amount of effort invested in the task during performance. High self-efficacy in a high ambiguity condition makes people conclude more easily that they are successful and it directs them to put less effort in the task. It can be said that the amount of ambiguity in prevailing conditions is an important factor during examining the relations between performance and self-efficacy. People who avoid ambiguity and uncertainty tend to have lower self-efficacy perceptions (Hofstede, 1980). Hofstede (1991), defines uncertainty avoidance as *"the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations"*. People in a high uncertainty avoidance society are not willing to face unfamiliar and ambiguous things. Steenkamp, Hofstede, & Wedel (1999) found that uncertainty avoidance has a negative effect on individuals' willingness to be exposed to new technologies. They are more concerned with the risks associated with new trials. Sánchez-Franco, Martínez-López, Martín-Velicia (2009) showed in their study, people who avoid ambiguity and uncertainty found ICT (Information and Communications Technology) more risky. This attitude leads to lower their self-efficacy perceptions in using the technology.

## **B. RECRUITMENT INTERVIEWS**

Interview is the main technique for the personnel selection process. The social interaction between interviewer and interviewee is an important component for the recruitment. Dipboye (1982) stated that the outcomes of the interview are affected substantially by the interaction of interviewer and interviewee. Time constraints, financial problems and physical boundaries make it difficult to use face-to-face interviews at all times. Technological changes bring a different perspective to conventional interview techniques. Nowadays online interviews are more frequently used. It offers a chance to cope with time and place limitations. But some factors, like familiarity with online communication or having digital literacy, affect the nature of the interview (Janghorban et al. 2014). Also the interaction between interviewer and interviewee can be affected because of the lack of some social cues. However, Sullivan (2012) stated that online interviews provide the possibility to manage the impression, therefore they offer the same level of authenticity as a face-to-face interview. Although the verbal and nonverbal cues can be used in online interviews, it is not possible to have access to all social cues that are available in a face-to-face interview.

Individuals have different expectations from an interview in terms of the social cues it provides to them. As people lack social cues, they experience more uncertainty. This uncertainty can lead them to avoid using the technology (Sánchez-Franco, Martínez-López, Martín-Velicia, 2009). People with high uncertainty avoidance are expected to have lower self-efficacy perceptions (Hofstede, 1980).

Especially in a recruitment interview, people with lower self-efficacy can prefer face-to-face interview in order to minimize the ambiguity in the procedure. In this context, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1: The self-efficacy levels of the participants, who prefer an online interview will be higher than participants who prefer a face-to-face interview.

Females are more responsive to social cues than men (Clarke-Stewart, 1973). They are more sensitive to social cues and they use them to attribute a meaning to a specific behavior (Della Vigna, 2012). Therefore it is more difficult for women, compared to men, to accept the risk of lacking social cues. Especially in important situations they are expected not to prefer to be deprived of them. In this context, the preference of women and men may differ from each other depending on their self-efficacy beliefs. According to this, the following hypotheses were developed:

H2a: There are differences between self-efficacy levels of women and men preferring online interview

H2b: There are differences between self-efficacy levels of women and men preferring face-to-face interview.

## **II. METHOD**

### **A. PARTICIPANTS**

The sample consisted of 302 participants (176 females, 126 males). Participants were students in Istanbul Kültür University from different departments. % 63 of the participants are from Psychology, % 17 of the participants are from Communication Arts, % 11 of the participants are from English Language and Literature, % 9 of the participants are from Turkish Language and Literature Department. The mean age was 20,55 (SD=1,95). Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire, based on a convenience sample method. Convenience sampling, as one of the type of nonprobability sampling, focuses on reaching individuals who are readily available to participate in a study (Gravetter and Forzano, 2012). Convenience sample method is often used in applied social research (Rog and Bickman, 2009). In such studies, by determining the sample size, Nunnally (1978) recommended to reach minimum 10 times, Gorusch (1983) recommended to reach minimum 15 times the number of items in the scale that is used in the research. In this study, the General Self-Efficacy Scale consists of 10 items. Comrey and Lee (1992) reports a sample size of 100 as weak, 200 moderate, 300 good, 400 very good and 500 perfect. In order to reach also an appropriate sample size for the factor analysis, 300 participants were included in the study.

### **B. MEASURES**

Participants' self-efficacy levels were measured by the General Self-Efficacy Scale, which was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). The internal consistency of the scale was reported by the researchers as varying between 76 and 90. This scale, which was translated into 28 languages, was adapted to Turkish by Aypay (2010). She has reported that the internal consistency coefficient of the Turkish scale was .83. It examines the belief that individuals have about their competency to deal with new and difficult tasks. The scale consists of 10 positive items. The high score points to a high overall self-efficacy level. It is a 4-point Likert

scale, which begins with 'completely incorrect' and ends with 'completely correct' point. The General Self-Efficacy Scale has a one-factor structure and for this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was .86.

In order to determine the recruitment interview preferences, two options were offered and the participants were asked to mark one of them. These options include "I would prefer the interview to be performed online via internet" and "I would prefer the interview to be performed face-to-face".

### III. FINDINGS

For testing the construct validity of general Self-Efficacy Scale, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Results can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Confirmatory factor analysis for General Self-efficacy Scale

Model	X <sup>2</sup> /df	RMSEA	GFI	IFI	CFI	SRMR
G. Self-Eff. Scale	2,51	,07	,94	,92	,92	,06
Goodness of Fit Stat. *	<3	<,08	>,90	>,90	>,90	<,08

\*Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Müller (2003)

The goodness of fit statistics of structural model (X<sup>2</sup>/df=2,51; RMSEA=.07; GFI=.94; IFI=.92; CFI=.92; SRMR=.06) fulfill the criterions in corresponding literature (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Müller, 2003). 138 of 302 participants preferred online interview during a recruitment process. According to the homogeneity of variances test, the groups were homogeneous (p> .05). For testing the first hypothesis t-test was conducted. The difference between the self-efficacy levels of the participants, who prefer a face-to-face or an online interview is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Difference between the self-efficacy levels of the participants preferring face-to-face or online interview

Self-efficacy	n	$\bar{x}$	sd	t
Face-to-face interview	164	2,93	,20	
Online interview	138	3,28	,25	-13,47***

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The self-efficacy levels of the participants, who prefer an online interview are significantly higher (t=-13,47, p< .001) than the participants who prefer a face-to-face interview. According to these results H1 has been confirmed.

78 of 176 female and 60 of 126 men participants preferred online interview. For testing the second hypothesis one-way ANOVA was conducted. The differences

between self-efficacy levels of women and men preferring online or face-to-face interview are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3.** The differences between the self-efficacy levels of women and men preferring online or face-to-face interview

<i>Self-efficacy</i>		<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>sd</i>	<i>F</i>
Face-to-face	Women	98	2,91	,22	76,27***
	Men	66	2,96	,16	
Online	Women	78	3,36	,23	
	Men	60	3,17	,22	

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$

The results show that there are significant differences between women and men preferring face-to-face or online interview ( $F = 76,27$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In order to be able to make comparisons to determine the source of this difference, Tukey test was conducted (See Table 4 and Table 5).

**Table 4.** Tukey test results for self-efficacy levels of men and women preferring online interview

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>sd</i>	Mean difference	<i>p</i>
Women	78	3,36	,23	,19	,000
Men	60	3,17	,22		

**Table 5.** Tukey test results for self-efficacy levels of men and women preferring face-to-face interview

	<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$	<i>sd</i>	Mean difference	<i>p</i>
Women	98	2,91	,22	-,05	,51
Men	66	2,96	,16		

According to Tukey test, women preferring an online interview, have higher self-efficacy levels than men with the same preference. H2a was confirmed. But there isn't any significant difference between self-efficacy levels of women and men preferring face-to-face interview. According to these results H2b has not been confirmed. In terms of self-efficacy, women with online interview preference have also higher scores than men and women, who preferred face-to-face interview.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study showed that there is a difference between the self-efficacy levels of the participants who prefer an online and a face-to-face interview.

The participants preferring an online interview have significantly higher self-efficacy levels than participants preferring a face-to-face interview. In terms of gender there were four groups to examine, namely women preferring face-to-face interview, men preferring face-to-face interview, women preferring online interview and men preferring online interview. Results showed that women preferring online interview have higher self-efficacy than men with the same preference. They also have higher self-efficacy than women and men preferring face-to-face interview.

During a recruitment interview it is critical for the interviewee to make a favorable impression, therefore the self-presentation abilities of the candidate are of vital importance. People use specific tactics for a proper self-presentation (Steinmetz et al. 2017). Impression management is affected by some situational factors like social interaction goals (Gohar et al. 2016). In a recruitment process, the interviewer is seen as an authority figure to whom the candidate has to make an impression. That makes the candidate focus more on impression management. As people with low self-efficacy see challenging situations as personal threats (Bandura, 1994), they prefer a safe place in which they can predict what will happen. When a recruitment interview is in question, people with low self-efficacy might prefer an environment with enough social cues to help them make predictions about the process. During an online interview they are deprived of some social cues. Therefore it can be said that people with high self-efficacy can focus more on the advantages of online interview, like the flexibility in terms of time and place, rather than the lack of social cues. Candidates considering the advantages rather than threats, namely the candidates with high self-efficacy, are expected to prefer online interviews. Research findings support this expectation.

In terms of gender, women are more sensitive to social influence than men (Eagly, 2013). Men are expected to show more resistance to social pressure. In a recruitment process, women can focus more on social cues in the environment as compared to men. It might be more difficult for women to give up the idea of making sense out of the social hints surrounding them. Women might feel better when they see the social environment in full. In a face-to-face interview they have the possibility to assess the whole of the social circle. It is also possible that they are more open to be influenced by the social environment. Guadagno and Cialdini (2007), showed in their study that women can be persuaded easily in a face-to-face communication while men can be persuaded more easily by a computer-mediated communication. It can be argued that women who prefer computer-mediated communication, can be more likely to try new things other than their natural tendency. Individuals with high self-efficacy believes are more likely to attempt new behaviors (Sherer et al. 1982). In this context, consistent with research findings, women's preferences for online interview can be interpreted as a sign of their high self-efficacy. In order to understand the advantages and disadvantages of online interviews better, in future studies, the social cues, which might effect the interviewees during the process, can be examined.

Recruitment interviews are critical for a productive hiring process, but the mobility, the most important change in today's conditions, makes it difficult to make face-to-face interviews. For this reason, it is important to examine the advantages and disadvantages of online interviews in order to develop a suitable recruitment process that fits today's job conditions. Since the 'presence' of the person is not always possible, in future studies, the factors that might have an effect on online interviews should be examined in more detail.

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