

## NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON FIRST IMPRESSION FORMATION

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### Abstract

Nonverbal communication is a way for humans to communicate without using language aspects. To communicate nonverbally, a person can use two channels, namely the visible channel and the paralingual channel. Nonverbal behavior in an interaction always communicates something. Even though when we meet new people we will communicate verbally, we need to realize that non-verbal communication also occurs and continues along with verbal communication. Even small things like eye movements, facial expressions, clothing, and body movements still influence other people's perceptions of us. First impressions and nonverbal communication are closely related in building other people's perceptions of us and also our perceptions of other people. The research was carried out using the literature study method. A literature review was used to collect data and information related to nonverbal communication and its influence on first impression formation. This research discusses the definition of nonverbal communication, theories of first impression formation, and the relationship between nonverbal communication and first impression formation.

**Keywords:** Nonverbal communication, formation, first impression

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## INTRODUCTION

It's not just verbal communication that plays an important role in our social interactions. It has been proven that the portion of verbal communication in the entire human communication process does not even reach 40%. Apart from verbal communication, there is another form of communication that dominates, reaching a share of around 65%, namely nonverbal communication (Hess, 2016). M Argyle (1972) stated that nonverbal communication is a way for humans to communicate without using aspects of language. To communicate nonverbally, a person can use two channels, namely the visible channel and the paralingual channel. Visible channels are communication channels that can be seen directly by our eyes. Visible channels include expressive behavior such as facial expressions, gestures, gestures, and appearance. Meanwhile, paralinguage channels are channels related to aspects of sound other than speech that can be understood by someone. The paralinguage channel or what is also called vocalica includes tone, loudness and softness of voice, voice quality, speed of speech, intonation, and form of speech. It cannot be denied that most of human life is spent communicating with each other. We have outlined the complexity of human communication practices and the context that supports the communication process. Like it or not, the communication carried out is not just verbal communication (Hall et al, 2019).

Humans cannot avoid forms of nonverbal communication which we simply know in sign language in the form of facial expressions, gestures, and so on. Nonverbal communication itself can be found in all cross-cultural communication processes in various parts of the world. However, there are differences in nonverbal communication patterns carried out by people who adhere to high and low context communication cultures. A society that adheres to a high-context communication culture is a society that adheres to a collective culture so that apart from the communication process being complicated, they also tend to frequently use signs, symbols and codes when communicating. In contrast to societies that adhere to a high-context communication culture, societies that adhere to a low-context communication culture are societies that are more individualistic (Grillo & Enesi, 2022). The communication process tends to be more straightforward and not complicated so that the meaning you want to convey is more easily understood by the communicant. Therefore, they tend to use nonverbal communication channels less often when communicating.

The presence of nonverbal messages in the communication process allows the communicant to interpret meaning more easily. In a communication process, nonverbal messages can act as the main complement to verbal

messages, as a substitute for verbal messages, or even contrast between the verbal and nonverbal messages conveyed (Mundy & Willoughby, 2014).

Building a good impression in a meeting is one of the important things in communicating. It is not uncommon for someone to consider first impressions as something trivial, even though first impressions are something important because first impressions are how someone we have just met evaluates us through their views (Tissera et al, 2021). Not a few people use first impressions as a parameter for judging other people, this is because first impressions usually make an impression and become an identity about the person themselves.

Yu et al (2014) in their research stated that at the beginning of every meeting with someone, of course we will definitely pay attention to how that person is, such as how they dress, what their body movements are, what their facial expressions or expressions are, and what their words are. the words spoken by a person, either through the way they speak or their intonation in speaking.

However, in reality, first impressions do not always have to be expressed in words or sentences, even just by being silent and looking at each other, a form of communication called interpersonal communication occurs. This can occur due to the exchange of information and feelings that occur between two or more people. However, to get a good first impression at the beginning of the introduction, apart from paying attention to appearance, we should also greet and introduce ourselves politely so that better communication occurs so that other people will have a much better first impression of us (Bcev & Haji, 2017).

Building a good first impression is very important because it can influence how other people perceive and treat us. The reason why building a good first impression is very important is because it influences other people's perceptions, people tend to form views about someone based on the first impression they get. Therefore, building a good first impression can influence how other people perceive and treat us (Cafaro et al, 2016).

Building a good first impression can open up new opportunities, both in terms of work and social relationships. People tend to be more interested in collaborating or communicating with individuals who have a good first impression. A good first impression will also help build trust in other people, people tend to trust someone more who has a good and professional first impression (Humă B, 2015).

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

The method used in writing this article is a literature review. A literature review is the process of collecting, analyzing, and compiling information from reliable sources that is relevant to the topic being discussed. In this case, a literature review is used to collect data and information related to nonverbal communication and its influence on first impression formation.

The author looked for reliable sources such as scientific journals, reference books, and websites related to nonverbal communication and its influence on first impression formation. The sources selected are sources that have the authority of nonverbal communication and their influence on the formation of first impressions. After collecting relevant sources, data and information from these sources are analyzed systematically.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Definition of Nonverbal Communication**

Nonverbal communication is a way for humans to communicate without using aspects of language (M Patterson, 2017). To communicate nonverbally, a person can use two channels, namely the visible channel and the paralingual channel. Visible channels are communication channels that can be seen directly by our eyes. Visible channels include expressive behavior such as facial expressions, gestures, gestures, and appearance. Meanwhile, paralingual channels are channels related to aspects of sound other than speech that can be understood by someone. The paralingual channel or what is also called vocalica includes tone, loudness and softness of voice, voice quality, speed of speech, intonation, and form of speech.

It cannot be denied that most of human life is spent communicating with each other. We have outlined the complexity of human communication practices and the context that supports the communication process. Like it or not, the communication carried out is not just verbal communication. Humans cannot avoid forms of nonverbal communication which we simply know in sign language in the form of facial expressions, gestures, and so on (Burgoon et al, 2021).

Nonverbal communication itself can be found in all cross-cultural communication processes in various parts of the world. However, there are differences in nonverbal communication patterns carried out by people who adhere to high and low context communication cultures. A society that adheres to a high-context communication culture is a society that adheres to a collective culture so that apart from the communication process being complicated, they

also tend to frequently use signs, symbols and codes when communicating. In contrast to societies that adhere to a high-context communication culture, societies that adhere to a low-context communication culture are societies that are more individualistic. The communication process tends to be more straightforward and not complicated so that the meaning you want to convey is more easily understood by the communicant. Therefore, they tend to use nonverbal communication channels less often when communicating.

The dominance of nonverbal communication in the human communication process was even studied by scientist Charles Darwin. Darwin conducted research that focused on facial expressions as indicators of a person's emotions. Darwin believed that a person's facial and body expressions were an important statement and contained true thoughts, intentions and emotions that were even greater than what was conveyed in the form of words. Darwin's research was then followed by other scientists so that now many studies have emerged that examine nonverbal messages transmitted by humans (Bull & Frederikson, 2019).

Just like verbal communication, nonverbal communication is a skill that is given to someone from the moment they are born into the world. The skill of using nonverbal messages grows and develops along with a person's practice and life experiences. When someone reaches a more mature age or enriches their abilities, it is not impossible that their skills in using nonverbal messages will also develop. At least nonverbal communication functions to respond to the situations we face, support the verbal messages we convey, or even replace the verbal messages themselves.

Nonverbal communication is present in our communication process through various forms. In general these forms are shown as:

1. Sign

A sign is an identifier or name that indicates a relationship between the sign and the object being marked.

2. Code

Code is a system and arrangement that organizes signs. In simple terms, code can be understood as rules and the way humans combine relationships between signs.

3. Symbols

A symbol is an object that is composed of other objects. Symbols are used to mean something.

These three displays are forms commonly used in nonverbal communication between humans (Metsumoto & Hwang, 2016).

Nonverbal communication is a form of communication that uses many channels to convey its message. The large number of communication channels for conveying nonverbal messages has resulted in the absence of a rigid classification of types of nonverbal communication. Several figures such as Jurgen Ruesch, Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, John R. Wenburg, and William W. Wilmot have tried to classify nonverbal communication according to the form of message and communication channel used. Jurgen Ruesch once classified signs in nonverbal messages into three parts, namely hand language (sign language), action language, and object language. Meanwhile, Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter classify nonverbal messages into two categories, namely behavior (appearance, body movements, facial expressions, eye contact, touch, smell, paralanguage) and space, time, and silence. Similar to the classification carried out by Samovar and Porter, John R. Wenburg and William W. Wilmot classified nonverbal messages into behavioral signals and public signals.

Although the classification of nonverbal messages carried out by these characters has a number of differences, they generally have the same roots, namely nonverbal messages conveyed physically and nonphysically. Nonverbal messages that are nonphysical involve the socio-cultural context that exists around the communicator and the communicant. In general, nonverbal messages can be divided into nonverbal messages in kinesic, proxemic and paralinguistic forms. Nonverbal messages in the form of kinesics are nonverbal messages in the form of body limb movements. Nonverbal messages in proxemic form are expressed in the form of distance between the communicator and the communicant. Meanwhile, paralinguistic or paralinguistic nonverbal messages are nonverbal messages that use vocal variations other than speech.

The following is an example of non-verbal communication along with a complete explanation.

1. Body Gestures

The first example of non-verbal communication is body gestures. For this example, you often encounter it in everyday life. Usually body gestures can help to provide meaning to words conveyed verbally. For example, we can use our hands as a gesture when rejecting something. Gestures can give power to the message that is being conveyed to other people.

2. Appearance and Clothing

The second example of non-verbal communication is through appearance and clothing. When we wear certain clothes, this can give a message about what characteristics we have. For example, at formal events, we wear clothes such as jackets and trousers made of cloth. This clothing will send the message that we are neat and serious people.

### 3. Facial Expressions

The third example of non-verbal communication is through facial expressions. Facial expressions are usually found as a reaction to something we are experiencing. For example, when you feel angry, your facial expression will be more constricted. Meanwhile, when you are happy, you will smile and laugh more. Facial expressions can help to give signals or messages to people around you.

## **Theories of First Impression Formation**

In the communication psychology book (M Argyle, 1972) the process of forming first impressions is classified into three, namely:

### 1. Stereotyping

According to cognitive psychology, it is the process of accepting new experiences that are stored in our memory according to categories. At the same time, all the properties in the experience category are imposed on the new experience.

### 2. Implicit Personality Theory

Giving categories means creating concepts. Each person has their own conception of what traits are related to what traits. This conception is a theory that people use when forming impressions about other people.

### 3. Attribution

Attribution is the process of inferring the motives, intentions, and characteristics of another person by observing visible behavior.

An individual often cares about the first impression he makes of others. This concern will lead the individual to always try to control what other people think about him (Swider et al, 2022). The first impression you are trying to convey can change from one situation to another, depending on the goal. The first impression you are trying to convey can be likened to an actor playing a role. Like an actor in a theater performance, each individual will try to display a certain image by using a careful setting of verbal and nonverbal behavior to reflect that image. This can be categorized as impression management or first impression management (Waroqler et al, 2010).

There are several previous studies that have examined nonverbal communication, namely Grillo & Enesi's (2022) research that ultimately nonverbal communication plays an important role when someone conveys a message. Moreover, nonverbal communication is very necessary to achieve effective communication, besides that their functions also complement each other, such as a communicator who is angry, sometimes the verbal message cannot be captured, but nonverbal communication is very helpful in explaining the communicator's intentions.

### **The Relationship between Nonverbal Communication and First Impression Formation**

As we know, non-verbal communication plays a very important role in our lives when we communicate with the people we meet. And this nonverbal communication is older than verbal communication. We do it early, because until the age of 18 months, we are totally dependent on nonverbal communication such as touch, eye contact, smiles, and the like. So, it's not surprising that if we doubt someone, we will believe more in the nonverbal messages that they convey. So, the first time we want to meet someone, the nonverbal message we display must be good. Because by displaying nonverbal communication well it can make the people we meet feel comfortable and our communication will continue smoothly. First impressions really determine the effectiveness of communication in everyday life, so we must take care of non-verbal messages, don't underestimate things such as clothing, voice of greeting, handshake, eye gaze and body attitude because these all have an impact on other people (Boussalis & Coan , 2021).

In practice, it turns out that in life humans use far more nonverbal communication (as much as 65%). Nonverbal communication is used more often because even when we communicate verbally, nonverbal communication is automatically used. Consciously or not, we always use nonverbal communication when communicating (Fultz et al, 2023).

Nonverbal communication is very influential in coloring human relationships with other humans. Including the first time you meet someone, where the first meeting will usually influence someone's perception of us. How we present ourselves to others will greatly influence other people's evaluation of us. This is where nonverbal communication plays a role in first impressions (Becerra & Olalla, 2012).

The first thing that influences first impressions is appearance. Appearance is the character of each individual that shows the physical part.

Many things can influence a person's appearance. Starting from lifestyle, beliefs, culture and hobbies. A person's self-image has an important role in communication, both interpersonal and intrapersonal communication (Montiel et al, 2017). Self-image or appearance has a big influence in building self-image. Because appearance is very influential in determining self-image, people will always improve and strengthen their self-image by trying to improve their appearance. Nonverbal communication through appearance is characterized by how we see other people's clothing. When we see how other people dress, we will interpret or give our views on the other person. However, it is not uncommon for us to give wrong interpretations to other people through their appearance.

Body appearance related to body shape can also influence perceptions of first impressions. Usually someone with strong physical attractiveness will feel more successful in interpersonal relationships than someone with low physical attractiveness. In fact, people are more interested in getting to know people who have strong physical attractiveness because they are considered more attractive. And generally people really care or pay attention to other people's appearances.

It is not uncommon for people to judge something through their face and appearance which is used as a benchmark for a person's background, personality, character, hobbies or talents. For example, someone has an attractive face and an attractive clothing style. Usually people will conclude that he is a person who has a pleasant personality and thinks that he is a cool figure. But people with faces that are considered ordinary will be categorized as boring and unattractive. Clothing is also a very important communication medium in building a first impression. Through clothing messages can be conveyed even before expressing words. Usually the message conveyed through clothing is influenced by cultural background, experience, and so on. Through clothing we can symbolize or communicate emotions or information (Krauss, 2022).

For example, if we see someone wearing dark clothes, it could be that they are mourning or we see many men wearing sarongs on a Friday afternoon, which could mean they are going to the mosque or have just returned from the mosque. Clothing also influences the behavior of the wearer and also the behavior of people who see it. Using clothes is basically a form of self-expression. Everyone has the right to dress, it is important to be able to adapt clothes and accessories to certain situations. For example, when going for a job interview, of course we will wear neat and polite clothes so that the person who will be interviewing can give a positive impression and not be insulting.

Then from clothing we can also differentiate individuals or groups from other individuals or groups. From clothing we can distinguish whether someone is a student or teacher, whether they are a singer from a rock or dangdut music group, and so on. Through clothing, people will provide an assessment of whether the person they meet has a cheerful personality or not, and can make us feel comfortable with the person we meet because they wear clothes that suit the situation.

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The second thing that can influence first impressions is facial expressions. Through facial expressions we can show whether someone is feeling happy, angry, sad and confused. Nonverbal behavior through someone's facial expressions can encourage us to get to know them more. If someone smiles at the first meeting, we will feel more comfortable and more appreciated. Apart from that, smiling is also a form of respect for other people. Therefore, at the first meeting we should smile to channel positive energy to other people and ourselves. And of course the smile we give must be sincere from the heart. A smile will create a good first impression on other people. We should avoid showing unfriendly facial expressions to others so as not to make others feel uncomfortable.

When talking to the other person, eye movements must also be paid attention to. Gaze is the use of the eyes to convey information to the person you are talking to in the communication process. Gaze functions to seek or provide feedback between the speaker and listener, provide information, and provide cues (Weisbuch et al, 2010).

In building a good first impression, the most important thing for us to pay attention to is of course comfort. Using the language of space or distance that we use when communicating with other people is very important to pay attention to. For people we meet for the first time, we should not communicate at too close a distance, especially if we are not yet familiar with each other. Too close a distance can make the person we are talking to uncomfortable and

uncomfortable. We also cannot apply distances that are too far. Keeping too far away can also make the person you are talking to feel uncomfortable because it seems like we are giving a signal to move away and feel uncomfortable being a little closer to the person we are talking to. Too long a distance will also make us have to speak in a louder voice.

A simple but no less important thing when meeting new people is an adapter attitude. This adapter attitude is a nonverbal behavior that we carry out privately which functions to fulfill certain needs but is not carried out openly or to completion. When we meet other people, things often happen that we don't want and that are beyond our control. For example, the head suddenly feels itchy or other parts of the body suddenly feel itchy.

These are some nonverbal behaviors that we need to pay attention to in building a good first impression. Nonverbal behavior in an interaction always communicates something. Even though when we meet new people we will communicate verbally, we need to realize that non-verbal communication also occurs and continues along with verbal communication. Even small things like eye movements, facial expressions, clothing, and body movements still influence other people's perceptions of us.

Even though first impressions are not our entire picture and we cannot judge someone just from the first meeting, we still need to maintain a good attitude at the first meeting. First impressions and nonverbal communication are closely related in building other people's perceptions of us and also our perceptions of other people. Usually first impressions are considered unnecessary, but first impressions are one of the factors that other people always remember. We just need to be ourselves when we meet other people for the first time. We don't need to pretend to be liked. We just need to be ourselves but still pay attention to good etiquette when meeting or connecting with other people for the first time.

## **CONCLUSION**

Nonverbal behavior in an interaction always communicates something. Even though when we meet new people we will communicate verbally, we need to realize that non-verbal communication also occurs and continues along with verbal communication. Even small things like eye movements, facial expressions, clothing, and body movements still influence other people's perceptions of us.

Building a good first impression can open up new opportunities, both in terms of work and social relationships. People tend to be more interested in

collaborating or communicating with individuals who have a good first impression. A good first impression will also help build trust in other people, people tend to trust someone who has a good and professional first impression. First impressions and nonverbal communication are closely related in building other people's perceptions of us and also our perceptions of other people. Usually first impressions are considered unnecessary, but first impressions are one of the factors that other people always remember. We just need to be ourselves when we meet other people for the first time. We don't need to pretend to be liked. We just need to be ourselves but still pay attention to good etiquette when meeting or connecting with other people for the first time.

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