

The Importance of Non-Verbal Communication in Organizations

Noor Afzaliza Nazira Ibrahim, Nur Shazana Abdul Rani,
Mohamad Hafifi Jamri, Mohd Hilmi Bakar, Shafezah Abdul
Wahab

Faculty of Communication and Media Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Melaka,
78000 Alor Gajah, Malaysia

Maizatul Haizan Mahbob

School of Media and Communication Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, UKM, 43600
Bangi, Malaysia

Nazri Kahar

Senior Editor, Astro Awani

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i6/13901>

DOI:10.6007/IJARBSS/v12-i6/13901

Published Date: 10 June 2022

Abstract

This paper discusses the importance of non-verbal communication within the organization. Communication involves the presentation of ideas and feelings to others. People communicate because they want to influence the understanding of others, the attitude and the actions of others whether they agree or not on the issue. In addition, communication is also a two-way process in which both parties must respond to any information that is communicated. Without realizing it, non-verbal communication is complementary to verbal communication. This non-verbal communication is an important message form as it can interpret the emotion, personality, purpose and social status of a person. Therefore, it is undeniable that most of the excellence of an organization is related to the effectiveness of the communication process. The previous study discusses non-verbal communication in terms of behavior, attitude and focuses only on students. There is very little study within the organization. Therefore, non-verbal communication within the organization should be given more emphasis because it is very important in ensuring that employees understand the true concept of non-verbal communication so that the message is not misinterpreted.

Keywords: Organizational Communication, Verbal Communication, Non-Verbal Communication, Behaviour, Motivation

Introduction

This writing is more geared towards the form of concept paper. This paper discusses the importance of non-verbal communication in organizations. There is no denying that a large part of the excellence of an organization is related to the effectiveness of the communication process. This fact directly reflects the truth the views of communication and management scholars who emphasize that communication should be the core of the life of an organization. Therefore, the main component in communication is the flow of information, communication and human interaction. In the era of this state -of -the -art, human beings are indeed inseparable from communicating.

The development of this communication is seen as very important to complete human life all day. With efficient communication, then information can be conveyed with easily and spread to all corners of the world (Yusof, 2000). Communication means to have a relationship such as talking to each other, talking and also exchanged opinions between one party and the other. Communication according to Johns (1996), is a process of information exchange between presenter and receiver information among various parties. Whereas according to Green Berg & Baron (1996), communication is a process in which individuals, groups and organizations act as a communicator of information to other individuals, groups and organizations in action as the recipient of the message.

Communication involves the transmission of ideas and feelings to others. Humans communicate because they want to influence other people's understanding, attitudes and even actions other parties whether they agree or not on an issue. Communication too is a two-way process to which both parties must respond something information is conveyed. Every human being living in a society will be involved with communication. If seen in organizations, especially in organizations that involve relationships with customers, it should be given priority in order to maintain the good name of the organization. This because everything that is done in the organization will display the image of the employee himself and also have an impact on the organization.

Furthermore, communication is also one of the most important aspects and complex for human life. Communication is a basic human activity where by communicating human beings can communicate with each other well within daily life at home, at school, at work or wherever they are. Communication colors all aspects of life including social, cultural, political, economic, health, education and so on.

According to Richmond & McCrosky (1992) in their book entitled "Organizational Communication for Survival", they have provided six functions communication in an organization i.e. to inform, control, combine, manage, persuade and socialize. Human relations policy in organizations as a method creating good cooperation is due to every member in the organization such have varying expectations and interests and are typically competing each other. According to Omardin & Azahar (1990), the communication paradigm in organization indicates that communication within the organization takes place within the environment a complex open system and it is influenced and influenced by the environment.

Hence because of the importance of communication in all walks of life, then many studies are looking at the importance of communication especially how to establishing effective communication. Among them is by observing the elements non-verbal communication when a person is communicating verbally. This is it which is always ignored by many humans when interacting. The scholars management has lagged behind in understanding this important form of communication. Though some theories discuss limited aspects of non-verbal behavior, still there are gaps in studying non-verbal behaviors directed at members organization. Results of a study obtained by Gerald et. al (1991) also found that 94 percent of respondents stated that non-verbal communication is in the world the business is very important. However, this is not the focus.

According to Timm & De Tienne (1995), the success of an organization is highly dependent to the communication used. But, communication is often a major problem in the organization. What is an effective form of communication so that all information can distributed quickly and accurately?

Furthermore, non-verbal communication can be used as a measure in seeing one's self-skills. This is because, the way humans talk to each other will shaping one's self-personality. According to Othman & Ahmad (2004), non-verbal communication is an important form of message because it can interpret a person's emotions, personality, purpose and even social status. Next that is, non-verbal communication can also increase the effectiveness of the delivery of something messages as well as serving as a complement to verbal communication. Not only that, but mastery of non-verbal communication also facilitates the hiring process. This is because, the interviewer will be face to face with us precisely. The interviewer will be easier to judge us by the way we answer the questions asked, the way we sit, the way thinking and so on. This makes the job selection process even easier. In a sense in other words, effective communication will only happen when it is non-verbal communication also understood by the sender and receiver of the message.

In an organizational context, communication is ineffective in an organization will cause a non-smooth workflow and will create problems against staff in the organization. This is because communication plays a role important in ensuring that the organization is always able to meet the needs of its employees.

In an organization, employees need more precise and concise information as well easy to understand so that it is easy for them to convey to others. Acceptance inaccurate information makes an organization problematic and unable to carry out assigned responsibilities. For example, body movements or 'body language' especially facial expressions and eye contact can convey a message to the recipient about the actual message to be conveyed. Eye contact has a huge impact when communication between two parties is in progress. Position the body also signals about an individual's interest and confidence when delivering message. In addition, body movements such as hand and foot movements are also possible describes the confident or less confident nature of a person. Lack of that attention given to non-verbal communication this can lead to comprehension problems to on the actual message to be conveyed, and this is what causes a lot of problems in running a program or organization successfully. Hence this is what be the main objective of this writing i.e. want to analyze past studies that give focus on the study of non-verbal communication and from the

perspective of whether it is non-verbal seen to understand the importance of this form of communication.

Communication in Organizations

In an organization, communication is a foundation that encompasses the activities of all functions that exist. With the existence of this communication channel, then each individual or groups are not only able to understand and exchange ideas and opinions, they are even able to also interact with each other and be able to establish ongoing collaboration among staff. In addition, it is a determinant in the success of an organization depending on how well the communication channel is used. Channel this communication means the path of messages that flow from one individual to another and from one group to another and vice versa.

Formal and informal communication channels are used by all organizations. Channel formal communication is the chain that will determine the flow of official messages within among the members in the organization. Plus, this official communication channel is part of an organizational structure that conveys messages according to rules, customs, authority, rank and type of duties in the organization. In contrast, communication channels are not formal in turn includes communication networks that occur as a result of social relationships as well friendships at work.

Non-Verbal Communication

There are two forms of language expression namely verbal and non-verbal. According to Bovee & Thill in Haryati (2001); Kristiyanti (2012), non-verbal communication is gestures, intonation of voice, attitudes and so on that will allow someone communicates without using words. Each time an interaction occurs non-verbal communication between two parties, without us realizing it will involve behavior (gesture), eye movements, changes in body posture and facial expressions. Consciously or not, these behaviors and movements are complementary to the speaking situation actually. But from another angle, this has actually created an interaction of using non-verbal language.

Non-verbal communication actually has many differences with verbal communication for which non-verbal communication has no form structured and it is spontaneous and this makes non-verbal communication difficult understood versus verbal communication (Ili Kristiyanti, 2012). For example, we are not alone sit still while answering customer questions we even use eyes, hands and body position to indicate something. However, from one angle, there has been interaction using nonverbal language that still has a specific meaning and interpretation. Even sometimes this non-verbal behavior or expression of language is capable of affecting the partner who are invited to interact. To this end, research looks at nonverbal statements that are actions and behaviors of speakers that can provide an idea of attitudes and observations of one's character in an organization.

The Importance of Non-Verbal Communication

The importance of this non-verbal communication cannot be denied. Non-verbal communication is possible used to reinforce what is said verbally. For example, if we talk about serious things but our faces are less serious, then people around less believing in what is being said. According to Norazlina & Masittah (2012), facial expressions are self-images

that are highlighted to the public, besides gives a glimpse of the inner image of one's self and is closely related to the concept such as self-esteem, status and dignity.

Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication. This is because the two work together in the communication process. With nonverbal communication, it actually gives more emphasis, repetition, complement and replace verbal communication so that it is easier to interpret (Ulmi, 2017). When verbal and non-verbal communication is uneven, so one will believe in nonverbal.

According to a UCLA study by Professor Albert Mehrabian, 55 percent of language accounts body, it comes from the first impression, 38 percent comes from the tone of voice while only 7 percent comes from our actual words. Through facial expressions a person, emotions can be conveyed to the person who observes them like emotions sad, happy, disappointed, grieving and so on (Afiqah & Hashimah, 2016). Many studies draw the same conclusions as Honeycutt et al (1983) that non-verbal signals have an important 'bearing' on evaluation the right one and the other is communication ". For example, Woodall & Folger (1981) speculate that when non-verbal cues are not "parallel" to the rhythmic pattern voiced, the decoder can question the honesty and motivation of the speaker.

Types of Non-Verbal Communication

This non-verbal communication is divided into several types. Among them object communication, tactile, conemic, gesture, prosemic, vocal and environmental (Kristyanti, 2012). According to Ruben & Stewart (2005) as well, non-verbal communication has several channels namely paralanguage, face and body movements (kinesics), touch (haptics), appearance physical as well as distance (proximity) and time (chronemics). Object communication also brings meaning, in an organization, employees follow a code of ethics of dress where clothing should be uniform and this will symbolize the professionalism of the workers and organization. Touch, on the other hand, is where it is seen through the way of shaking hands with someone.

Non-verbal communication is divided into several types. Among them is communication object (way of dressing), touch (shaking hands), chronemic (time), gesture (expression face), prosemic (space), vocal (intonation of voice) and environment (space and distance) (Ili Kristyanti, 2012). According to Ruben & Stewart, 2005 in Prisca Della (2014) as well, non-verbal communication has several channels i.e. paralanguage covering vocal auditory message made in the form of speech. In addition, it also includes tone of voice, tone of speech, intonation, loudness or weakness of voice and speed of speech.

Next is face and body movement (kinesics) which means body movement, arms and legs, facial expressions and eye movements when communicating with people another. Without us realizing it, facial expressions will also constantly change while speaking or to hear. The eye is also an important non-verbal communication channel with maintain eye contact and when a person is interested in a discussion or an issue, then he will focus fully.

The third is touch (haptics). Touch or body contact is said by Emmert & Donaghy (1981) as the best way to convey personal, good attitudes positive and negative. The frequency and duration of contact can also be indicative friendship and desire among the people who do it.

An example is shaking hands, hugging, slapping, punching, rubbing heads, kissing hands and so on. Physical appearance as well as proximity (distance) is one of the channels non-verbal communication. It carries meaning the way people are seen in action communication tries to feel and use space. Proxemics doesn't just cover distance between two people involved in the conversation, but also their physical orientation.

The communication of the object means that in an organization, employees follow a code of dress code where clothing should be uniform and this will symbolizes the professionalism of workers and organizations. Touch is where it is seen by way of shaking hands with someone. The conemic is the length of time the employee treats the customer. This is because if the employee likes the customer, then better service and friendly will be provided and vice versa. In addition, body movements as well plays an important role in which facial expressions, eye contact, body movements can determine whether a person likes it or not and this gives an impression to ourselves.

Providing a comfortable, convenient and attractive place can help in further strengthen the relationship between employees and customers and they will feel valued. High, slow, loud, loud tone of voice also plays a deep role communicate. This is because, every human being has a different acceptance. So, we have to know will be how to deal with this issue and if wrong, their emotions will be disturbed and inevitably the image we will be affected. This environment covers the colors worn on the day of illumination given, the cleanliness of the environment and also the temperature at that time. All this plays out role in an organization in order to achieve good communication and it can reflects the personal skills of the students will be the workforce when stepping out into the realm of work.

Forms of Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication actually has many differences with verbal communication which non-verbal communication has no structured form and it is in nature spontaneous and this makes non-verbal communication more difficult to understand than communication verbal (Ili Kristiyanti, 2012). For example, we do not just sit still while answering customer questions even we also use eyes, hands and body position to show something. Ranjit (2004) has listed several examples of language gestures and messages that may be interpreted by a person. Among them are:

Table 1.0

Gesture Languages and Translated Messages

Gesture language	Translated message
Blink too often	Worried
Frowning	Confused or angry
Eyes wide open and alert	Passionate
Maintains eye resistance	Interested and confident
Open palms	Open and honest
Rubbing the palms of the hands	Positive hope
Fingers drumming or constantly looking at the clock	Impatient or bored
Both hands are clasped behind the head	Confident, dominant or arrogant
Both hands on waist	Be aggressive or unpleasant
Shrugging	Lack of knowledge or experience
Stretching the neck	Uncertainty or apprehension
Crossed arms	Be martial or negative
Crouched posture	Not interested or bored
Massage the chin	Make a decision
Bend forward	Interested or happy with what is happening

Behavior and Non-Verbal Communication in The Workplace

A problem often faced by employees is the failure to communicate properly in the organization. Sometimes the information received is misinterpreted. The scholars management has lagged behind in understanding this important form of communication. Though some theories discuss limited aspects of non-verbal behavior, still there are gaps in studying non-verbal behaviors directed at members organization. The early definition of non-verbal communication has emphasized that it is not just depends on words or language alone, in fact it also involves movement (Knapp, 2011). Non-verbal communication is different from verbal communication because it is non -linguistic communication (Burgoon et al., 2011).

Generally, all humans understand the true context of non-verbal communication which involves behavior and not just words. According to Ambady & Weisbuch (2010), non-verbal communication is understood as sending and receiving thoughts and feelings through non-verbal behavior. However, this nonverbal communication can actually also be associated with verbal communication (Richmond & McCroskey, 2004). For example, if a person agrees, then he will nod signifies agree. Also, to replace something we don't want, then we can shake his head. This is also considered non-verbal communication.

In the organization, the basics of this communication must be known in order to facilitate the workers to interact with each other. This is because, within the organization, each employees will communicate from one division to another. If information what is conveyed is different, so the meaning to be conveyed is also different.

In a study conducted by Agarwal & Garg (2012), researchers would like to see the importance of communication in two four -star hotels in Dehradun region. In this study, the researcher would like to highlight the types of communication, tools, resources as well as how interactions between employees in the organization. This study was conducted by researchers against 65 people. A total of 36 questionnaires were distributed to hotel X and the remaining 29 questionnaires were distributed to hotel Y. The questionnaires included 30 close-ended questions.

The results of the study obtained by the researcher stated that communication can be defined as the exchange of information, thoughts and emotions between individuals and group. In other words, communication plays an important role in balancing individual and organizational objectives. Non-verbal communication describes the process of conveying meaning in the form of messages and not words. Research shows that the majority of the communication used by the respondents was non-verbal, also known as language body. Some non-verbal communication includes chronemics, haptics, gestures, language body or posture, facial expressions and eye contact, communication of objects such as clothing, hairstyles, architecture, graphic symbols and tone of voice as well as through the aggregates above.

Speech also contains a non-verbal element known as paralanguage. These include voice quality, emotion and speaking style as well as prosodic features such as rhythm, intonation and stress. Similarly, written text includes non-verbal elements such as style handwriting, word space arrangement and use of emoticons to convey emotional expression in pictorial form. Gerald et al (1991) found that too many studies of non-verbal communication conducted on university students and only a few were conducted on business organization. The results of the study obtained by Gerald et al (1991) also found that 94 percent of respondents stated that non-verbal communication is in the world the business is very important. Some may be surprised to see this result but here it is statement.

Mehrabian (1967) was one of the first to attract human attention with respect to the importance of non-verbal communication. From the results he obtained, he found that non-verbal communication channels such as facial expressions, body movements and tone of voice accounts for 93 percent of the message's "attitude" to the recipient. Perception can affect behavior and if respondents' perceptions are in line with skill measurements and the actual behavior found in the experimental data, recommendations for improving non-verbal communication in the workplace is feasible. Relationship without conversation was important to all studied and most respondents agreed with this statement. Non-verbal communication will affect human interaction with other human beings more than verbal content. Therefore, many researchers want to investigate the importance of this non-verbal communication. According to Hall (1978); Isenhardt (1980); Blanck et al (1981), non-verbal communication of women is better than man.

Non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication. This is because the two work together in the communication process. With nonverbal communication, it actually gives more emphasis, repetition, complement and replace verbal communication so that it is easier to interpret (Ulmi, 2017). When verbal and non-verbal communication is uneven, so people will believe in non-verbal.

Overall, past studies surveyed found, non-verbal communication more viewed from the perspective of the importance, type, form and behavior of communication not verbal. Observations on these forms of non-verbal communication allow us further investigate the association of these forms with verbal communication. This is a gap that needs to be deepened by future researchers so that the message can better understood, in turn able to establish more effective communication. Thus communication is not so much what is spoken, but the image displayed, the motion the body shown and the emotions expressed, are far more important to understand the message to be conveyed and get to know one's personality.

Conclusion

Weaknesses in communication will invite misunderstandings of the instructions assigned from the highest administration to the lower administration. Not impossible, it is will cause disputes and clashes in the administration of the organization. In conclusion, it is undeniable that most of the excellence of an organization is related to the effectiveness of the process communication. This fact directly reflects the truth of the views of scholars communication and management that emphasizes that communication should be at the core the life of an organization. Therefore, the main component in communication is information flow, communication and human interaction.

Also, communication is one of the important things to support organizational success in improving organizational performance and organizational adaptability to every change in the existing business environment so that the organization still can survive even reaching their competitive advantage. Through good communication between individuals and parties directly involved within the organization and beyond organization, the organization can obtain the necessary information. To develop good communication requires the active role of managers and subordinates through the application of some of the techniques already described in the previous section.

An increase in satisfaction with organizational communication will also increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This shows, in the context of the organization which may differ in terms of management, environment and so on, roles effective organizational communication and creating satisfaction among staff the organization in question is important. The importance of effective communication is in line with the views of scholars such as (Bednar, 1983; Goldhaber, 1990; Anderson, 1995; Daniels et al., 1997; Weiss, 1998).

The importance of satisfaction to organizational communication is also in line with assumptions put forward by the theory of use and satisfaction. Theory of use and satisfaction argues that the factor of an organization's staff choosing a communication channel is influenced by the satisfaction gained as a result of exposure to the channel concerned. For example, the characteristics of supervisory communication such as openness, consideration, support and so on cause staff to interact frequently with supervisors. This engender a sense of satisfaction with one of the aspects of communication in the organization concerned and in turn affect other aspects of the staff such as commitment to the organization.

In the various forms of communication available, non-verbal communication is the most important. Non-verbal communication is an important communication convey information to others. Furthermore, non-verbal communication actually has a greater impact than verbal communication. Communication non-verbal involves gestures, intonation of voice, facial expressions and body language. Information which is delivered verbally will not be successfully delivered if it is not aligned with non-verbal communication. This is because, if one wants to deliver serious news, the face shown should be serious and not in a happy state. Through communication, members in the organization can exchange information in advancing their respective units It is recommended that when communicating, we need to understand others before others understand us as we have been entrusted in the book by Stephen Covey (1989) "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" which he says that 'Seek first to understand, then to be understood' which means to try understand first, then try to be understood.

References

- Abdul Aziz, A. R. (2000). *Kemahiran sosial asas*. Utusan Publication & Distributor : Kuala Lumpur.
- Ambady, N., & Weisbuch, M. (2010). Nonverbal behavior. In Fiske, S. T., Gilbert D. T. & Lindzey, G. (Eds.). *Handbook of social psychology*, 464-497. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley Publishers.
- Blanck, P. D., Rosenthal, R., Snodgrass, S., DePaulo, B. & Zuckerman, M. (1981). Sex differences in eavesdropping on nonverbal cues: Developmental changes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 41, 391-396.
- Burgoon, J. K., Guerrero, L. K., & Manusov, V. (2011). Nonverbal signals. In Knapp, M. L. & Daly, J. (Eds.). *Handbook of interpersonal communication*, 239-280. Thousand Oaks, California : Sage Publications.
- Agarwal, S., & Garg, A. (2012). The importance of communication within organizations: A research on two hotels in Uttarakhand. *Journal of Business and Management*. 3(2), 40-49.
- Hall, J. (1978). *Gender effects in decoding nonverbal cues*. Psychological Bulletin. 68, 845-857.
- Kristiyanti, I. (2012). Pengaruh komunikasi non-verbal terhadap kepuasan pelanggan. *Jurnal Manajemen*. 1, 60-66.
- Isenhardt, M. (1980). *An investigation of the relationships of sex and sex role to the ability to decode nonverbal cues*. Human Communication Research. 6, 309-317.
- Knapp, M. L. (2011). An historical overview of nonverbal research. In V. Manusov & M. L. Patterson (Eds.), *The sage handbook of nonverbal communication*, 3-19. Thousand Oaks, California : Sage Publications.
- Mehrabian, A., & Wiener, M. (1967). Decoding of inconsistent communications. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 6(1), 109-114.
- Mehrabian, A., & Ferris, D. (1967). Inference of attitudes from nonverbal communication in two channels. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 31, 248-252.
- Mehrabian, A. (1971). *Silent messages*. Belmont. California: Wadsworth Pub. Co.
- Ulmi, N. (2017). *Komunikasi verbal dan non verbal dalam proses tahfidz Al-Quran*. Tesis Sarjana.
- Harun, N. A. (2010). Hubungan antara komunikasi dalam organisasi terhadap kepuasan kerja. *Jurnal e-Kemanusiaan*, 1-24.

- Omardin, A., & Dean, A. R. W. D. (1990). *Komunikasi dalam organisasi*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Ranjit, S. M. (2004). *Mempertingkatkan kualiti peribadi: Menjana diri untuk mencapai prestasi unggul di tempat kerja*. Kuala Lumpur: Cetakrapi Sdn. Bhd.
- Richmond, V. P., & McCrosky, J. C. (1992). *Organizational communication for survival*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Richmond, V. A., & McCroskey, J. C. (2004). *Nonverbal behavior in interpersonal relations*. 5th ed. Boston: Pearson.
- Ruben, B. D., & Stewart, L. P. (2005). *Communication and human behaviour*. USA: Alyn and Bacon.