Is Non-verbal Behavior accurate in forming First Impressions ?

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Introduction

"No mortal can keep a secret. If his lips are silent, he chatters with his fingertips. Betrayal oozes out of him from every pore."- Freud,1905.

- As individuals, impression formation through non-verbal behaviors *is an ongoing-process* in life influencing decisions on how we perceive others.
- **Non-verbal behavior** is defined as "expressing without the use of words".
- **First impressions** refer to the notion, feeling and attitudes that individuals initially hold about a person
- In fact, non-verbal cues are emblematic and utilized by individuals in the sense of "reading" others and analyzing other's body language as well as facial cues, respectively to culture (Denault & Zloteanu, 2022).
- In fact, minimal cues are adequate for people to form an impression & judging others personality, without considering the essential truth behind these judgments (Cook & Over, 2022).

The aim of the research is to shed lights and assess the area of impression formation accuracy through non-verbal behaviors in three components.

1.Types of Non-verbal Behaviors utilized in Impression Formation

Dynamic cues ; Facial appearance

- *Overgeneralization effect***,** theorizing why people form first impressions from faces.

→ " The attention halo", regardless of the age and culture, people tend to link attractiveness with more positive qualities compared to unattractive cues.

- *The familiarity-face overgeneralization effect ,* based on the faces of individuals people are familiarized with, they tend to make use of them to form first impressions of strangers that look like them and are similar to them . (e.g., Mother). (Zebrowitz & Montepare, 2008).

Static Cues; dress appearance ~ shoes , makeup or accessories

- the study of Gilath et al. (2012) showcased that pointy shoes was negatively associated with personality traits such as warmth, friendless and modesty.
- Even ,the brand of shoes could make assumptions of others' personality traits, including gender, income and age, highlighting the immense impact that a first impression could have.

Handshakes

- An association between individual's extraversion and their handshake performance has been established (Bernieri & Petty, 2011).



2. Scientific Approaches

Attribution theory

- *Fritz Heider (1958)* the founder of attribution theories, according to him we are all scientist of a sort, since we use the so-called attribution theory to analyze the behaviors of others.
- The term attribution refers to how people analyze the causes of the behaviors of others (Ventouratos, PP, 2024**).**

1. Causal attributions concept

Describes the notion of "reasons beneath the motive" in others' behaviors. The action is perceived as

Personal causality ⟷ **Impersonal causality**

2. *Person–situation dichotomy*

The perceiver assumes the observer behaviors was due to:

The actor (intentional) ⟷ **Situational factors**

Stereotypes

Stereotypes urge perceivers to think in a way depending on whether the target is compatible with the stereotype or not (Huang, 2023).

More importantly, one's stereotype knowledge about any characteristic traits, alongside with which category the observer belongs such as gender, facilitates influence the process of impression formation.

- For instance, female's facial appearance is stereotyped to be more trustworthy compared to men (Sutherland & Young, 2022).

Stereotypes raises the question of accuracy of judgments and impressions formation considering the influence of culture and gender differences .

❖ " There is no such Pinocchio effect. "(Denault & Zloteanu, 2022).

- The study of Carney et al. (2007), suggest that accuracy of first impressions dependent upon *the exposure time* as well as the *amount and quality* of minimal cues.

→ The longer, the more information the better accuracy .

- Additionally, characteristics traits, specifically extraversion, intelligence and negative affect needed less exposure time to be detected compared to neuroticism, positive affect and agreeableness.

3.Culture and Gender Impact

Culture

Culture triggers script formation regarding social behaviors (Alison, 2022).

- Based on culture norms same nonverbal behaviors could be perceived differently.

For instance, vertical head movements (nodding) means yes in US culture whereas in Bulgaria for instance it is the opposite it means no showcasing culture differences in nonverbal behavior (Andonova & Taylor, 2012).

- European American deduce behavior through person attribution bias explaining that actions are made upon the target choice whereas Indian and Chinese exhibit situational bias when understanding a behavior, the action was caused due to situations features (Goyal, and Keersmaecker, 2022).

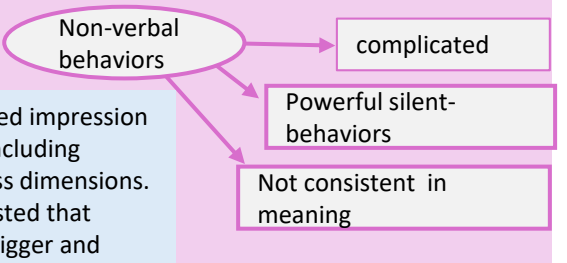
Gender

The presence of gender bias is equally essential in how one perceives nonverbal behavior.

- Gender differences in impression formation is conceptualized though the theory of normative accuracy, according to which people give more attention to gender features when they align with stereotypes of gender and accepted by society (Chan et al., 2011). Based on these findings, features such as the attractiveness of females or the socioeconomic status of males also influence the formation of first impressions showcasing the effect of gender roles (Ying & Qi, 2022).

Conclusion

Hence, the accuracy of formed impression holds upon various factors including individual's differences across dimensions. Therefore, it could be suggested that silent-behaviors serve as a trigger and prompt for overt verbal behavior that we perceive.



Full references available upon request.