Popular Press Analysis

COMM 314

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**Introduction to Gestures and Movement**

Gestures and movement are key factors in communicating with others. Your posture specifically plays a major role in how you are perceived by other individuals. Kinesics and intentional movements help hint at what we want to tell others to do or feel without saying a word. The following paper evaluates a popular press article that exchanges views on the gestures and movements of the body and provides scholarly research that may support or refute the article’s elaborations about nonverbal communication.

**Summary of Popular Press Article**

Within this popular press article the Huffington *post*, the author expresses how powerful and dynamic nonverbal communication can be. She stresses how the mind-body connection can convince yourself to do better in your professional and personal life. Janet Odgis (2017) describes how our body language can signal confidence or weakness to others. She spoke of using “power stances” or adopting a “power pose” to assert confidence within a room. Janet Odgis (2017) referenced a study, provided by Professor Amy Cuddy, on how standing in different postures affects the various levels of hormones in the body and how it impacts the brain and the individual’s perception of how they feel. Depending on how you feel and stand, your peers around you can either become inspired by your confidence or brought down by your lack of certainty. The social scientist, Cuddy, noted that once you tweak your “power pose” to the best of your abilities, others will take notice of your position and strength. Your body stance can help emulate your resilience and assure your colleges around you that you know what you are doing.

**Gestures and Movement and Perception Others**

This articles portrays how individuals pass judgments and support them by our body language. Subtle forms of communication can be interpreted through open and closed posture of the body (Meadors, 2014). The purpose of the study conducted by Joshua Meadors (2014) was to examine subtle nonverbal cues that may also be a means as bias. One-hundred and sixty young adult participants of a 2009 nonverbal racial bias study showed that when a person of color suspect was placed in the same room as the participant, the participant would show closed posture by unintentionally crossing their arms while participants with a white suspect in the room would display open posture and body language (Meadors, 2014). Eighty different men and women were selected to be “suspects” of all nationalities. All suspects entered the room with the same demeanor and stance. The suspects’ body language did not affect the individual in the room; their skin color made the other person act with either open or closed body language. This study showed nonverbal communication is influential in establishing the thoughts and behaviors that are considered to be consistent with cultural or stereotypical beliefs. The nonverbal decoders found 76%- 93% of participants to use closed posture with a person of color suspect over a white suspect.

**Gestures and Movement and Mimicry**

This article provided a study on the behavioral process through which a visible female leader can help empower other women in leadership tasks (Latu, 2018). The researchers stated that women tend to mimic powerful, open body postures of other successful female role models, in turn they would have a more empowered behavior and higher leadership performance. Latu’s first study involved placing a male and female role model in a room of one-hundred women. The woman used affect displays to express her emotion while speaking and regulators to control the room while the man used closed posture and avoidance when speaking. Eighty-six Swiss college women mimicked the open posture of the female and had a better performance on public speaking (Latu, 2018). Mimicking others body position in the room can be a signal for “liking”, while conversely leaning away with opposite body position can signal dislike for an individual.

**Comparison of Popular Press Article and Peer Reviewed Research**

 The popular press article expressed how powerful dynamic nonverbal communication and how influential it could be in a group setting (Odgis, 2017). Odgis (2017) claimed using “power poses” and confident body language, others in the room would be inspired. The first article refuted the claims of the *Huffington Post* article by stating that people have preconceived notions of others in the room based upon their skin color (Meadors, 2014). Meadors (2014) had conducted a study where the stance and body language of the “suspect” had no effect on the other individual’s actions or feelings in the room. Latu (2018) had supported the claims of Odgis (2017) within the second article by stating that seeing an engaging speaker with open body posture and use of gestures empowered other to follow suit and mimic their demeanor. More women felt empowered by seeing another woman use open nonverbal communication behaviors (Latu, 2018).

**Conclusion**

Posture and how we orient ourselves helps define our closeness with the individuals we are communicating with. More open gestures and movements lean towards a more positive and empowering way of communication versus closed gestures and stances. The popular press article was supported by the research of Latu (2018) in that open posture may lead to mimicry of confidence and empowerment. Meadors (2014) conversely showed that stances had no effect on others with bias instilled in them from prior cultural experiences. Never the less, having engaging gestures boosted by the corresponding movements can help an individual display positive nonverbal behavior.

References

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(Odgis, 2017)

(Meadors, 2014)

 ( Latu, 2018)