To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Stephen Jackson Pullum entitled "The Effects of Nonverbal Communication in the Selection Interview." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Speech and Theatre.

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THE EFFECTS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SELECTION INTERVIEW

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Arts

Degree

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Stephen Jackson Pullum

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DEDICATION

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my parents,

Mr. and Mrs. Fred J. Pullum,

who, through the course of my college education

have never let me down.

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ABSTRACT

This research was a field study on the effects of student applicants' nonverbal behavior on corporate recruiters in the selection interview. Most research on nonverbal communication in the selection interview has been conducted within the laboratory. Little if any research, however, has been conducted in the field. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted in a field setting in order to determine what specific nonverbal cues of a student applicant have either a positive or negative effect upon interviewers.

Forty corporate recruiters who visited the placement office of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, during the winter quarter of 1981 supplied the information for this thesis. Each recruiter was interviewed by the writer of this thesis. A twenty-eight item questionnaire was used in each interview to secure the data.

Results showed that researchers are aware of nonverbal cues of applicants and that these cues can have positive or negative effects upon recruiters. This study also found that much of the popular literature on nonverbal communication in business does not necessarily hold true for the selection interview.

The present findings can be useful in training applicants to be more cognizant of nonverbal communication, thus

increasing their chances of success. This study can also aid corporate recruiters in understanding which nonverbal cues of an applicant influence their decisions about that applicant.

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CHAPTER I

SURVEY OF LITERATURE ON NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SELECTION INTERVIEW

Introduction

Before beginning a study on any topic, the researcher needs a base from which to operate. Thus, it is helpful to have a meaningful definition of the subject to be studied. That is, it is necessary to know as precisely and exactly as possible the meaning of the topic under consideration. And certainly the phrase nonverbal communication is no exception. Nonverbal communication is a relatively "new" area of study. Therefore, it is imperative in this chapter to set forth a working definition, a springboard from which one can enter into such a study.

Definition of Nonverbal Communication

Psychologist Albert Mehrabian, a leading researcher in the field of nonverbal communication, has helped define nonverbal communication. Mehrabian believes that in its narrower and "more accurate" sense, nonverbal communication includes physical movements such as body postures and positions, facial expressions, arm and hand gestures,

feet and leg movements, and any other actions of the body distinct from speech.[1]

Another researcher, Randall P. Harrison, defines nonverbal communication as such:

> The term nonverbal communication has been applied to a broad range of phenomena; everything from facial expression and gesture to fashion and status symbol, from dance and drama to music and mime, from the flow of affect to the flow of traffic, from the territoriality of animals to the protocol of diplomats, from extrasensory perception to analog computers, and from rhetoric of violence, to the rhetoric of topless dancers.[2]

McCroskey divides nonverbal communication into seven categories or modalities. These are proxemics, the use of space as a means of communicating; chronemics, the use of time in communicating; oculesics or visual behavior, such as eye contact and gaze aversion; haptics or touching behavior; kinesics, the way one communicates through body posture and orientation; objectics or the way artifacts communicate ideas; and vocalics, any nonsemantical aspect of speech.[3]

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[1] Nonverbal Communication (New York: Aldine, 1972), p. 1.

[2] "Nonverbal Communication," in Handbook of Communication, Ithiel de sola Pool, Frederick W. Frey, Wilbur Schramm, Nathan Maccaby, Edwin B. Parker eds. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973), p. 93.

[3] James C. McCroskey, An Introduction to Rhetorical Communication, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 111-23. For other discussions of the various modalities, see Mark L. Knapp, Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1972), pp. 12-20, and John D. Hatfield and Robert D. Gatewood, "Nonverbal Cues in the Selection Interview," Personnel Administrator, Jan. 1978, p. 35.

While the use of McCroskey's labels are arbitrary, they will be employed because of their conciseness. These labels are used in many basic speech communication courses.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term "nonverbal communication" will mean any communication which is not spoken. This thesis will be concerned with such areas as facial expression and eye contact, body orientation and posture, touch, smell, appearance such as clothing, hair, jewelry and the like, as well as space and environment. Paralanguage will be omitted due to its technicality.

Brief History of Nonverbal Communication

Generally speaking, nonverbal communication developed as a discipline in the twentieth century. Although there were numerous rhetorical antecedents to the study of nonverbal communication, it was only in the fifties that it became well known.[4] Prior to the fifties, the topic was a somewhat neglected subject, especially in the selection interview context. Mark L. Knapp points out in Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction:

> The decade of the 1950's has sometimes been referred to as the decade of the "communication revolution." It was a time when national concern for human communication behavior was generated by

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[4]The reader is referred to John J. Guilbeau, "Rhetorical Antecedents of Nonverbal Communication Research," Thesis, Tennessee, 1974.

> a small number of researchers and educators from social psychology, speech, education, anthropology, sociology and psychiatry.[5]

Knapp further remarks that now (1972) is the time to study a neglected field—nonverbal communication.

The term "nonverbal communication" made its mark on the academic scene in 1956. Knapp, Wiemann and Daly write:

> The phrase "nonverbal communication" was used before 1956 . . . but that year seems to mark a critical juncture in the scholarly and popular exposure to a term which attempted to encompass numerous message sources which were not then a part of typical approaches to the study of human communication namely, written and spoken language. . . . Ruesch and Kees' pioneer work, Nonverbal Communication: Note on the Visual Perception of Human Relations, was published.[6]

The reader should keep in mind, however, that much of the research on nonverbal communication within an interview context has been done within the sixties and seventies as this chapter will attempt to prove.

Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Dale G. Leathers, in Nonverbal Communication Systems states that nonverbal communication is significant because it serves a number of functions. First, nonverbal cues are "major determinants of meaning."[7] For example, Albert

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[5]Knapp, p. v.

[6]Mark L. Knapp, John M. Wiemann, and John A. Daly, "Nonverbal Communication," Human Communication Research, 4 (1978), 271.

[7]Nonverbal Communication Systems (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976), p. 4.

Mehrabian devised a formula which showed that of the total impact of human communication, only 7% is verbal, 38% is vocal, and 55% is facial.[8] Closely related to this is Ray Birdwhistell's estimate that 30 to 35% of meaning in a context is conveyed vocally, leaving 65 to 70% to be conveyed nonverbally.[9]

Furthermore, Leathers points out that nonverbal cues more accurately convey feelings and emotions than do verbal cues. This means that emotions and feelings can be explained and better understood through nonverbal channels. Leathers also states that nonverbal cues convey messages that are free from confusion, distortion, and deception. Nonverbal cues can also function on a meta-level of communication. For example, a smile or a pat on the back will convey meaning in a different way than does a verbal expression. Leathers says that nonverbal cues will communicate an idea more efficiently than a verbal message. That is, nonverbal channels frequently save time. And lastly, nonverbal cues may frequently suggest ideas to individuals when verbal cues are less appropriate. For instance, one may express a

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[8] "Communication Without Words," Psychology Today, Sept. 1968, p. 53.

[9] Kinesics and Context (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1970), p. 158.

desire to terminate a conversation through nonverbal cues rather than verbal.[10]

Knapp further emphasizes that nonverbal cues can perform a variety of functions. He believes that they can repeat, contradict, compliment, accent, or regulate verbal messages as well as substitute for.[11] With these ideas in mind, it is no wonder why nonverbal communication is an important subject to consider. After all, the way a message is sent may be more important than what is actually said.

Relevance to the Selection Interview

More specifically, though, modern researchers and theorists have recognized the importance of nonverbal communication in the selection interview. Although some research had been done as early as 1949 and 1958, it really was not until the decades of the 1960's and 1970's that the importance of nonverbal communication in the selection interview began receiving widespread attention.

To begin with, in 1978, Sigelman and Davis wrote:

> The employment interview is a concrete and significant social situation in which communication behaviors might be expected to influence judgments of acceptability. Research on employment interviews indicates that interviewer decisions which are typically formulated

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[10]Leathers, pp. 4-7.

[11]Knapp, pp. 21-26.

> in the first few minutes of the interview, are strongly associated with evidence of sociability or positive social behavior and vocational motivation.[12]

Hatfield and Gatewood reinforce this point by stating that nonverbal information often shapes and molds the impression of an interviewee in the mind of the interviewer. They state that cues such as eye contact, physical appearance, and firmness of handshake consciously and unconsciously influence the interviewer's decision.[13] Furthermore, Gorden, in Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics comments:

> Nonverbal cues are essential ingredients in both interviewer-to-respondent and respondent-to-interviewer communication. From the standpoint of the development of skills, the interviewer must learn to be more sensitive to nonverbal cues from his respondent, be more aware of his own nonverbal signals to the respondent, and learn to control the later as a conscious technical skill.[14]

It should also be kept in mind that, according to Young, Beier, and Beier, 90% of all prospective employees must complete successfully at least one interview during the quest for an occupation.[15] Therefore, one needs to be

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[12]Carol K. Sigelman and Philip J. David, "Making Good Impressions in Job Interviews," Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded, 13, No. 1 (1978), 71.

[13]Hatfield and Gatewood, p. 30.

[14]Raymond L. Gorden, Interviewing, 3rd ed. (Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey, 1980), p. 314.

[15]David M. Young, Ernst G. Beier, and Steven Beier, "Beyond Words," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 57 (1979), 346.

keenly aware of the subtle cues that may have an effect on the selection interview in order to pass it successfully and obtain a job. While numerous other writers have made comments similar to Knapp and Leathers', these should give the reader an indication of why nonverbal communication should be studied within the framework of an interview.

It is now necessary to take a look at other studies which deal more specifically with interviewing. The remaining part of this chapter will discuss nonverbal communication in the interview context as revealed in (1) experimental studies and (2) popular literature. Furthermore, this chapter will attempt to view the experimental studies in light of other extant theories, and principles of nonverbal communication. That is, it will attempt to integrate other nonverbal axioms into these studies to clarify and make more meaningful those findings reported. The experimental studies will be discussed chronologically, showing how nonverbal communication in the interview evolved through the years, while the popular studies will be discussed in terms of the various modalities.

Experimental Studies

Wagoner

The first study related to nonverbal communication in the selection interview was conducted in 1949 by Ralph Wagoner.

This is perhaps the single most important article written because it began the discussion of nonverbal communication within an interview context. Wagoner sought to discover those factors which could be evaluated best in an interview. Once those factors could be determined, Wagoner believed that more research could be conducted to develop a scientific interview. This scientific interview would in turn add to the validity of the selection interview. To isolate those factors, Wagoner surveyed interview evaluation sheets from several interviewers. Ninety-six different areas of an applicant were found to be evaluated based on Wagoner's survey. Of all factors isolated, appearance was the most frequently recurring variable that was evaluated by interviewers. Manner was the next commonly recurring criterion. Both of these have to do with nonverbal behavior. Though not recurring very often, beauty, cheerfulness, fear, facial expressions, neatness, posture, anger, and size were other nonverbal cues listed.[16] This study, then, laid the foundation for studying nonverbal behavior in the selection interview.

Springbett

To this writer's knowledge, one of the earliest studies concerning nonverbal communication in the selection interview

[16] Ralph Wagoner, "The Employment Interview," Personnel Psychology, 2 (1949), 35-38.

was published in 1958 by B. M. Springbett. Springbett's study intended to ". . . make a start at identifying the factors which affect the final decision in the interview."[17] Springbett carried out two experiments; one in a military and one in an industrial setting. In both experiments, application form and appearance of the applicant were judged for effects on an interviewer. Specifically, Springbett found: (1) application form and appearance were major factors in deciding the employment of 85% of all interviewees; (2) final rejection 88% of the time was based on appearance or application form; (3) a person has a better chance of being hired if, when both application form and appearance are positive, the application form is rated before the person's appearance; (4) the decision to hire those who have average appearances was based mainly on factors other than appearance. Another factor which was highly significant was that 85% of all who were interviewed had final impressions formed of them in the first two or three minutes of the interview.

Springbett's study leaves room for further research on the applicant's reaction to the interviewer's nonverbal behavior. Later studies which will be discussed consider these various factors.

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[17] "Factors Affecting the Final Decision in the Employment Interview," Canadian Journal of Psychology, 12 (1958), 13-22.

Dittman

In 1962, Allen T. Dittman was seeking to discover how movement patterns of various body members differed when different moods were aroused in a mental patient undergoing psychotherapy.[18] To collect his data, Dittman videotaped the interview. Upon careful analysis, Dittman found that when the patient was angry, there were many head and leg movements but few hand movements. However, during a depressed mood, there was little movement of the hands and head but many leg movements.

This study, while not focusing on "normal" interviewees, suggests possible future studies which would seek to discover what type of body movements correspond to certain moods of a "normal" interviewee. If an interviewee were moving certain parts of his body, he may unknowingly reveal to the interviewer that he is in a particular mood, that is, depressed, or angry, thus creating negative impressions.

Ekman

In 1964, Paul Ekman, in reference to Dittman's findings in 1962, stated that while Dittman's study reported a relationship between the structure of the interview and the changes in body movement, it did not point out what these

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[18] "The Relationship between Body Movements and Moods in Interviews," Journal of Consulting Psychology, 26 (1962), 480.

nonverbal cues could reveal to an observer.[19] Ekman therefore hypothesized that observers could detect a relationship between bodily movements and verbal communication when both are simultaneously emitted in an interview.

Four experiments were done in which judges judged pairs of photographs against written verbal samples of an interview. They were required to pick the photograph which they felt most appropriately corresponded with a written sentence extracted from the interview. It was found that specific nonverbal gestures such as a fist shake or a smile can have a direct verbal translation. Also, less symbolic nonverbal cues such as tapping the foot or swaying the body can have a specific communicative purpose because it focuses attention on a particular area of the verbal message.

Ekman pointed out that nonverbal communication, besides reinforcing the verbal level, could communicate general information about the sender such as the sender's level of activity, anxiety, or discharge of tension.

Exline, Gray, and Schuette

Research on nonverbal communication in the selection interview took a different turn with Exline, Gray, and Schuette's pioneer study on visual behavior in 1965. Exline,

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[19] "Body Position, Facial Expression, and Verbal Behavior during Interviews," Journal of Abnormal ~~and Social Psychology~~, 68 (1964), 295-301.

Gray, and Schuette's study sought to test the assumption that eye contact with another person can be directly linked to the emotional state of an individual, specifically the state of embarrassment.[20]

Forty male and forty female subjects were interviewed by one male and one female interviewer. Each interviewer sustained maximum eye contact with his or her subject when asking both very personal questions designed to induce embarrassment and nonpersonal or nonembarrassing questions. Results showed that female subjects maintained a greater amount of eye contact with the interviewer than did males. The experiment also showed that subjects looked more at the interviewer when listening and less when answering embarrassing questions. It further pointed out that avoiding another person's glance is motivated by an individual's unwillingness to reveal his affect to the other person.

Some of the findings in this study were reinforced in 1969 by Argyle. Although Argyle's work did not deal specifically with the interview, he nonetheless found that a reduction in eye contact may serve as an avoidance of a distracting effect of received verbal stimuli.[21]

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[20]Ralph Exline, David Gray, and Dorothy Schuette, "Visual Behavior in a Dyad as Affected by Interview Content and Sex of Respondent," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1 (1965), 201-09.

[21]Michael Argyle, Bodily Communication (London: Methven, 1975), p. 237.

Baxter and Winters

In 1968, Baxter and Winters were "concerned with evaluating the relationship between linguistic category availability and gestural behavior in mature adults."[22] It was hypothesized that adults would use more nonverbal gestures in a standardized interview when discussing a topic with which they were not familiar. It was also believed that an inverse relationship would exist between gesturing and verbal category differentiation. That is, the well-differentiated person would use a smaller amount of gesturing.

Twenty males and twenty females were interviewed by a female interviewer. Each interview lasted fifteen to twenty-five minutes in which each subject was asked to talk for five minutes about a topic which he or she felt he or she could discuss comfortably in a social setting. After five minutes, each subject was asked to talk about another topic which he or she did not feel comfortable discussing in a social situation. The amount of gesturing of each subject was measured by a judge who observed the interview from behine a one-way mirror.

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[22]James C. Baxter and Elaine P. Winters, "Gestural Behavior during a Brief Interview as a Function of Cognitive Variables," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 8 (1968), 303-07.

Results of the study showed that subjects actually gestured more when discussing familiar topics. Thus, Baxter and Winter's first hypothesis was nullified. Also, the well-differentiated person used more gestures more vigorously and extensively. Hence, their second hypothesis was nullified also.

Baxter and Winters point out that gesturing is used more as a supplementary device rather than a substitute. They also reveal that caution should be taken when generalizing such findings because five minutes may not be indicative of the whole communicative process. Also, other less adjusted, articulate individuals than the ones used in the experiment may not reveal the same findings.

Washburn and Hakel

To this writer's knowledge, no experiments on nonverbal communication in the selection interview were conducted after 1968 until Washburn and Hakel in 1973.[23] In this study, Washburn and Hakel pointed out that little is known about the manner in which an interviewer's behavior can affect his own perceptions of an interviewee. That is, it is believed that interviewer's behaviors may, in turn, have effects on

[23] Paul V. Washburn and Milton D. Hakel, "Visual Cues and Verbal Content as Influences on Impressions Formed after Simulated Employment Interviews," Journal of Applied Psychology, 58, (1973), 137-41.

interviewee's behaviors. Specific interviewer cues such as eye contact, smiling, and gestures were measured for effects.

Four fifteen-minute interviews were videotaped and played back to student judges who alternatively viewed enthusiastic (minimal gaze aversion, high smilings, and frequent gestures) and unenthusiastic (gaze aversion, low smiling, and minimal gestures) interviewers. The results showed that interviewers were perceived more positively in all enthusiastic contexts. Interviewers were seen as being more intelligent, enthusiastic, younger, considerate, interesting, and easily approachable. Interviewers were also perceived as being good superiors, and ones who enjoyed their occupations. Interviewers were also rated higher when they were seen in the enthusiastic context. This study underscores the idea that the way one says something nonverbally has a large impact upon likeability and credibility. This is in keeping with both Leather's and Knapp's comments made at the beginning of this chapter. Young, Beier, and Beier validated similar findings in 1979, as will be shown later in this chapter.

Fugita, Wexley, and Hillery

Two quantitative studies were produced in 1974. The first one to be discussed was done by Fugita, Wexley, and Hillery in which black-white differences in nonverbal

behavior in an interview were assessed.[24] The purpose of this study was to discover the differences that Blacks and Whites might have with regard to eye contact and speaking design. In 1966, Edward T. Hall wrote that Black nonverbal behavior has often been misunderstood by Whites, which causes Blacks' desire for a job to go undetected.[25] This is why this study is so important.

Twenty Black and twenty White females were interviewed by two middle-class Blacks and two middle-class Whites. Each interviewer interviewed five White and five Black females. A standard set of eight questions was asked to determine the females' qualifications for a hypothetical job. Half of the questions asked were emotionally provoking.

The results of this study showed that (1) White interviewees maintained more eye contact with Black and White interviewers than did Black interviewees; (2) both Black and White interviewees maintained more eye contact with White interviewers than with Black interviewers; (3) less eye contact occurred when Blacks were talking with Blacks than when Whites were talking with Whites; and (4)

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[24]Stephen F. Fugita, Kenneth N. Wexley, and Joseph M. Hillery, "Black-White Differences in Nonverbal Behavior in an Interview Setting," Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 4 (1974), 343-50.

[25]Edward T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension (New York: Doubleday, 1966), pp. 172-73.

the racial questions in the interview did not elicit more interaction time than did the other questions. The study also points out that Black interviewers had shorter glances given to them than White interviewers by both Blacks and Whites and that Whites glanced longer at interviewers than did Blacks.

Fugita and his associates state the following:

> Research with whites has demonstrated that they maintain more eye contact with those toward whom they have positive interpersonal attitudes (e.g. Exline, et al., 1965; Exline and Messick, 1967) and with those from whom they are attempting to elicit positive attitudes (Pelligin, Hicks, and Gordan, 1970). Perhaps blacks do more of this impression management through other . . . proxemic or kinesic channels. . . . [26]

While this study answers many questions and makes a valuable contribution to the study of nonverbal communication, further research should be done to determine the impact that all-male or all-female interactions would produce. To this writer's knowledge, it is the first study done which seeks to measure differences in racial behavior within an interview setting.

Bond and Shiraishi

Also in 1974, an article was written by Bond and Shiraishi which sought to determine how body lean and orientation of an interview would affect the behavior of

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[26]Fugita, Wexley, and Hillery, p. 348.

Japanese applicants.[27] An important point to keep in mind is that Japan is primarily a vertical oriented society; thus, this study has specific importance to the Japanese culture. Bond and Shiraishi point out that "vertical organization is marked by the common affiliation of members to the same family head, employer or teacher rather than to the same age group, professional affiliation or caste as in a horizontal social structure."[28]

Sixteen males and sixteen females between nineteen and twenty-one years of age were interviewed by two male graduate students. In some interviews, the interviewers exhibited high status while in the other half low status was exhibited. The interviewers would lean forward or backward twenty degrees from a vertical plane with their legs uncrossed while measuring on hidden camera gaze aversion, smiling, gestures, posture changes, and self-manipulators of the interviewees.

Results of this study showed that females manipulated their legs and smiled more often than males. Forward leans on the part of the interviewer produced more eye contact

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[27]Michael H. Bond and Daisuke Shiraishi, "The Effect of Body Lean and Status of an Interviewer of Japanese Interviewees," International Journal of Psychology, 9 (1974), 117-28.

[28]Bond and Shiraishi, p. 117.

from both females and males than was anticipated. Men tended to gesture more with their feet.

Like the study by Fugita and associates, this study does seek to deal with other ethnic groups. This is certainly a positive aspect for this study even if it has seemingly little relevance to Americans.

One year later (1975), two studies were published. One study on affect and deception cues was written by McClintock and Hunt[29] while another by Keenan and Wedderburn[30] dealt with the nonverbal behavior of interviewers. A discussion of McClintock and Hunt will come first.

McClintock and Hunt

Based on Mehrabian's and Ekman and Friesen's[31] works which dealt with nonverbal "leakage" that reveals true affects, McClintock and Hunt sought to determine what specific nonverbal cues showed deception and emotional feelings of respondents during interviews.

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[29]Charles C. McClintock and Raymond G. Hunt, "Nonverbal Indicators of Affect and Deception in an Interview Setting," Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 5 (1975), 54-67.

[30]Adam Keenan and A. A. I. Wedderburn, "Effects of the Non-verbal Behavior of Interviewers on Candidates' Impressions," Journal of Occupational Psychology, 48 (1975), 129-32.

[31]See Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, "Detecting Deception from the Face and Body," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 29 (1974), 288-89, and Albert Mehrabian, "Nonverbal Betrayal of Feeling," Journal of Experimental Research in Personality, 5 (1971), 64-73.

Ten male and ten female subjects were interviewed by a single female interviewer. Subjects rated how much they enjoyed talking about certain topics prior to entering the interview. These served as criteria to decide what questions would be asked to measure pleasant involvement, passivity, unpleasant involvement, and deception. Nonverbal cues could be checked against these states of arousal through videotape while the questions were being asked.

Results of the study showed that there was no marked difference in eye contact of subjects during questions evoking pleasant involvement, unpleasant involvement, and deception. Postural shifts occurred less than any of the other variables but were significant detectors in the unpleasant involvement and deception questions. Postural shifts and self-manipulators were found to be the highest factors involved for determining intentional deception. Although smiles were hypothesized to be more highly concentrated during pleasant involvement in interviews, this study did not prove it.

With this study behind, it is safe to conclude that there are certain nonverbal patterns such as postural shifts and self-manipulators which reveal deception and uneasiness. Although we can control facial expressions most easily, we have a harder time controlling tension in the lower part of the body.

This study made an important contribution to the field of nonverbal communication because it is one of the first (if not the first) studies to measure whether or not an applicant is sincere during an interview.

Keenan and Wedderburn

That same year (1975), Keenan and Wedderburn wrote an article similar to Washburn and Hakel's study of 1973. Keenan and Wedderburn were seeking to discover how respondents perceived interviewers when interviewers used both positive and negative interview styles. Positive styles, much like those discussed by Washburn and Hakel, included smiling, head nodding, and high eye contact. Negative styles included frowns, head shaking, and gaze aversion.

Four student interviewers interviewed twenty-four student subjects. Two interviewers used positive styles and two used negative styles. Each interviewer interviewed six subjects. After the interview, subjects were asked to fill out questionnaires which sought answers such as who was the friendliest, nervous, sensitive and the like.

Like Washburn and Hakel's study, results showed that subjects found the interviewers in the approval or positive condition friendlier, competent, and more at ease. The interviewers in the disapproved categories were rated as being more nervous.

This study shows that individuals in an interview make use of nonverbal cues to form impressions of interviewers. These impressions, however, were formed subconsciously; subjects were not aware of the basis of their judgments.

In another study by Young, Beier, and Beier, which will be discussed in a moment, the question of whether or not interviewers perceive interviewees in the same fashion that interviewees perceive interviewers will be answered. This was an opposite approach from Keenan and Wedderburn and Washburn and Hakel.

Keenan

In 1976 Keenan continued his research on nonverbal communication with a study similar to his and Wedderburn's of 1975.[32] Having already demonstrated than an interviewer's nonverbal cues influence a respondent's impressions of him, Keenan further sought to determine if the interviewer's nonverbal cues would influence a respondent's performance in the interview.

A total of twelve interviews, half of which showed positive interviewing styles and half negative interviewing styles, were randomly chosen to be judged by twenty-four subjects. The ultimate findings of this study were that an

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[32]Adam Keenan, "Effects of the Non-Verbal Behavior of Interviewees on Candidates' Performance," Journal of Occupational Psychology, 49 (1976), 171-76.

interviewer's nonverbal style can indeed affect the behavior of an interviewee. Furthermore, this study showed that positive nonverbal styles can create a good impression in the interview but do not necessarily make the interviewer look more competent. It also showed that it is not necessarily true that an interviewer will evaluate the same way an outside judge will.

Severson

In that same year (1976), Constance B. Severson wrote a dissertation which dealt with the nonverbal responses of internal and external subjects to nonverbal cues in an interview.[33] Internal subjects were defined as those people who expected events to be shaped by their own behavior or characteristics. External subjects, on the other hand, were those subjects who believed that a situation was contingent upon fate, luck, or another agent other than themselves. The Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control scale was used to determine whether or not subjects fit one of these two categories.

Thirty-two males and thirty-two females were interviewed by an unknown interviewer for six minutes. In half of the interview, the interviewer showed high eye contact, forward

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[33]"Nonverbal Responses of Internal and External Subjects to Nonverbal Interview Cues," DAI, 37 (1976), 816-17A (North Dakota).

lean, and smiling. The interviewer displayed opposite nonverbal cues in the second half.

The results of the study showed that both internal and external males and females emitted significantly more smiling and eye contact during the positive half of the interview. This study supports the findings of Keenan in 1976.

The year 1977 also proved to be a productive year for research articles concerning nonverbal communication in the selection interview. Much of the research done sought to determine respondent's effects of nonverbal communication on the interviewer.

Imada and Hakel

The purpose of Imada and Hakel's study in 1977 was to determine what nonverbal cues have an impact upon an interviewer, such as eye contact, smiling, body positioning, and proxemics. It was believed that the closer the interpersonal distance between an interviewer and applicant, the greater the immediacy and liking. This was based on studies by Mehrabian in 1972 and Weiner and Mehrabian in 1968.[34]

It was also believed that the mode of presenting subjects and functioning of different roles by observers had

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[34] Andrew S. Imada and Milton D. Hakel, "Influence of Nonverbal Communication and Rater Proximity on Impressions and Decisions in Simulated Employment Interviews," Journal of Applied Psychology, 62 (1977), 295-300.

an impact upon the way an applicant was perceived. The question was, did viewing an interviewee from videotape make a difference in judge's perceptions of the applicant as opposed to a live observation?

Data was collected from twenty-four interviews involving three female subjects at a time. In each interview, an applicant who was trained to communicate immediacy and nonimmediacy was interviewed by a first female who used a standard script. A second female also sat in the room across the table from the trained applicant and beside the interviewer. A third female observed the interview from a television set in another room. After each interview, the three female subjects filled out a questionnaire which measured such characteristics as the applicant's motivation and confidence as well as how highly the applicant would be recommended for hiring.

Imada and Hakel found that immediate nonverbal communication by the applicant produced higher ratings. Imada and Hakel reported: ". . . through use of eye contact, gestures, smiling, smaller interpersonal distances, an attentive posture, and a more direct body orientation, the applicant was perceived and described as a warmer and more enthusiastic person."[35]

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[35]Imada and Hakel, p. 297.

As far as ratings of behavior due to distance, it was found that distance made no difference as to whether or not an applicant was considered immediate or favorable. Live participation and television viewing were equivocal as far as perceiving favorability.

It is certainly clear, then, from this study that decisions and impressions within an interview are determined largely by nonverbal behavior, which is consistent with the other studies surveyed.

Young and Beier

Also in 1977, Young and Beier published an article dealing with the way interviewers perceived the applicant based on nonverbal cues.[36] It was hypothesized that if an applicant were physically attractive, used frequent eye contact, smiled often, and used frequent head nods, then his chances of being hired were increased.

To measure this, thirty-two females received one of four instructions either to minimize their nonverbal behavior, use eye contact, use frequent eye contact plus smiling or use frequent eye contact, smile often, and frequent head nodding. Fifty people judged the applicants

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[36] David M. Young and Ernst G. Beier, "The Role of Applicant Nonverbal Communication in the Employment Interview," Journal of Employment Counseling, 14 (1977), 154-65.

as either favorable or unfavorable employees. Each applicant was also rated for physical appearance by thirty other judges.

The results showed that those applicants who used frequent eye contact and smiling were judged as more hirable than others. Head nodding was not found to be a statistically significant determinant. Furthermore, attractiveness was only a significant determinant when the minimization sample was withdrawn from the correlation. This study helps validate Imada and Hakel as well as other studies thus far cited.

McGovern

Similar to Young and Beier's study, McGovern wrote a dissertation in 1977 in which he discussed what effects sex and nonverbal cues can have on an interview.[37] Fifty-two personnel representatives viewed one of four videotaped interviews. The interview content was the same except for the sex of the interviewee and the kind of nonverbal behavior displayed. One male and one female were shown using negative nonverbal communication such as little dynamism, lack of affect and voice variations, low eye contact, multiple speech disturbances, and low speech fluency. Another tape

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[37] Thomas Vincent McGovern, "The Making of a Job Interviewee," DAI, 37 (1977), 4740-741 B (Southern Illinois).

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was shown of a male or female who used positive nonverbal communication. These interviews were evaluated every four minutes by personnel representatives.

The results were similar to Imada and Hakel's, Keenan's, and Young and Beier's study. Nonverbal cues had a significant effect on the judges evaluations in areas such as self confidence of the applicant, pleasantness, and enthusiasm and motivation. McGovern found that clear impressions were formed in the first four minutes of an interview. This finding is similar to Springbett's conclusion that decisions are formed in the first two or three minutes as was stated earlier in this survey.

Sigelman and Davis

To this writer's knowledge, only one study was conducted in 1978. Two psychologists, Carol K. Sigelman and Philip J. Davis, sought to identify verbal and nonverbal cues within an interview which would have an influence on the hiring of the mentally retarded. This information could then be used to facilitate training and counseling programs.[38]

Twenty-one slightly mentally retarded females were judged by fifteen judges. These judges were given a brief lecture on the nature of mental retardation and were told

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[38]Sigelman and Davis, p. 71-77.

that they would be judging mentally retarded females. After viewing one-minute filmed interviews of subjects, interviewers filled out questionnaires which measured impact of subjects nonverbal behavior.

Like many of the earlier studies thus far cited, it was found that smiling, eye contact, and head movements played a large role in determining interviewers' perceptions of these subjects.

One of the unique qualities of this study is that it is the first documentation of nonverbal behavior of mentally retarded people within an interview context. However, since students were used to judge applicants, there is a limitation to the findings. They may not be as good at judging as professional employment interviewers would be.

Young, Beier, and Beier

Similar to the study written in 1977 by Young and Beier, in 1979 Young, Beier, and Beier reported on three experiments.[39] The first experiment recorded was an exact duplicate of Young and Beier's study of 1977. However, the next two were significantly different.

In the second experiment, videotapes of thirty-two applicants were played back to a group of professional interviewers. Ten interviewers judged applicants for

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[39]Young, Beier, and Beier, 346-50.

nonverbal behavior. Eleven interviewers rate each interviewee on whether or not these applicants deserved a job. Seventeen remaining interviewers rated the applicants on likeability and attractiveness.

Once again, similar to the findings of Young and Beier, these results showed that there was a correlation between those applicants who deserved a job and applicants with frequent eye contact and smiling. Furthermore, as in Young and Beier's study, neither head nodding nor attractiveness was a significant determinant in whether a person was judged as deserving a job.

The third experiment written in this same article sought to measure the "halo" effects of an applicant's nonverbal cues e.g. his reference letters, application form, and any other written recommendation that might precede him in an interview. Two examples were taken from the thirty-two female subjects to represent positive and negative nonverbal behavior. Each one was measured equal in attractiveness. This experiment was designed to measure nonverbal communication against neutral, positive and negative written records. One hundred and twenty-six college students, six groups in all, read one of the three written evaluations, and then observed one of the two types of nonverbal behavior. The results showed that the nonverbal behavior of an applicant in an interview can have either positive or

negative effects on an interviewer regardless of his written records or "halo."

That is, applicants who had good records could either be hurt or helped depending on whether or not their nonverbal behavior was positive.

Hollandsworth, Kazelskis, Stevens, and Dressel

In 1979, Hollandsworth, Kazelskis, Stevens, and Dressel wrote an article dealing with what factors contribute to decisions made by interviewers in the selection interview.[40] During 1976 and 1977, seventy-six interviewers rated three hundred thirty-eight total interviews. After each interview, the rater would rate interviewees on eye contact, loudness of voice, body posture, fluence of speech, appropriateness of content, personal appearance and composure. They were then asked whether or not they would hire the candidate.

Results showed that the most important variable in an interview was the content of the applicant's speech followed by speech fluency and composure. Eye contact and body posture as well as voice loudness and personal appearance in that order contributed to the decisions made.

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[40] James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., Richard Kazelskis, Joanne Stevens, and Mary Edith Dressel, "Relative Contributions of Verbal, Articulative, and Nonverbal Communication to Employment Decisions in the Job Interview Setting," Personnel Psychology, 32 (1979), 359-67.

This study is good in that it helps clarify from an experimental standpoint the importance of nonverbal cues in an interview. While other studies listed earlier in this survey discussed the effects that certain cues have, none of them ranked them in terms of importance as this study does.

Popular Literature

Much popular literature has been written on nonverbal communication in the selection interview. Popular literature is literature which is suited to the public in general or literature of general circulation. Basically what will be surveyed are easily read books and magazines which would appeal to the overall populace. Books such as Julius Fast's Body Language,[41] John Malloys' Dress for Success,[42] and Flora Davis' Inside Intuition[43] are examples of popular literature. Also, many of the magazine articles which are not experimental in nature will be discussed. This discussion will be limited to four modalities, namely oculesics, objectives, haptics, and proxemics because these are the commonly reoccurring topics of the literature.

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[41]Julius Fast, Body Language (New York: Pocket Books, 1970).

[42]John T. Malloy, Dress for Success (New York: Warner, 1975).

[43]Flora Davis, Inside Intuition (New York: McGraw, 1973).

Oculesics

Hatfield and Gatewood warn that different interviewers may perceive eye contact from the respondent differently, that eye contact is a function of a listener's status and that outgoing individuals will engage in more eye contact than the introverted. The point is that young, experienced male cnadidates may not have high eye contact if they do not perceive their chances to be good enough to enter a firm. It may not show any indications of their working skills. Therefore, interviewers should be careful with their judgments.[44]

In a magazine article entitled, "The Job Interview," the authors instructed the applicant to maintain good eye contact to give the impression of being alert.[45] Likewise, Ekman and Friesen have a small paragraph instructing the job applicant to be aware of what impressions they give to the personnel manager by their facial expressions.[46]

Objectics

Hatfield and Gatewood, similar to Springbett and McGovern, write that the first few minutes of an interview

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[44]Hatfield and Gatewood, p. 35.

[45]"The Job Interview," Administrative Management, Aug. 1979, p. 14.

[46]Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, Unmasking the Face, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 4.

will determine the outcome of the interview. This decision they say is based on the applicant's appearance. They went on to say that research has revealed five findings:

> 1. Males wearing suits, having short hair . . . and no facial hair create the strongest favorable impact on the interviewer's . . . decision.
> 2. Females wearing blouses, heels, and nylon stockings have a positive impact on such decisions.
> 3. Interviewers are still biased toward male candidates.
> 4. Being overweight has a mild negative impact on decisions.
> 5. Taller male applicants have an advantage in selection decisions (and often get higher starting salaries).[47]

Gootnick advises that one should look business-like and carry an attache case.[48] Fast agrees that carrying an attache case is a sign of status.[49] Silverman says that poor grooming is a popular problem for many executives seeking higher jobs. Many had dandruff on their shoulders, unpolished shoes, and wore the same suit three days consecutively.[50]

Furthermore, Galassi and Galassi warn that applicants should avoid extremes which divert the interviewer's attention. Like Hatfield and Gatewood, Galassi and Galassi

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[47] Hatfield and Gatewood, p. 36.

[48] David Gootnick, "Selling Yourself in Interviews," MBA, Dec. 1978, p. 37.

[49] Fast, p. 38.

[50] Michael A. Silverman, "How to Lose a Job," Management Today, Sept. 1978, p. 61.

believe that men should avoid facial hair because it tends to create negative feelings from the interviewer. Long hair, beards, mustaches, and sideburns in that order produce the strongest negative reactions.[51]

Similar to Hatfield and Gatewood, Adams concludes that the physical appearance of the interviewer is the source of first impressions made on the applicants. Most popular literature has dealt thus far with the applicant's dress, but Adams is one of the first to focus on the interviewer's overall appearance. He further remarks that physical appearance should be average and neutral, that long sideburns on men and even crew haircuts can have negative effects. Women were admonished to wear make-up and nail polish to avoid looking masculine.[52] Much of Adams advice corresponds with Galassi and Galassi's.

Ken Cooper in Nonverbal Communication for Business Success further remarks concerning the appearance of both men and women. Cooper cites that interviewers look initially at a woman's hair and legs and then give a "once-over," while

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[51]John P. Galassi and Merna Dee Galassi, "Preparing Individuals for Job Interviews," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 57 (1978), 189.

[52]Stacy J. Adams, Interviewing Procedures, (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1958), pp. 16-17.

hair length, clothing, and shoes are frequently looked at first on the man.[53]

Haptics

As was cited earlier in this study, haptics is a modality of nonverbal communication. Therefore, handshaking is certainly worth one's consideration. Hatfield and Gatewood hinted that it may be one of the most important determinants of impressions when they wrote:

> Typically, those who receive firm handshakes assign liking and warm feelings to the candidate. Perceptions of limp or soft grips are often individuals who are unwilling to become involved or who are unaffectionate and unfriendly.[54]

However, they did warn that these perceptions are stereotypical and have never been verified.

The authors of "The Job Interview" advise that one should greet the interviewer with a good, firm handshake.[55] However, contrary to both Hatfield and Gatewood and the article on "The Job Interview," Galassi and Galassi report that according to most interviewers, a firm handshake does not carry much weight. This is certainly an area which needs to be given more attention in order to draw a more stable conclusion.

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[53] Nonverbal Communication for Business Success, (New York: American Management, 1979), p. 112.

[54] Hatfield and Gatewood, p. 36.

[55] "The Job Interview," p. 14.

Proxemics

The last area that will be covered in this survey is that of proxemics or space and environment. Not much has been written about proxemics in the interview in popular literature. Galassi and Galassi point out that small interpersonal distances, along with direct body orientation, are influential in the interview.[56] Fast points out that in office visitations, visitor status was deemed low when stopping inside the door, higher when half-way, and still higher when going up to the desk.[57] Further research needs to be done in this area to determine the influence that proxemics can play in the selection interview.

Suggestions for Further Research

From researching, discovering, and analyzing the preceding literature, one is compelled to inquire further into such a study. Several areas come to mind. For example, researchers need to look further into what specific cues professional interviewers look for, if any at all. That is, are they conscious that such nonverbal cues are affecting their judgments? Also, how do professional interviewers' expectations fit the findings cited in this survey.

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[56]Galassi and Galassi, p. 189.

[57]Fast, p. 37.

Another interesting idea which should be researched would be, what type of bodies have an effect upon interviewers? That is, do obese individuals (endomorphs) have a better chance of getting a job than thin people (ectomorphs)? Or would more athletically shaped bodies (mesomorphs) have a better chance of obtaining a job than either of the above? Are tall people perceived as more competent, likeable, and better deserving of a job than short people? Are more attractive candidates more likely to get jobs over the less attractive?

Further research, as has already been suggested, needs to be done on how valid the handshake is as well as how proxemics is used in the interview.

Perhaps one could examine what type of dress evokes positive and negative impressions from an interviewer. Surely, then, multiple studies can determine the impact of a number of nonverbal cues within an interview. The purpose of this thesis, then, is to answer some of these questions. Namely, what effects do certain nonverbal cues of the applicant have on the interviewer within a field setting? The nonverbal areas to be researched are smiling, handshaking, clothing, body orientation, eye contact, jewelry, colognes and perfumes, hair lengths, space and environment, and artifacts such as resumes and application appearance. Research will also be concerned with the effects of body

types of the applicants as well as interviewers' degrees of awareness to nonverbal cues. More about the specific types of areas to be covered will be discussed in the next chapter as will the procedure followed to collect such data.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

Chapter I of this thesis has reviewed the literature and research to date. This chapter will discuss four areas: (1) the research setting suggested in Chapter I; (2) the recruiters to be interviewed; (3) a discussion of questions administered to the recruiters; and (4) an analysis of the questions.

Research Setting

Young, Beier, and Beier suggest that, embarrassingly, much of the nonverbal research foundation in interviews is based on experiments using lower-division college students who are seeking extra credit. Furthermore, they warn that an applicant's nonverbal behavior can only be evaluated adequately by professional employment interviewers.[1]

Similarly, Knapp, Wiemann, and Daly point out that there is an abundance of laboratory experimental research involving college students but a paucity of research from natural settings. This insufficiency of data from natural settings has frequently hindered experimental testing in a

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[1]David M. Young, Ernst G. Beier, and Steven Beier, "Beyond Words," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 57 (1979), 348.

natural setting. Knapp and associates go on to advise the researcher to have a good understanding of the way behaviors actually occur before seeking to control them in the laboratory. This firm grip can only be obtained by conducting more descriptive studies in natural settings.[2]

Dubin justifies the study done in a natural setting when he comments:

> There is no more devastating condemnation that the self-designated theorist makes of the researcher than to label his work purely descriptive. There is an implication that associates "purely descriptive" research with empty-headedness. . . . This is nonsense. . . . In every discipline, but particularly in its early stages of development, purely descriptive research is indispensable. Descriptive research is the stuff out of which the mind of man, the theorist, develops the units that compose his theories. The more adequate the description, the greater is the likelihood that the units derived from the description will be useful in subsequent theory building.[3]

In addition, Backstrom and Hursh point out that "hesitance to attempt quality field research retards building a working body of knowledge and enhancing . . . theory."[4] With the preceding comments in mind, it is easy

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[2]Mark L. Knapp, John M. Wiemann, and John A. Daly, "Nonverbal Communication," Human Communication Research, 4 (1978), 276-77.

[3]Robert Dubin, Theory Building (New York: Free Press, 1969) as quoted by Knapp, Wiemann, and Daly, p. 277.

[4]Charles H. Backstrom and Gerald D. Hursh, Survey Research (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1963), p. 3.

to see how important studies done in natural settings are. The present study is a field study conducted through the College Placement Office at The University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The purpose of this study was an attempt to discover more fully how specific nonverbal cues of a college student affect the decision of the interviewer as well as to test some of the findings in the popular literature in the selection interview. While it would be naive to believe that the final decision of an interviewer concerning any given applicant is based solely on nonverbal cues, it is believed that if an applicant has enough negative cues, then these would surely have an impact upon an interviewer's decision. In a laboratory study cited in Chapter I, Young, Beier, and Beier discovered that if an applicant had positive written credentials but his nonverbal style was poor, then the nonverbal style would negate and override those positive written credentials.[5] What are ways in which an applicant creates a negative impression? Is popular literature correct in prescribing things that should or should not be done? This thesis will focus on these questions.

The method used to collect the data for this study was a series of interviews with forty recruiters who visited the

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[5]Young, Beier, and Beier, p. 349.

placement office of The University of Tennessee during the winter quarter of 1981. These interviewers had come to campus to recruit graduating college students to fill positions with different companies. Before any research took place, permission was secured from the placement office director. After the study was cleared with the director, a schedule was obtained of the interviewers who were to be on campus. As each recruiter was sitting in his or her assigned interviewing room, this researcher approached them, introduced himself, described the type of study he was doing, and asked them if they would mind answering a few questions on the effects that certain nonverbal cues of a student applicant would have on them.

Each recruiter was chosen on the basis of his or her availability. Some recruiters did not have time to give any information. Therefore, this researcher had to interview only those whom he could get. Many had back-to-back interviews throughout the day. Only those who had spare time to answer questions were interviewed. If recruiters said that they would help with the study, the best time for them was determined. After the time was set, this researcher thanked them and returned at the designated time. Most recruiters agreed to answer questions upon initial contact as long as they were not busy. Many of these research interviews were conducted during breaks of the practioners and in the

mornings before they began interviewing students. Other research interviews were conducted late in the afternoon when the recruiters were finished with their work. Each interview to collect information for this thesis lasted approximately fifteen to twenty minutes and was conducted privately in a small room. The interviews were recorded on cassette tape. The information was later transcribed to paper.

Recruiters

Forty white interviewers between the ages of twenty-two and sixty-five were interviewed. The mean age was thirty-six. Of these forty, seven were females with the mean age being thirty-two. Of the thirty-three remaining males, the mean age was thirty-seven. Of all the interviewers, 72.5% were recruiting for technical positions while 22.5% were interviewing for business-related jobs. Only 5% were recruiting for both technical and business-related positions.

Discussion of Questions

As has already been pointed out, only five modalities were researched. These were haptics, oculesics, kinesics, proxemics, and objectics. Twenty-eight questions based on the various modalities were asked to recruiters either to determine their impressions of an applicant's nonverbal

behavior or to determine the truthfulness of some findings of popular literature. Most of the questions were openended. A list of the questions can be found in the appendix. The purpose of this section is to demonstrate why each question was asked (i.e. what were the underlying motives behind each individual question?). Questions will be analyzed in relation to various categories.

Before asking the specific questions on each modality, recruiters were asked whether they understood the term nonverbal communication. A definition was read to them to ensure further clarity. The definition read stated that "nonverbal communication entails the use of posture, facial expressions, physical appearance, eye contact, gestures, space and environment and any other type of communication that is not verbal in nature."

Haptics

Question number two of the interview asked, "How much emphasis do you place on the handshake as the applicant first enters the office to be interviewed and what does that tell you about the applicant?" This is the only question asked in the area of touch behavior. The basis for this question arose from discrepancy in the popular literature on hand-shaking. It was believed that by asking how much emphasis each recruiter placed on shaking hands, some degree of importance could be determined. The later part of that

question was developed in order to discover what types of adjectives would be used to describe an individual with a warm, firm handshake as opposed to a weak, limp handshake.

Oculesics

Question number three was the only question concerned with the modality of oculesics. The question asked was, "How do you perceive an applicant with high eye contact as opposed to an applicant with low eye contact; what does this tell you about the applicant?" Eye contact importance has already been validated in other studies discussed in Chapter I. Still, the question was posed to determine recruiters' reactions in a natural setting. Just as in the second question, the later part of this question was asked in order to determine what adjectives each interviewer would use in describing individuals with high eye contact or low eye contact.

Kinesics

The next four questions in the questionnaire centered on the area of kinesics. The fourth question of the questionnaire dealt with smiling. This question asked, "How do you feel about an applicant who smiles a lot in the interview as opposed to one who smiles very little and what does that tell you about the applicant?" This question, like many of the others asked, had been researched in the

experimental studies. This writer, however, believes that by asking it in a field study, a more spontaneous, real-life answer can be given. Interviewers can describe in their own words how they perceive applicants who smile or not rather than filling out a check list as is the frequent practice in many experimental studies.

Besides smiling and eye contact, a third question dealing with the face was asked to determine if there were any other facial cues which were overlooked that would have either a positive or a negative effect. Thus, question number five read, "What other facial expressions about the applicant affect you either positively or negatively?" It was hoped that by asking this question other facial cues could be discovered that might have negative effects upon interviewers. Needless to say, facial expressions are important. Ekman and Friesen point out that emotions are shown primarily in the face.[6]

Staying in the modality of kinesics, the researcher shifted from the face to body orientation. The next question was, "What effect does an applicant's body orientation have on you and what does this tell you about the applicant?" The idea for this question came from Bond

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[6]Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, Unmasking the Face, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 6.

and Shiraishi's study discussed in Chapter I. While Bond and Shiraishi focused on the effects that an interviewer's body orientation would have on an applicant, there seemed to be a need to discover the effects that the body orientation of an applicant would have on the interviewer.[7] Furthermore, Ekman and Friesen also suggest that body movements reveal how well a person is coping with emotion, what a person's attitude is, and what a person's interpersonal orientation might be.[8] It was hoped that by asking this question on body orientation, some idea of a recruiter's perception of the applicant could be assessed.

Along with the questions on kinesics concerning smiling, facial expressions, and body orientation, another question was raised; "Are there any annoying gestures that you have noticed in your interviewing experience?" This question sought to determine what gestures influence the interviewers. The more that is known by an applicant, the better his chances are of making a favorable impression. Albert Mehrabian, in his book Silent Messages, suggests that nonverbal behaviors, among other things, can indicate

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[7]Michael H. Bond and Daisuke Shiraishi, "The Effects of Body Lean and Status of an Interviewer of Japanese Interviewees," International Journal of Psychology, 9 (1974), 117-28.

[8]Ekman and Friesen, p. 7.

immediacy or nonimmediacy.[9] Cues such as body orientation, gesturing, and mutual gaze are only a few ways in which an applicant can have a positive impact upon an interviewer.

Proxemics

Proxemics was the next modality to be pursued. The questions on proxemics were asked mainly to determine how the interviewer controlled the environment. An applicant would have little, if any, control over this area of nonverbal communication since the setting would be arranged prior to his arrival. If an applicant was ever placed in a position where he could control the arrangement, however, he would have, at least to some degree, an understanding of what arrangement would best be suited for an interview. The three questions on proxemics then were: (1) "Do you prefer a face-to-face type interaction as opposed to a side-to-side or right angle arrangement?" (2) "Do you prefer a barrier between you and the applicant?" (3) Approximately how many feet do you prefer between you and the applicant?"

In the early stages of this research, one recruiter suggested that the researcher ask, "What effect would it have on you as an interviewer if, upon entering the office to be interviewed, the applicant sits before you do?" Thus, after twelve interviews had been conducted, this question

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[9] Silent Messages (Belmont, California: Wadsworth).

was added to the questionnaire. It is more closely related to space and environment than any other area so it will be discussed in the next chapter under the area of proxemics.

Objectics

Along with the previous question, it was also suggested that this researcher ask the question, "What effect does smoking have on you in the interview?" This question will be discussed in the next chapter under the area of objectics. As in much of the literature suggested in Chapter I, objectics is an important area of nonverbal communication in the selection interview. Fifteen questions in all were asked related to this area.

The thirteenth question was, "What do you prefer the applicants, both male and female, to wear in the interview?" This question was asked to determine whether the popular literature on this topic was worthy of consideration. The following question raised was, "Does the color, style, or number of pieces of a male applicant's suit affect you?" This question had its origin in John Malloy's Dress for Success.[10] More will be said on the specifics of this question in Chapter III.

Question number fiteeen of the questionnaire read, "Does it matter whether or not an applicant enters the

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[10]Dress for Success, (New York: Warner, 1976).

interview wearing a top coat? What effect does this have?" The sixteenth question was, "Have you ever noticed any annoying grooming traits of the applicant and if so, discuss them." In Chapter I, Silverman's belief was noted that poor grooming is a popular problem for many executives seeking higher jobs.[11] Would the same problems hold true for college applicants? The purpose of these questions then was to determine what poor grooming traits, if any, were noticed by a recruiter.

The focus of the next two questions on objectics was shifted to head and facial hair. Question number seventeen read, "Does the length of an applicant's hair have any effect on you?" The eighteenth question was, "What effect does facial hair (beards, mustaches, sideburns) have on you?" These questions were rooted in the ideas of Hatfield and Gatewood in Chapter I which state that men with short hair and no facial hair have the strongest favorable impact.[12] More will be discussed along these lines in Chapter III when the results are presented.

Question nineteen centered on messages obtained through smell. Only a small amount of research has been conducted

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[11]Michael A. Silverman, "How to Lose a Job," Management Today, Sept. 1978, p. 61.

[12]John D. Hatfield and Robert D. Gatewood, "Nonverbal Cues in the Selection Interview," Personnel Administrator, Jan. 1978, p. 36.

in this area. Thus, the question asked was, "What is your reaction to colognes and perfumes of the applicant?" Anthropologist Edward T. Hall writes:

> Pleasant odors, such as perfume on women or bay rum on men are desirable but should not be detectable at more than intimate distance for the middle class. In fact, when olfaction is present it usually signals intimacy.[13]

With this in mind, how then, would recruiters view applicants who wore colognes and perfumes?

The twentieth question, still in the modality of objectics, asked, "What is your reaction to jewelry?" Cooper says that more than one ring per hand will detract from your business while dangling bracelets are annoying.[14] Malloy says that the less jewelry a man wears, the better.[15] Both of these may be good pieces of advice, but more specifically, how do student recruiters look upon jewelry?

Both Gootnick,[16] Fast,[17] and Malloy[18] say that carrying an attache case is important. For this reason,

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[13]"A System for the Notation of Proxemic Behavior," American Anthropologist, 65 (1963), 1015.

[14]Ken Cooper, Nonverbal Communication for Business Success (New York: American Management, 1979), pp. 86-87.

[15]Malloy, p. 156.

[16]David Gootnick, "Selling Yourself in Interviews," MBA, Dec. 1978, p. 37.

[17]Julius Fast, Body Language (New York: Pocket Books, 1970), p. 38.

[18]Malloy, p. 157.

question twenty-one was asked: "What effect does a college student carrying an attache case into the interview have on you; what does this tell you about the applicant?" Would a college student carrying an attache case enhance his chances of getting a job? Results will be discussed in Chapter III. The twenty-second question asked, "Does the style of pen that an applicant uses have any effect on you?" This question might seem trivial. However, once again, Malloy suggests that expensive, thin, gold, and silver pens have the most favorable impact in business.[19] Do pens really have an impact upon college recruiters?

Question twenty-three asked, "Does the color of an applicant's resume matter to you?" Questions twenty-four and twenty-five, respectively, asked "Does an applicant's handwriting affect you and does the application appearance affect you?" These three questions were intended to uncover any effects that might hinder an applicant based on prepared written materials. Color preference for resumes, script preferences for applications, and commonly recurring problems with the application form were determined.

The next question was asked in three parts. This question read, "If you have two candidates who are equal in credentials, would you tend to hire the taller applicant

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[19]Malloy, p. 157.

over the shorter, thinner over the more obese, and more attractive over the less attractive?" In Chapter I, Hatfield and Gatewood point out that taller male applicants have an advantage in the selection interview, while being overweight creates a negative impression upon the interviewer.[20]

Furthermore, Knapp suggests that taller men are preferred over the shorter in the American society. He goes on to point out that a study conducted at the University of Pittsburgh showed that shorter men are shortchanged on job opportunities.[21] Knapp also suggests that physique-temperament stereotypes may have a lot to do with how people perceive and respond to each other.[22] He also suggests several studies which show that the more attractive individual has the advantage over the less attractive in certain social contexts.[23] But would all or any of these physical factors really play a part in the selection interview? The purpose of question twenty-six was to determine just that.

It is one thing to determine what nonverbal cues have a positive or negative effect upon an interviewer but it is

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[20]Hatfield and Gatewood, p. 36.

[21]Mark L. Knapp, Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1972), p. 167.

[22]Knapp, pp. 162-68.

[23]Knapp, pp. 153-61.

another altogether to find out which cues are the most important. That is, which areas carry the most weight? Question twenty-seven was asked to determine just what nonverbal cues are the most important. The question read, "Of all the nonverbal cues discussed thus far, what are the most important nonverbal cues?" If an applicant is aware of the most important nonverbal area, more attention could be paid to it over others.

The last question asked in the interview was, "How much attention and emphasis is given to nonverbal communication in the selection interview?" A five point scale was given which ranged from one, "no attention at all is given to the nonverbal level," to five, "a lot (i.e., more attention is given to the nonverbal level than to the verbal level)." Three was, "an equal amount of attention is given to both verbal and nonverbal levels."

Analysis of Questions

Results of each question were tabulated into percentages based on the total number of responses received for that question. Some questions being open-ended received more than one answer from several recruiters, so that these questions were tabulated based on more than forty responses. Many questions required interviewers to answer with descriptive phrases or adjectives. Thus, percentages were

calculated to determine how many times an adjective or a phrase judged by the researcher to be closely related was used. That is, adjectives and phrases were grouped if they expressed the same idea. For example, descriptions such as strong, confident, and self-assured would be placed in one category because they all carry the same idea. In another category, adjectives like truthful and open would be placed together because they carry the same meaning. Still, a third category might read warm and friendly because they suggest a different meaning than do either of the two previous examples. When words did not quite fit the same category or general idea, they were left separate to avoid forcing them where perhaps they should not belong.

Some questions did not warrant the use of adjectives in answering them. Rather they called for one of three effects, either positive, negative, or neutral (no effect). These three categories were used primarily for the questions on objectics when asking whether certain artifacts had any effect upon a recruiter. The other modalities made primary use of categorizing adjectives which represented the same idea. Qualification categories were set up to determine why a certain cue was either positive, negative, or neutral. These qualifications are discussed after the results of each question requiring a positive, negative, or neutral response. The results of each question will be discussed in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss in detail the results of the questions mentioned in Chapter II. Before presenting the results of the questions specifically related to McCrosky's categories, it is imperative to give the result of the first question asked. That question asked the interviewer whether or not he or she understood the term, nonverbal communication. Without exception, each recruiter answered yes. However, a few recruiters were hesitant to be firm with their reply. Some would comment, "yes, but maybe you had better go over it." In any case, whether or not the subjects asked for a clarification, a definition was read to them to insure clarity. The definition can be found in Chapter II, page 46. A discussion of the remaining questions will now follow.

Haptics

In response to the second question concerning the importance of handshaking, 47.5% of the recruiters said that handshaking had little, if any effect upon them, that their decisions about the applicant were not influenced at all by the handshake. However, 27.5% said that a fair

amount of emphasis was given to the handshake while 25% said that the handshake was very important. A total of 52.5% do place some emphasis on the handshake.

The second half of question two asked what the handshake told the recruiter about the applicant. Recruiters gave various answers. Of the total number of answers given 50% indicated that an applicant with a firm handshake was strong, confident, and self-assured. Of the total answers received, 23.9% said that the applicant was outgoing, assertive, and aggressive. The remaining answers concerning the firm handshake were as follows: 8.7% said the applicant was truthful and open; 4.3% indicated the applicant was warm and friendly; 4.3% suggested the applicant was more mature; 2.2% said the applicant was enthusiastic; 2.2% said the applicant was supportive; 2.2% indicated the applicant was competent; and 2.2% suggested the applicant was more athletic.

When queried about their perceptions of weak handshakes, 27.5% said that the interviewee was shy, not outgoing, quiet, reserved, withdrawn, introverted, or uninterested. Lack of self-confidence and surety were answers occurring 24.5% of the time. Twelve percent of the answers revealed that the applicant was socially immature. Social immaturity meant that the applicant had never learned to shake hands, that he had not researched the interview process, or that he

lacked in social experience. Of all answers received, 9% indicated that the applicant was insecure or wishy-washy. Weakness of character occurred 6% of the time. Nervous occurred 6% of the time. Reluctant and not very aggressive also occurred 6% of the time. Effeminate occurred 3% of the time while another 6% said that the handshake says nothing at all. Many phrases carry very similar meanings. Thus, they could be combined with other phrases and the percentages would be raised immensely. However, this writer chose to leave them into narrower categories rather than run the risk of forcing them into categories where perhaps they should not belong. One can easily see though the types of effects that both firm and weak handshakes have on recruiters.

Oculesics

In the third question, this researcher asked the recruiters to describe persons with high eye contact as opposed to those with low eye contact. As in the previous question, a wide variety of adjectives were given as answers. For example, concerning those applicants who used a lot of eye contact, 42.3% of all answers given fell into the category of strong, confident, self-assured, or unafraid. The next highest category at 17.3% said the

applicant was interested, attentive, and a good listener. Answers such as truthful, direct, open, applicant has nothing to hide, honest, sincere, straight-forward, and extroverted occurred 13.8% of the time. Eleven point five percent of all answers for individuals with good eye contact revealed that the applicant was highly expressive and could communicate and get along with other people easily. The remaining answers broke down into the following: 5.7% indicated the applicant was at ease and poised, 5.7% said he was prepared for the interview and knowledgeable about the discussion, and 3.7% indicated the applicant was assertive and aggressive.

Persons with low eye contact were described with derogatory terms. For instance, 43% said the interviewee was insecure, not assured or not confident, while 20% indicated the applicant was bashful, shy, nonsocial, and introverted. Ten percent indicated the applicant was nervous, scared, or frightened, while another 10% used the terms evasive, hiding, not open, and sneaky to describe low eye contact. Others terms used were uncomfortable and uninterested, at 7% each. Three percent said that low eye contact had neither a positive nor negative impact. This is consistent with other studies which have been cited in Chapters I and II. Argyle and associates found that the more an individual gazed toward another

person, up to a certain point, the person with high eye contact was seen as active, dominant, self-confident and better liked.[1] Many of the recruiters expressed similar ideas. Though answers were not computed into percentages, frequent comments indicated that high eye contact was positive unless the applicant stared, in which case the applicant would then create a negative impression.

Kinesics

Question four of the interview asked what effect on the interviewer an applicant's smiling had. Of all recruiters interviewed, 54% said that smiling was positive, 17% said that smiling was neutral or had no effect, and 29% said that too much smiling has a negative effect. Of those who said that smiling had a positive effect, frequent answers indicated that the applicant is easy going, at ease, or relaxed (34.8%), happy, cheerful, and having a sense of humor (30.4%), gregarious, congenial, able to mix with others and socially mobile (17.4%), aware of what was taking place in the interview (4.3%), and in control of themselves (4.3%).

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[1]Michael Argyle, Bodily Communication (London: Methven, 1975), pp. 236-37.

For those who answered that too much smiling was negatively perceived, nervousness was indicated 71.4% of the time followed by uncomfortable 14% of the time. Insincerity and lack of seriousness about the interview also occurred 14.3% of the time. Young, Beier, and Beier, as has already been shown, found that smiling had positive effects upon both college judges and professional recruiters.[2] However, Ekman and Friesen warn that smiling may be used to mask an incomfortable situation, to make a tense experience more comfortable.[3] Thus, it appears from this study that recruiters can and often do associate too much smiling with an attempt to cover up real feelings. Generally, though, this study indicated that smiling was positive.

The fifth question asked for a description of other facial expressions which are annoying to the interviewer. Answers were so diverse and difficult to categorize that no attempt was made to put them into percentages. Besides, many interviewers indicated that they had never really noticed any annoying facial expressions. Frequent answers

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[2]David M. Young, Ernst G. Beier, and Steven Beier, "Beyond Words," The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 57 (1979), 347-49.

[3]Paul Ekman and Wallace Friesen, Unmasking the Face (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 102.

revealed that skeptical expressions of doubt, scowling, snearing, grimaces, and frowns indicate a lack of interest. Other cues such as wrinkled brows, rolling the eyes, tics and twitches in the cheeks and lips, yawning, constant blinking, too much head nodding, and pouched eyes were answers given by recruiters which had negative effects.

On a more positive note, some facial expressions may enhance an interviewee's chances of being successful. For instance, raised eyebrows, quizzical looks, intense looks, looks of enthusiasm, head nodding, and general use of facial expressions to express oneself all had positive effects upon interviewers. Most interviewers indicated that these looks showed them that the applicant was interested and concerned. These findings become important when taken with Ekman and Friesen's idea that ". . . the face is the key for understanding people's emotional expressions, and it is sufficiently important, complicated, and subtle. . . ."[4] No doubt, facial expressions do have an effect on student recruiters.

Moving from the facial area, the sixth question centered on body posture and orientation. This question asked the interviewers what effect body orientation had on them and what did they prefer to see. Seven point five percent of all recruiters interviewed indicated that they

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[4]Ekman and Friesen, p. 7.

preferred the applicant to lean backward in his seat. The main reason given was because it showed the applicant was relaxed. On the other hand, 12.5% of all recruiters preferred a forward lean. Typical reasons for the forward lean preference were that it showed enthusiasm, attentiveness, and aggressiveness, and that the applicant wants to get all he can out of the interview. Generally though, 72.5% had no preference for body orientation. The only requirement was that the applicant appear relaxed and attentive. Poor posture was a frequent complaint cited. For example, many recruiters indicated that they were turned off by slouching or drooping in chairs. One recruiter in particular summed it up colorfully when he remarked that he "doesn't like a loose bag of flour." Another recruiter commented that poor posture gave an "'I don't care man' kind of attitude." Overall, poor posture showed a lack of motivation and interest. Seven point five percent of all recruiters said that either they had never noticed body orientation or that it did not have any effect on them. Once again, these findings become important when considered with other extant findings on body positioning. For example, Mehrabian's immediacy principle certainly holds true in this study. Mehrabian discovered that a more direct body orientation, forward lean, and closer position as well as more eye

contact resulted in an addressee being evaluated as more positive and likeable by an addresser. Furthermore, Mehrabian found that power and status were exuded by a more relaxed posture.[5] Certainly, this present study indicates that the body orientation and posture of an applicant can and does have either a positive or negative effect upon a recruiter. In a word, the predominant preference for an applicant's posture and orientation was to be relaxed and attentive.

The next question on kinesics asked if there were any annoying gestures that recruiters ever noticed. Of all recruiters interviewed, 30% said that they had never really noticed any annoying gestures. However, of the remaining 70%, a wide cross-section of responses was given. Once again, many recruiters gave more than one answer. Of the total number of answers given, surprisingly enough the most annoying gesture cited was that the applicant picks his nose or ears. This occurred 20% of the time. Chewing or playing with fingernails occurred 12.5% of the time while bouncing the knees, shaking the legs and tapping the feet against the table or ground also occurred 12.5% of the time. Furthermore, 12.5% of all answers given cited too

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[5]Albert Mehrabian, "A Semantic Space for Nonverbal Behavior," Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 35 (1970), 248-57.

much hand movement as being annoying. Ten percent of all answers given listed pecking on the table as a common annoying habit. General fidgeting was cited 7.5% of the time while touching the face with the hands appeared to be annoying 7.5% of the time. Crossed arms, rubbing hands together, head nodding, and playing with a pen or keys were all reported 5% of the time respectively. Continual note taking by the applicant, hands behind the head, and frequently checking the time concluded the three answers given at 2.5%.

Proxemics

As was mentioned in Chapter II, questions eight, nine, and ten constituted a cluster of information on proxemics. These questions sought to determine how interviewers use space within the interview. The first question on proxemics concerning a recruiter's preference for a face to face interaction as opposed to a side to side interaction revealed the following. Seventy-seven point five percent preferred a face to face interaction; 17.5% preferred a side to side type interview, and 5% had no preference. When asked whether or not they preferred a barrier between them, 52.5% said that they did. One of the most commonly recurring reasons was that the table served a logistic function in that the interviewer

needed it to write on as well as to hold visual aid material. A few indicated that the barrier served to put the applicant at ease while others said that the barrier served to give the interviewer more status.

Campbell and Herren found that placing a desk between a student interviewee and a faculty interviewer did not have any significant effect upon the lower-status person during brief visits to the higher-status person's office. According to Campbell's and Herren's study, manipulation of furniture does not influence perception of the occupant.[6] However, Zweigenhaht suggests that a desk, when placed between the visitor and occupant, can cause the occupant to be seen as less friendly than when the desk is off to the side.[7] In any case, a barrier between applicant and interviewer, whether it be a table or desk, may have a negative effect if any at all. Five percent of all interviewers said that they had no preference one way or another with regards to a barrier while 42.5% said that they did not prefer a barrier at all. The typical reason that recruiters chose not to have a barrier was to appear more friendly and personal toward the applicant.

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[6]David E. Campbell and Kim A. Herren, "Interior Arrangement of the Office," Psychological Reports, 43 (1978), 234.

[7]Campbell and Herren, p. 234.

When questioned about the distance with which each recruiter felt comfortable, the results were as follows: 2.5% preferred one to three feet between them and the applicant; 20% preferred two to three feet; 45% preferred three to four feet; 7.5% preferred four to five feet; 5% preferred five to six feet; 5% preferred six to eight feet; and 15% had no preference. The largest number in the above list was 45% at three to four feet. This is consistent with Edward T. Hall's idea of the far phase of what he has termed, personal distance, that distance used by white middle-class Americans for conversation. However, Hall's third category of social distance, that distance employed for business transactions, is four to twelve feet of which 17.5% of all recruiters felt most comfortable with.[8] Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that different recruiters view the interview differently. Some may see it as strictly business while others may view it less seriously.

When asked if it mattered whether an applicant took a seat before the recruiter, 77% said that it did not, that there was no effect either positively or negatively. However,

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[8]Edward T. Hall and Mildred Reed Hall, "The Sounds of Silence " In Language: Introductory Readings, 2nd ed. Virginia P. Clark, Paul A. Eschholz, and Alfred F. Rosa, (New York: St. Martin's, 1977), p. 458.

23% said that it did matter, that it showed the applicant was not courteous or polite, and that he had poor manners. Other recruiters said that the applicant should wait until he is asked before being seated.

Objectics

The first question to be discussed under objectics is question twelve which asked what effect an applicant who smoked during the interview would have on the recruiter. Only twenty-eight people were interviewed. As was mentioned in Chapter II, this question grew out of a suggestion from one of the recruiters being interviewed. Of those recruiters interviewed, 53% indicated that they do ~~not~~ mind if an applicant smokes. Of that number, 93% were nonsmokers leaving only 7% who were smokers. There were 43% who indicated that they did not mind if an applicant smoked. Of this number, 67% were nonsmokers and 33% were smokers. Four percent indicated that they would not mind if an applicant smoked providing that the applicant asked first.

In a study conducted by Hickson, Powell, Hill, Holt, and Flick concerning smoking artifacts, college professors who smoked cigarettes were judged by student judges to be less competent than nonsmokers. Furthermore, subjects who did not smoke were judged as more able to get a

job done and physically attractive than were subjects who smoked either a cigar or cigarette.[9]

Some interviewers who objected to smoking said that they had allergies that were aggravated by smoking. Other than this, there was no reason given why the applicant should not smoke. Could it be that interviewers view applicants much like student judges viewed professors? If so, smoking should be discouraged altogether in the selection interview.

Question thirteen asked the interviewer what he or she preferred the applicants to wear in the interview. For male applicants, 72.5% of the recruiters indicated that interviewees should at least wear a coat and tie if not a suit. However, 25% had no preference concerning a suit so long as the applicant was neat. Frequent responses from those who had no preference said that the male student may not have enough money to buy a suit and that should not be held against him. Two point five percent were inadvertently overlooked.

For female applicants, 70% of all recruiters said that they had no preference whether or not the interviewee wears pants, a dress, or a suit. Twenty percent indicated

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[9]Mark Hickson III, Larry Powell, Sidney R. Hill, Jr., Genetta B. Holt, and Hank Flick, "Smoking Artifacts as Indicators of Homophily, Attraction, and Credibility," Southern Speech Communication Journal, 44 (1979), 191-200.

that the feamle should definitely wear a dress; 7.5% indicated that they preferred a suit; none preferred pants; and 2.5% were inadvertently overlooked. The predominant response, much like the response for male applicants, was to be neat. Those who opposed pants said that they were less professional. One recruiter indicated that if he saw a female applicant wearing pants, "I would wonder who she types for." On the whole, though, pants were acceptable.

When asked whether the style, color, or number of pieces of a male applicant's suit mattered, 67.5% indicated that it did not. Thirty percent said that it did matter and qualified their answer. Answers such as suits can be too flashy, loud, wild, and garish, were not uncommon. Others added that this type of color would not fit into their organization. Also, paisley, checks and light colors were considered to have negative effects. Two point five percent were inadvertently overlooked.

On matters of style, 57.5% said that the style of a male applicant's suit did not matter while 40% said that it did. Again, 2.5% were inadvertently overlooked. Those who reported that the style did matter indicated that the style must be within reason, up to date, and not extremely flamboyant. Nehru, leisure, and double knit suits were among those listed as having negative effects because they are outdated. The general idea was that the suit

should be at least semireflective of the times; otherwise, the applicant is viewed as a nonconformist or maverick.

When asked whether or not the number of pieces of an applicant's suit made any difference, 97.5% said that it did not, that it neither enhanced nor hindered an applicant's ethos. Two point five percent were inadvertently overlooked. Malloy says in his Dress for Success that large men should not wear dark suits because dark suits are highly authoritarian. Furthermore, he says that large men should wear neither pin stripe nor three piece suits.[10] This was not found to be the case in the present study. If anything, darker, more conservative colors were preferred. Neither the number of pieces of a male applicant's suit nor its style had any effect unless it was simply obnoxious. One has to wonder about the validity of such generalized statements by Malloy for the selection interview context. Certainly Malloy's statements were incompatible with the data collected in this study.

Question fifteen asked whether or not an applicant entering wearing a topcoat had any effect upon the recruiters. Eighty-five percent indicated that this had no effect on them at all while 7.5% said that it would

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[10]John T. Malloy, Dress for Success (New York: Warner, 1975), p. 125.

create a negative impression. Seven point five percent were inadvertently overlooked. For those who said that it had a negative effect upon them, the explanation given was that it showed the applicant was poorly organized and unprepared. Those who indicated that it would not have any effect said that it might be cold outside and thus would be understandable.

Some of the literature in Chapter I indicates that there may be frequent problems with grooming. Therefore, question sixteen sought to find out what were the most prevalent grooming problems that college recruiters witnessed. Twenty percent said that they had never noticed any grooming problems at all. However, of those who responded, many answers were given. Of the total answers received the most frequently recurring problem at 29% was unkept, uncut, uncombed, greasy hair. The second largest problem at 17% was ungroomed facial hair. Dirty fingernails and dirty shoes were third and fourth at 15% and 13% respectively. Dandruff and wrinkled shirts and collars which often stood up were next at 6% a piece. Four percent of all answers included improperly tied neck ties. Poor dental work, tooth decay, and unbrushed teeth occurred next at 4%. Smudgy glasses, food in the mustache, and buttons missing on shirts all occurred 2% of the time.

Once again, Malloy says that the haircut of an individual, particularly a male, is very important. He points out that what is important is not really what an individual thinks about his hair but what those who are in a position to pass judgment think.[11] With this in mind, question seventeen of this study sought to determine what hair lengths, if any, are preferred by college recruiters. Of the forty recruiters interviewed, none said that hair had a positive impact. Forty-five percent said that hair did not have any effect as long as it was neat, while 55% said that it was negative if it was too long. Of this 55%, eleven recruiters considered hair to be too long if it was shoulder length because it would not fit the corporate image. Three of this 55% said that it was too long if it was over the shirt collar, while four agreed that hair should not be below the ear. Certainly, if hair was considered to be too long, it would create a difficulty for an applicant trying to obtain a job. At Stanford University in 1971, the placement officer said that long-haired young men often found themselves lacking in opportunities for employment.[12]

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[11] Malloy, p. 121.

[12] Mark L. Knapp, Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1972), p. 171.

This might very well be the case at other college placement offices.

Still concerned with hair, question eighteen asked what effect facial hair had on recruiters. Similar to the above question, none said that it had a positive effect; 92.5% said that it had a neutral effect as long as it was well kept, neatly trimmed, or well groomed. Only 7.5% said that long beards and long sideburns were negative. This indicated that the applicant was a nonconformist. Some even called the applicant the pejorative name, "redneck."

In 1969, Daniel Freedman did a study in which a group of male undergraduate students assessed beards of adult males. Findings indicated that men with beards were considered more youthful, independent, and extroverted. On the other hand, females viewed men with beards as more masculine, sophisticated, and mature.[13] While these are all complimentary adjectives, the present study indicated that beards of college students had no consciously positive effect upon recruiters. Perhaps the difference between Freedman's findings and the present study can be attributed to the ages of the judges. Another factor may be the difference in attitudes prevalent in 1969 and 1981.

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[13]Daniel G. Freedman, "The Survival Value of the Beard," Psychology Today, Oct. 1969, pp. 36-39.

When queried about recruiter's reactions to colognes and perfumes in the interview, only 3% said that it would be positive, that it was enjoyed. Only 13% said that colognes and perfumes were negative altogether. If they could be smelled at all, then they were considered negative. However, 84% said that as long as the cologne or perfume was not overpowering, it did not have an effect, one way or another. Obviously, if colognes and perfumes were too strong then they would have negative effects with anyone.

When asked about the effects of jewelry, answers similar to those concerning colognes and perfumes were given. For example, only 5% said that jewelry, especially on females, was positive because it would help the recruiter remember the candidate. Conversely, 8% indicated that it was negative if there was too much. The most frequent answer given was that it was neutral. This answer occurred 87% of the time. The predominant response was that jewelry had no effect as long as it was tasteful and was not too gaudy. Recruiters said that too much jewelry, however, had never been a problem in the past. Perhaps Cooper's advice that noisy jewelry should be

avoided[14] or Malloy's warning that too much jewelry is unimpressive[15] should be heeded.

Question twenty-one sought to determine what effect, if any, an applicant carrying an attache case had on the recruiter. The justification for this question has already been discussed in Chapters I and II. Of all recruiters interviewed, 57.5% said that an attache case did not have an effect. Another 12.5% said that it had a negative effect while 30% indicated that it enhanced an applicant's image. The reasons given why carrying an attache case is positive were that the applicant appeared well organized and prepared for the interview. Those who objected to student interviewees carrying an attache case indicated that the applicants were trying too hard to make an impression, that they were overdoing it, or that an applicant needed security. One recruiter commented, "the applicant is putting on the dog," meaning that he is trying to be impressive. In any event, carrying an attache case may very well be advantageous.

As was cited early, Malloy believes that expensive, thin, gold, or silver pens are impressive in the world of business. However, the present study revealed that 95%

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[14]Ken Cooper, Nonverbal Communication for Business Success (New York: American Management, 1979), p. 86.

[15]Malloy, pp. 154-55.

of all interviewers were not affected by an applicant's pen, mainly because they never see one to begin with. Only 5% said that it created a positive impression.

Question twenty-three asked the interviewers what effect a colored resume has on them. Of all interviewers, none said that it was positive, 75% said that it was neutral, and 25% said that it ran the risk of being negative. Colors such as peach, pink, orange, purple, yellow, and any other bright color were generally frowned upon. Cheap crinkly paper was also cited a negative aspect of resumes. When asked what color was preferred, 40% preferred white, 32.5% had no preference, and 27.5% preferred a buff color such as cream, tan, beige, manila, off-white, or some other type of earthtone.

The next question asked what effect handwriting has on the recruiters. Of all answers received, 32% said that they did not pay any attention to it. However, 20% said that it is positive if it is neat. Frequent answers indicated that the person who writes well is neat, tidy, methodical, organized, intelligent, motivated, and would be careful on the job. Conversely, 48% said that sloppy handwriting leaves a negative impression of an applicant. Typical answers indicated that an individual was confused, not serious about the interview, in a hurry, sloppy in work, or unorganized and careless. This type of person is not the type of person for whom recruiters were looking.

Question twenty-five asked what are the most commonly recurring problems with an application form. Many answers were given. Twenty-three point three percent said that they had never really noticed any. However, of those answers given, 16.3% feel into the category of lack of information. Other answers were as follows: misspelled words (9.3%), sloppiness (11.6%), lack of a grade point average (7.0%), undated or incorrect dates (7.0%), improper addresses (7.0%), improper phone numbers (4.6%) lack of signatures (4.6%), incomplete sentences (2.3%), poor grammar (2.3%), vague, preworded, duplicated statements (2.3%), and no social security number (2.3%). When asked about what style of script is preferred for the application form, 28% had no preference; 19% preferred a handwritten application; and 53% preferred a typed application.

Question twenty-six asked the recruiters if they would tend to hire taller, thinner, or more attractive candidates if written credentials of two applicants were equal. Argyle says that taller applicants are usually pomoted to imaginary jobs in experimental studies.[16] However, the present study showed that 67.5% said that they would not hire the taller applicant over the shorter.

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[16]Argyle, p. 337.

Two point five percent were uncommitted while 30% said that they would hire the taller candidate because height instills an air of authority and leadership.

When questioned concerning the hiring of the thinner applicant as opposed to the more obese, only 17.5% said that there was no preference. This left 82.5% who said that they would hire the thinner over the more obese. Frequent reasons suggested that thinner people were perceived as more energetic and were suited physically for the job. Obese individuals were seen as sloppy individuals lacking in self-control and thus would not be able to handle their jobs. Also, a more obese person was perceived as being a high health risk for a company.

In the area of attractiveness, 52.5% indicated that they would hire the more attractive candidate over the less attractive. Forty-five percent said they they would not necessarily hire the more attractive and 2.5% were uncommitted. Typical reasons why the more attractive individual would be hired were that attractive individuals are easy to deal with, that it is human nature to gravitate toward attractive people, that attractive people are wanted to represent the company, and that they would be better in sales and management. One recruiter facetiously remarked, "you don't get them any cheaper because they're ugly."

In a study conducted by Dion, Berscheid, and Walster, it was hypothesized that more attractive individuals would secure more prestigious jobs. Thirty male and thirty female students judged three photographs of individuals who were considered to be attractive, average, and unattractive. Each photograph was rated against twenty-seven personality traits. Half of the subjects received pictures of females while the other half received pictures of males. Although more attractive subjects were seen as more socially desirable, they were not judged as more likely to secure a prestigious occupation.[17] Further, Young, Beier, and Beier's study discussed in both the first and second chapters of this thesis did not find attractiveness to have a significant correlation to an applicant deserving a job.[18] Even in the present study, there was only a 6.5% difference between those recruiters who would hire the more attractive and those who would not.

When asked question twenty-seven, what are the most important nonverbal cues that an applicant should be aware of, good eye contact was the top answer at 37.9% of all answers received. Clothing, grooming, neatness, and general

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[17]Karen Dion, Ellen Berscheid, and Elaine Walster, "What Is Beautiful Is Good," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 24 (1972), 285-90.

[18]Young, Beier, and Beier, p. 349.

appearance were all categorized at 21.2%, while a steady composure and demeanor with a relaxed and poised body presentation were grouped at 18.2%. The handshake was the next important answer given at 13.6%. The last category mentioned was smiling and facial expressions which showed the applicant was at ease. These occurred 9.1% of the time. Ten percent of all interviewers did not answer the question because they considered it too difficult.

The last question of the interview asked to what extent each recruiter was aware of nonverbal communication. On a scale of one to five, one being the least amount of attention given, five being the maximum, 2.5% chose either a one or five. Twenty percent chose the second category while 40% chose the third. The third category was an equal amount of attention is given to both verbal and nonverbal levels. Twelve point five percent were classified at the three point five level because recruiters would answer, "between a three and a four." Category four was chosen 22.5% of the time. Of all categories chosen, 77.5% chose a three or higher. It may be argued that this finding would be significantly different if this question had been asked earlier in the interview; this researcher, through asking questions on nonverbal behavior, may have triggered each subject's awareness of nonverbal communication. However, it may also be argued that if this question had been asked

early in the interview and the subject chose a lower category, he or she might in turn choose to answer "no effect" for the remaining questions in order to be consistent with this single question. In any event, as has been pointed out in Chapter II, this questionnaire only dealt with the conscious. There was no way of detecting what cues affect recruiters on a subconscious level. Therefore, caution should be exercised with the percentages given to this and other questions asked.

This chapter has presented the results of each question administered in the questionnaire. This researcher has attempted to review the findings in view of extant knowledge of the topic under discussion. Chapter IV will include a summary and conclusion, limitations to the present study, and suggestions for application and further research.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

With the results of the questionnaire completed, it is necessary to make some observations and draw some conclusions about those results. This chapter will also discuss the limitations of this research, offer suggestions for application, and consider suggestions for further research.

Summary

While there has been a barrage of research done on nonverbal behavior in the selection interview within the laboratory, few if any studies have been conducted in the field. Traditionally, subjects consisted mainly of undergraduate students seeking extra credit. Therefore, this research was conducted in a field setting through a college placement office. This thesis attempted to discover two things: (1) what specific cues of a student applicant affect recruiters' perceptions of the applicant, (2) the validity of some of the findings of the popular literature on nonverbal communication in the context of the selection interview.

While it is apparent that the final decision concerning an applicant is not based entirely on nonverbal cues, it is equally apparent that the final decision is not based entirely on verbal cues either. Past experiments have proven this. It was hypothesized, then, that poor nonverbal style can be damaging to an applicant. Therefore, research was conducted from the premise that if there are enough negative nonverbal cues produced by the applicant, then these cues will have a detrimental impact upon recruiters' decisions about the applicant. This researcher hoped that many of these negative nonverbal mannerisms and artifacts could be identified in order to help an applicant bring them to a conscious level.

This researcher was also interested in testing many of the general assumptions found in the popular literature that was discussed in Chapter I. Once again, if these assumptions could be supported, then more confidence could be placed in some of the popular writers' premises. Conversely, if their comments were found to be unsupported, the consumer should be made aware of these, in which case the literature should be read with caution until research could determine the truth of the matter.

To arrive at the data, forty white recruiters (seven females, thirty-three males) between the ages of twenty-two and sixty-five were asked a series of questions concerning

nonverbal behavior. Of the total number of recruiters, 72.5% were interviewing for technical positions while 22.5% were looking to fill positions in business. Only 5% were interviewing for both types.

Each question, with the exceptions of numbers one and twenty-eight, was open-ended, designed to stimulate responses from recruiters. Question one required a simple yes—no response while question twenty-eight was a five point scale designed to measure recruiters' awareness of nonverbal behavior. All others allowed room for explanation and discussion.

Results of this study were not surprising to this writer. Results showed that interviewers do form impressions of applicants, whether consciously or unconsciously, based on nonverbal cues. In short, this thesis proved that actions do indeed speak louder than words. Therefore, applicants cannot afford to have poor nonverbal styles in the interview. Since 90% of all people must pass successfully at least one interview in their lifetime to obtain a job, awareness of nonverbal behavior becomes especially important.[1] A summary of individual questions will now follow.

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[1]Larry Ulrich and Don Trumbo, "The Selection Interview Since 1949," Psychological Bulletin, 63 (1965), 100-23.

As was expected by this author, for the first question all interviewers said that they did understand the term nonverbal communication. Surprisingly though, this researcher did not expect the answer to question twenty-eight to be so high. For example, not only do interviewers understand the term nonverbal communication, but 77.5% said that they at least give half of their attention to nonverbal cues. This means that impressions about the applicant are made based on nonverbal as well as verbal cues. As was mentioned in Chapter III, this high degree of awareness to nonverbal cues may be due to the fact that question twenty-eight was the last question asked. Recruiters would have their thinking geared toward the nonverbal level as a result of the interview with this researcher. Also, many recruiters may have felt pressured by the interviews with this researcher to respond favorably toward nonverbal communication. Therefore, they would indicate a high degree of awareness to nonverbal cues. In order for recruiters to be consistent with the past twenty-seven questions, obviously they would respond with a high degree of awareness to nonverbal cues (i.e., if they had responded favorably to the previous twenty-seven questions).

On the other hand though, if question twenty-eight concerning the degree of recruiter awareness to nonverbal

cues had been asked earlier and each recruiter had responded with "little awareness," recruiters may not have given much information to the remaining twenty-six questions in the interview in order to be consistent with the question concerning recruiters' awareness to nonverbal cues. Perhaps question twenty-eight concerning interviewers' awareness of nonverbal behavior should be asked by itself in another survey to increase the validity of the responses.

When considering the second question related to handshaking, this research showed that handshaking was at least minimally important at 52.5%. Besides, it was ranked as the fourth most significant nonverbal cue in question twenty-seven. These results, however, did not surprise this author. Obviously, the handshake by itself does not make or break an applicant but, when considered with many other nonverbal cues, it could have a determining effect upon an applicant's likelihood of acceptance. When preparing for an interview, applicants ought to be aware of their initial impressions since the decision about an applicant is made in the first few minutes of the interview as has been shown in previous chapters. Certainly, the handshake is instrumental in forming that impression.

Answers to the third question showed that good eye contact is very important. In fact, in answering question twenty-seven, eye contact was ranked as the single most

important cue that applicants should be aware of. These findings were not surprising. This study revealed that applicants with good eye contact show self-assurance, confidence, poise, honesty, plus many other desirable traits. Low eye contact has just the opposite effect. In fact, low eye contact shows a lack of self-confidence and assurance, nervousness, shyness, and many other unbecoming traits. When considering these findings along with other laboratory research done on nonverbal behavior, eye contact is immensely important. Again, applicants need to be aware that good eye contact usually leaves a favorable impression.

Along with good eye contact, smiling was found to have positive impressions as long as it was not excessive. Too much smiling indicated nervousness, thus leaving negative impressions. Other negative facial expressions were scowls, snears, grimaces, frowns, yawning, too much head nodding, constant blinking, and tics and twitches in the cheeks and lips to name a few. Surely the applicant should be aware of these cues. If an applicant has any of these habits, then he should have them pointed out to him before he enters the interview. He should concentrate on eliminating these facial distractions. Many are done subconsciously. Therefore, extra effort might be required in order to bring them to a conscious level.

On the other hand, it is not surprising to find that expressions such as raised eyebrows, looks of intensity, and adequate head nodding all indicate the applicant is attentive. These expressions, then, are positive for the applicant. Here again, applicants need to be made aware of these facts prior to an interview.

When one considers body orientation, the main thing applicants should bear in mind is to appear relaxed. In this study, there was no significant preference for forward leaning as opposed to a backward lean. This study also found that the third highest type of behavior that an applicant should be aware of was to appear steady, poised, and relaxed in bodily presentation. The findings on body orientation are consistent with the findings for good eye contact. For instance, good eye contact indicated to the recruiters, among other things, that an applicant is poised and relaxed. Applicants need to appear poised, relaxed, and free from nervousness. Otherwise, they run the risk of leaving negative impressions, hence hindering their chances for getting a job.

Still in the area of kinesics, question seven showed that there were many gestures which applicants have committed in the past which have had negative effects. To this researcher's surprise, picking the nose and ears was the most frequently cited annoyance. It is startling

to think that any applicant would do these things in an interview. Other annoying gestures included shaking and bouncing the legs or tapping the feet against the floor. Pecking on the table, chewing the fingernails, constantly fidgeting with keys, coins, or pens, and too much hand movements were all derogatory actions. No doubt, applicants have done these things in past interviews. The point is applicants should be taught and made aware not to do these things in future interviews because they certainly leave negative impressions.

In the area of proxemics, the study showed that most recruiters prefer a face-to-face interaction rather than a side-to-side. Research also suggests that most recruiters prefer a table between them and the applicant. Neither of these answers came as a surprise. However, the reason that barriers were preferred did surprise this writer. For example, one of the most commonly recurring reasons for wanting a barrier was to hold visual aids and brochures. This author believed that tables would serve more as a psychological factor in which the recruiter maintains his superiorirty. However, this was not always the case. Although the psychological factor was a reason cited, the predominant response was that the table serves a logistic function. The third question on proxemics revealed that the majority of recruiters preferred at least three feet

between them and the applicant. Once again, it should be pointed out that if an applicant is ever placed in a position where he can control the environment, these findings could be used. Obviously, many times an applicant has no control over the interviewing situation. Still, this information on proxemics might be helpful. More research should be conducted on how a barrier makes an applicant feel. This research would be helpful for the interviewer.

The answer to question eleven came as a surprise to this writer. This question discovered that applicants who sit before their interviewers generally have no negative effect upon their interviewers. Of all recruiters interviewed, 77% said that this had no effect upon them one way or another. Still, this researcher believes that applicants should wait to be asked before they are seated, if for no other reason than just to be courteous.

The area of objectics was also of special interest to this researcher. Smoking was the first subject under consideration in this area. As has already been discussed in Chapter III, this research suggests that smoking should not be a part of an applicant's interview. Though many recruiters who were indeed nonsmokers did not mind if the applicant smoked, the higher percentage (53%) fell toward those who did mind if the applicant smoked. Most of those who objected were nonsmokers and were very adamant about

their answers. This finding is surprising to the researcher. This writer believed that more recruiters would have objected to smoking than actually did. In any event, to be safe, this author would suggest to an applicant that smoking should be left out of the interview. Not only would an applicant who smokes run the risk of showing poor manners, the recruiter might also have an allergy. Therefore, smoking would be extremely detrimental to an applicant if it offended a recruiter.

When one considers dress, many answers from recruiters were surprising to this author while other answers were expected. For example, it was not unusual to find that recruiters preferred male applicants wear a coat and tie. Conversely, this researcher expected recruiters to prefer women applicants to wear a dress. That, however, was not the case. A total of 70% had no preference for what women wear in the interview as long as they dress neatly. Some recruiters, however, did prefer dresses for females. To be safe, this writer would suggest wearing a dress. Certainly this would be acceptable. In no event were pants preferred over a dress.

Question fourteen was of particular interest to this author because Malloy had much to say concerning a

man's dress.[2] This researcher was not surprised to find that generally, recruiters paid little attention to color, style, and number of pieces of a male applicant's suit. Therefore, it seems that Malloy's advice concerning color, style, and number of pieces of a male applicant's suit does not hold true for the college student in the selection interview, at least it did not affect recruiters on a conscious level. Furthermore, an applicant entering an interview wearing a topcoat had no negative effect on recruiters. The main thing one needs to keep in mind is to be neat. The importance of being neat can be seen more clearly in the next question.

It was not a surprise to find that the most frequently cited problems concerning grooming were unkept, ungroomed, or uncut head and facial hair. Nor was it a surprise to this author that dirty fingernails, dirty shoes, and dandruff were cited as annoying grooming traits. These were listed in Chapter I in the popular literature as frequently creating negative effects. However, other results to this question were astonishing. For example, smudgy glasses, food in mustaches, and buttons missing on shirts all came as a surprise to this writer. It is hard

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[2]John T. Malloy, Dress for Success (New York: Warner, 1975).

to believe that any applicant would enter an interview in one of these conditions. Needless to say, all these traits should be attended to prior to an interview. There is no excuse for an applicant not to be able to control these factors. In any event, it is good to know what sort of annoying grooming traits have appeared in past experiments in order to avoid them in the future.

In questions seventeen and eighteen concerning head and facial hair, the predominant response was that it should only be neat. Length, rarely if ever had any effect. Nonetheless, applicants ought to pay close attention to both head and facial hair in order to avoid appearing sloppy. Applicants run a risk of being rejected, whether consciously or subconsciously, based on the length and condition of head and facial hair.

Questions nineteen and twenty concerning colognes and perfumes and jewelry revealed approximately the same thing. These items have neutral effects unless they are extreme. Here, as was stated in Chapter III, both Malloy and Cooper may be correct when they warn against too much jewelry. Neither the responses concerning colognes and perfumes nor the one concerning jewelry came as a surprise to this researcher.

In question twenty-one this researcher asked the interviewers whether an applicant should carry an attache case into the interview. This question was also

of particular interest to this author. As was stated in previous chapters, popular literature suggests that carrying an attache case could enhance a person's image in the business world. But what effect would a college student carrying an attache case into the interview have on a recruiter? Results showed that it may indeed be positive. For instance, 30% indicated that carrying an attache case was positive, 57.5% indicated it was neutral, and only 12.5% indicated it was negative. Clearly, the percentages lie on the positive side. At least it is not very likely that an applicant will create a negative impression. This writer would only suggest carrying an attache case if the applicant had something in it that needed to be shown to the interviewer.

In inquiring about pens, Malloy's advice discussed in Chapters II and III seem unwarranted for purposes of the selection interview for college applicants. This is not very surprising since many recruiters never see an applicant writing in the interview. Furthermore, interviewers might not expect to see college students using expensive pens to begin with. Perhaps Malloy's advice holds true for salesmen and other business executives, but not for the college student seeking a job.

Questions twenty-three through twenty-five of the questionnaire concerning resume color, applicant's

handwriting, and application appearance were also interesting to this researcher because little, if any, research has been conducted in this area. Results showed that when constructing written materials for the recruiter, plain white or earth-toned paper should be used to construct the resume to avoid a negative response. Applicants should not run the risk of using brightly colored papers. When filling out an application for employment, this study suggested that the application should be typed. The justification is that only 19% preferred a hand written copy as opposed to 53% who preferred it to be typed. Only 28% expressed no preference. Even when the "no preference" percentage (28%) is added to the handwritten category, 47% is the total. This is still lower than the 53% who prefer typed resumes. Aside from the type of script, this study showed that applicants should double-check all areas on the resume and applicaition. Both the resume and application should appear neat and complete with all dates, numbers, and sentences correct. These were frequent complaints given by recruiters. When given the chance to write, an applicant should take his time and be as neat as possible with his writing. A total of 32% of all recruiters said that they do not pay attention to the neatness of an applicant's handwriting. However, 68% said that they did attend to an applicant's handwriting and that it will have one of two

effects, positively or negatively. Therefore, applicants ought to pay particular attention to color, neatness, and completeness of resumes and application forms. Certainly these are all nonverbal factors which greatly affect a recruiter's impression of an applicant and therefore, are important.

The last question to be discussed in this chapter is question twenty-six. (Questions twenty-seven and twenty-eight were dealt with earlier in this summary.) Question twenty-six dealt with physiques and attractiveness of an applicant.

In a discussion with recruiters on body types, it was a surprise to this author to find that taller people were not always preferred over the shorter. Only 30% of all recruiters indicated that they would tend to hire the taller applicant. Of the remaining recruiters, 67.5% said that they would not necessarily hire the taller over the shorter. Two point five percent were uncommitted. This researcher believes that more research should be done to determine if there is a significant difference in answers based upon the type of job being applied for. As has already been noticed in Chapter III, some research has indicated that taller applicants receive better jobs over shorter applicants. On the other hand, some research has also indicated the opposite. This writer would like to see

more research done on this subject in order to draw stronger conclusions about height preferences.

It was not a surprise to find that 82% of all recruiters said that they prefer thinner applicants to the more obese. With this finding in mind, obese individuals need to be aware of the types of impressions they leave. They were frequently seen as lacking in self-control and were also considered as health risks by many companies. Until obese individuals realize these facts, they may needlessly be hindering their chances of a successful interview. Besides, these negative impressions may carry over into other social contexts.

While attractive candidates received 52.5% preference over a less attractive candidate, more research should be conducted to determine if this would hold up in other studies. Other literature discussed in Chapter III suggests that this may not necessarily be the case. Besides, this study only showed a 6.5% difference in those who preferred an attractive candidate (52.5%) and those who did not prefer an attractive candidate (45%). Perhaps in another study, the differences in results would be greater and a more stable conclusion can be reached.

With the findings to each question summarized, it is easy to conclude that nonverbal cues can and often do affect how recruiters perceive college student applicants.

This has been suggested from the beginning of the study. The premise is a valid one, then, that if an applicant has enough negative nonverbal cues, these will affect greatly his chances of getting a job. Therefore, applicants need to research, study, rehearse, and even role play the interview process in order to insure a greater chance of success.

Limitations of the Research

One of the major problems with this study is that it only dealt with the conscious level. One cannot tell what cues might have subconscious positive or negative effects. Are there other nonverbal cues which affect recruiters without recruiters being aware of them? Recruiters were only asked to respond according to how they felt on a given day. If these questions had been asked on another day, difference responses might have been evoked.

Furthermore, results might differ based upon the number of years experience of each recruiter. Perhaps some of the older recruiters have had their level of awareness to nonverbal cues raised through their years of experience. Maybe recruiters have learned to control their biases toward nonverbal behavior. Older interviewers may realize that nonverbal behaviors may not always be a valid means of making competent decisions. For example, some older recruiters may understand that an applicant

with poor eye contact may be qualified for a job, that the applicant's eye contact in the interview may not be indicative of the applicant's ability to perform his occupation well. Younger interviewers may not have yet learned that principle.

It might also be argued that many recruiters answered the way they did because they were familiar with the literature on nonverbal communication. They would have felt obligated to respond according to what they had read in order to keep from feeling ignorant or incompetent. While this researcher did not measure it, it would be interesting to discover how many recruiters had read materials on nonverbal communication. How educated are recruiters on the subject of nonverbal behaviors? Are they familiar with authors such as Malloy, Fast, Mehrabian, and Ekman and Friesen? Answers to these questions may reveal significant differences in recruiters' responses.

This study should also be read with caution because there may be regional differences among recruiters. Interviewers from the South may view an applicant differently than would a recruiter from the North or Midwest. In addition to regional differences, the company image might also affect the way an applicant is judged nonverbally. For instance, some corporations may be looking for a taller applicant with good eye contact and neat appearance

to meet the public. On the other hand, a firm may not care about any of these nonverbal factors because an applicant might be working in the forest away from society where these nonverbal cues would not matter. Company image and expectations, therefore, may be a factor in determining recruiters' perceptions of applicants. One should be careful not to overgeneralize these results.

The physical appearance of recruiters may have affected the way recruiters responded. For example, a more obese recruiter may tend to hire the more obese applicant because the recruiter can identify with the applicant. Also, a taller recruiter may tend to hire the taller interviewee because the interviewer can identify with the applicant. Conversely, the shorter recruiter may discriminate, consciously or unconsciously, against the taller applicant because the recruiter might feel threatened by the applicant's appearnace. More research should be conducted to discover if there is any validity to the above ideas.

Another limitation to the study has to do with the sex of the recruiter. Although this study did not show any significant differences between men and women's responses to the questions, the study did show that women are definitely aware of nonverbal communication in the selection interview. For example, of all seven women

questioned in this research, the average response to question twenty-eight concerning a recruiter's awareness to nonverbal communication showed that women give at least half of their attention to nonverbal cues (a finding in keeping with existing nonverbal theory).[3] More research should be conducted to determine if women view any of the question asked in the interview differently than men do. Seven women is an inadequate number from which to draw conclusions.

One last limitation to this study is that the race of the interviewer may affect the way applicants are perceived. All recruiters interviewed by this writer were white. Therefore, applicants of an opposite race should read this thesis with caution until further research can determine whether the results found in this thesis are applicable to other races.

Suggestions for Application

This study, as well as others on the subject of nonverbal communication in the selection interview, can be used in training prospective interviewees. Counselors could coach prospective applicants before an applicant

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[3]Mark L. Knapp, Nonverbal Communication in Human Interaction, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1972), p. 424.

enters an interview. This study can also help an applicant identify negative personal behaviors prior to and even after an interview. Interviewers can benefit from this study by being more aware of biases which could influence the making of valid decisions.

At this point, a question of ethics might arise in which counseling potential applicants would see a kind of game in which the applicant is seeking to bluff the interviewer. Young, Beier, and Beier write:

> [W]e prefer to view coaching nonverbal behavior as a form of social-skill training. This kind of skill development has been traditionally taking place in speech classes, in therapy groups, and in the company of observant friends. Thus, we believe that guidance counselors helping their clients to acquire appropriate social-communication skills may be doing more than helping job applicants over the hurdle of the initial interview. Effective communication skills can be generalized to other situations.[4]

With the above thoughts in mind, studies of this sort are important and need to be continued.

Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis suggests that an applicant's nonverbal cues in the selection interview can leave negative impressions with recruiters. However, numerous factors which have been cited in the "limitations" section were not accounted for.

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[4]David M. Young, Ernst G. Beier, and Steven Beier, "Beyond Words," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 57 (1979), 350.

Therefore, more studies are needed in which age, sex, race, and body types of the recruiters are controlled for responses. Also, regional differences of the recruiter, recruiters' knowledge of the literature on nonverbal communication, and perceived corporate images should be studied to determine what effect these might have on a recruiter's response. A different questionnaire should be constructed in order to conduct a more scientific study in a field setting.

While gathering data for this thesis, it occurred to this writer that the nonverbal behaviors of an interviewer could and probably do affect the nonverbal responses of an applicant. Some laboratory study has already considered this problem. However, more research should be conducted in a field setting in order to determine what interviewer's nonverbal cues affect an applicant's nonverbal responses. Another questionnaire could be constructed and administered to applicants immediately after an applicant's interview with a recruiter is finished.

Furthermore, more field research should be conducted to determine whether interviewers perceive certain occupations as requiring an applicant with a positive style of nonverbal behavior. If so, can one determine what occupations correspond with what nonverbal cues?

Lastly, there is a strong need for discovering what type of recruiter looks for nonverbal cues. For example, if the recruiter is easy-going in manner, will his expectations of an applicant's nonverbal style differ from a more authoritarian type? Would an interviewer who is more introverted, affectionate, or democratic have different expectations than one is more outgoing, less affectionate, and autocratic? These questions and others similar to them need consideration in order to understand further the nature of nonverbal communication in the selection interview.

Whatever the variable to be studied, whatever the experiment, or whatever the benefit, nonverbal communication should be studied to pave an easier road to success for everyone in the selection interview.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Do you understand the term nonverbal communication?

   Defined: Entails the use of posture, facial expressions, physical appearance, eye contact, gestures, space and environment, and any other type of communication that is not verbal in nature.

2. How much emphasis do you place on the handshake as the applicant first enters the office to be interviewed and what does that tell you about the applicant?

3. How do you perceive an applicant with high eye contact as opposed to an applicant with low eye contact; what does this tell you about the applicant?

4. How do you feel about an applicant who smiles a lot in the interview as opposed to one who smiles very little and what does that tell you about the applicant?

5. What other facial expressions about the applicant affect you either positively or negatively?

6. What effect does an applicant's body orientation have on you and what does this tell you about the applicant?

7. Are there any annoying gestures that you have noticed in your interviewing experience?

8. Do you prefer a face-to-face type interaction as opposed to a side-to-side or right angle arrangement?

9. Do you prefer a barrier between you and the applicant?

10. Approximately how many feet do you prefer between you and the applicant?

11. What effect would it have on you as an interviewer if, upon entering the office to be interviewed, the applicant sits before you do?

12. What effect does smoking have on you in the interview?

13. What do you prefer the applicants, both male and female, to wear in the interview?

14. Does the color, style, or number of pieces of a male applicant's suit affect you?

15. Does it matter whether or not an applicant enters the interview wearing a top coat? What effect does this have?

16. Have you ever noticed any annoying grooming traits of the applicant and if so, discuss them.

17. Does the length of an applicant's hair have any effect on you?

18. What effect does facial hair (beards, mustaches, sideburns) have on you?

19. What is your reaction to colognes and perfumes of the applicant?

20. What is your reaction to jewelry?

21. What effect does a college student carrying an attache case into the interview have on you; what does this tell you about the applicant?

22. Does the style of pen that an applicant uses have any effect on you?

23. Does the color of an applicant's resume matter to you?

24. Does an applicant's handwriting affect you?

25. Does the application appearance affect you?

26. If you have two candidates who are equal in credentials, would you tend to hire the taller applicant over the shorter, thinner over the more obese, and more attractive over the less attractive?

27. Of all the nonverbal cues discussed thus far, what are the most important?

28. How much attention and emphasis is given to nonverbal communication in the selection interview?

    1. ( ) no attention at all is given to the nonverbal level
    2. ( ) very little attention is given concerning nonverbal cues

3. ( ) an equal amount of attention is given to both verbal and nonverbal levels
4. ( ) only slightly more attention is given to nonverbal cues than verbal cues
5. ( ) a lot (i.e., more attention is given to the nonverbal level than to the verbal level)

VITA

Stephen Jackson Pullum was born in Columbia, Tennessee, on November 8, 1957. He attended elementary and high school in Mount Pleasant, Tennessee. He graduated from Mount Pleasant High School in 1975. After high school, Mr. Pullum attended Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida, from Fall 1975 to Spring 1977 when he received his Associate of Arts degree.

Upon leaving Florida College, Mr. Pullum attended Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, from Fall 1977 to Spring 1979. There he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech Communication. While at MTSU, Mr. Pullum was a member of Gamma Beta Phi Honorary Society and President of the MTSU Speech Communication Association.

In the Fall of 1979, he accepted a teaching assistantship at The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He received a Master of Arts degree in Speech and Theatre in June 1981.

Mr. Pullum is a member of the Public Relations Student Society of America, the Speech Communication Association, and the Southern Speech Communication Association. After graduation, he plans to work in the area of internal public relations and organizational communications.