

Impact Of Teachers' Adverse Non-Verbal Communication On University Students' Learning Outcomes (Within Classroom)

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the impact of teachers' adverse non-verbal communication on university students' learning outcomes. The objectives of the research were to explore the importance and relationship between teachers' non-verbal communication and students' learning outcomes, students' emotional responses towards teachers' adverse non-verbal communication and impact of adverse non-verbal communication of the teachers on students' learning outcomes. The nature of the study was qualitative. Covert observation cum interviews was research instruments for data collection. Data was interpreted based on the responses of the majority of respondents. It was found in the study that teachers' appropriate use of non-verbal communication is very important for the enhancement of students' learning outcomes. Students felt burdened, uninterested, confused and bored in the class of teachers who used the same teaching methodology and adverse non-verbal communication, which affected learning outcomes. It is recommended that training courses for teachers and students may be introduced for the appropriate use of non-verbal cues and the improvement of emotional intelligence. Teachers may be observed so they will use different teaching methodologies.

Keywords: Impact, Adverse, Nonverbal communication, learning outcomes, Classroom, Higher Education.

Introduction:

As a human, we are blessed to speak out our thoughts and express our feelings. In society, we need to interact with others and for the interaction we mostly communicate with others. Lucas, (2018) stated that being social animals humans are more successive species due to the ability of effective communication (verbal & non-verbal) and the ability to communicate forms our relationships (interpersonal & business), financial and personal success and also our physical as well as psychological wellness depends on communication. Communication is also very essential in the teaching-learning process. Through communication, we share information, ideas and feelings. Communication

is a mixture of verbal and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication includes spoken and written communication and it is beneficial as it helps the speaker to deliver accurate information and true feeling to the listener. Barrett et al. (2016) clarifies in their book that not only spoken communication is considered verbal communication but reading and writing are also verbal communication because by reading we decode the writer's written communication. However, nonverbal communication includes all those means other than words, that individuals use to convey their messages such as gestures, body movements (kinesics), eye contact, facial expressions, vocal

characteristics, spatial distance, postures, and dress of an individual.

Positive Communication plays a vital role in the teaching-learning process. It enables educators to convey information, encourages efforts, improves behaviours and refreshes thinking. An effective combination of verbal and non-verbal communication enhances learning outcomes. Many studies and research proved the positive impact of effective and positive non-verbal communication on students learning attainments. Baroona, (2019) stated that non-verbal communication plays a supportive role to achieve the purpose of the study and it helps to control the classroom's atmosphere as well as gives confidence to learners to participate actively in the classroom.

Effective and positive non-verbal communication has a positive impact on students' learning achievements. But teacher's negligence towards the appropriate use of non-verbal communication can affect students' emotions due to which student feels burdened and uninterested in that subject which can affect learning outcomes. In this research, the researcher intends to find out the impact of teachers' adverse non-verbal communication on students' learning outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the relationship between teachers' appropriate use of non-verbal communication with learning outcomes at a higher level.
2. To explore students' emotional responses towards teachers' adverse non-verbal communication.
3. To explore the effects of teachers' adverse non-verbal communication on students' Learning-outcomes.

Research Questions

Q.1. What is the role of nonverbal communication in the teaching-learning

process while interacting with university students?

Q.2. What are students' emotional responses towards teachers' adverse non-verbal communication?

Q.3. How does teachers' adverse nonverbal communication affect learning outcomes?

Significance of the Study

This research will help all stakeholders related to education to focus on the appropriate use of non-verbal communication in the teaching-learning process to enhance learning outcomes.

Delimitation of the Study

Out of 56 departments in the University of Peshawar, the study is limited to only one department (Institute of Education and Research). Out of 4 programs, only one (M.Phil.) program was selected and observed. Focused group interviews were conducted from only two teachers out of four due to limited time.

Literature Review

Theme 1.

The role of non-verbal communication in the teaching-learning process while interacting with university students.

Higher education is the last phase of student's learning process. At this level, the teaching offered is at the professional level because the students are being prepared for the future as professionals. These professionals are going to serve society in every field of life. Evolution of the society is directly related to higher education because this ensures a prosperous socio-economic system. Due to this, higher education has a great responsibility towards society. Here what students learn is going to demonstrate throughout their lives.

Learning is the process of obtaining new knowledge, understanding different concepts, and being skilled through experiences which leads to behavioural change. Cherry (2022) stated that learning is a continuous process which continues one's whole life, and it is not only limited to the classroom. During the process of learning, we encounter many opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, abilities, skills and behavioural change. Mahar, (2014) defined in her research paper that learning has no one simple definition. The concept of learning is complex and contextually defined differently. Learning psychological definitions highlight that 'behavioural change or potential behaviour is a result of experience. In science, with a broad application field, the processes of learning include careful, investigation through experiments. However, learning in education is likely to focus on learning as the process by which individuals get knowledge, skills and understanding about situations. She further added that knowledge and creativity, attitudes and emotional responses, social behaviour and significant skills are the products of learning which enables individuals to think critically, act according to situations and prove themselves.

When a learner is able to show his/her knowledge, skills, and abilities we can relate it to successful outcomes of learning. According to Adam, (2006) learning outcomes are exhibitions of experiences, behavioural change, skills and knowledge that a learner obtains during the learning process. Learning outcomes are a demonstration of knowledge, skills and capabilities that an individual student owns during or after the completion of a learning experience or sequence of learning experiences. These outcomes of learning are the results of the objectives of a particular course training (Boston University, 2017).

In the process of learning, we get information through different sources. We need to

communicate to everyone involve in this process. Most of the time we use verbal communication. We convert our thoughts into words. And this is a very effective way to convey your true feelings to others. Verbal communication helps the speaker to deliver his/her original thoughts or feelings to listeners. But communication is a mixture of verbal as well as non-verbal. Keiling, (2022) explained that verbal communication is to deliver information using languages, written text, speaking and even symbols or sign. But when we transfer information through body language, facial expression, movement, gestures, posture, paralanguage, eye contact and distance this process will be considered as non-verbal communication. For example, if someone wants to agree or disagree with someone, he/she does not need words but the head/hand/foot or eye movement or facial expression can be enough to express his/her agreement or disagreement. Hull, (2016) claimed that experts in interpersonal communication evaluate that our communication consists of approximately 70% of non-verbal communication like facial expression, voice tones, eye contact and body language etc. An effective composition of verbal and non-verbal communication leads to fruitful and productive communication.

The use of effective communication skills (both verbal and non-verbal) during the learning process leads to successive learning achievements. Sutiyatno, (2018) found in his studies that student's learning achievements have significant effects on both verbal and non-verbal communication. He stressed that positive use of non-verbal communication resulted in positive learning achievements. Demonstration of non-verbal communication at right time and in right situation is more effective. Zekia, (2009) found in his research and revealed that non-verbal communication can be an effective tool for getting attention of students and maintaining it but it is also helpful for motivating students and increasing their concentration for learning.

Khan, (2020) investigated in his studies that teachers' non-verbal behavior has significant impact on student's educational achievement. He recommended that behavioral studies must be included in course material and training sessions of teachers keeping in view the importance of non-verbal communication in teaching-learning process. Butt, (2011) claimed in his research that proper use of non-verbal communication in the classroom enhanced educational attainments as students were attentive, felt motivated and took interest. However, students of those teachers who did not or use improper non-verbal communication lack motivation and interest which resulted low academic achievement.

Bambaeeroo and Shokrpour, (2017) in their studies investigated a solid relationship of strong, effective and frequent use of non-verbal communication in teaching, teachers' successive teachings and student's academic achievements. Mehrbian, (2008) wrote in his book that facial expression, body language, gesture, speech rate or head movement reflects their positive or negative attitudes.

Theme 2.

Students' emotional responses towards teachers' adverse non-verbal communication.

Listener with less understanding or sensitive personality could get wrong idea. Kishore, (2021) cited that effectiveness of non-verbal communication is related to how positively it is being used. Ineffective delivery unintentionally by the speaker can result in misunderstandings, hurting others' feelings and sometimes in hatred. Segal et al., (2022) stated that trust, respect and position of someone depends how they use body language or non-verbal communication or signals. Trust, respect and connection of an individual can be damaged if negative non-verbal communication is used. Mazer et al. (2014) mentioned in their article that students' negative/positive emotional responses are related to teachers' communication behaviors. Teachers

whose communication behaviours are positive result in positive students' emotions i.e., interested, attentiveness in the classroom. And teachers' negative communication behaviours like facial expressions, taunts and ignorance followed students' negative emotional responses i.e., boredom, hopelessness, shame, anger or anxiety. Teachers must be trained to use positive communication behaviours for students' positive emotional responses.

In a classroom, a teacher is a role model for students to be followed in every aspect. Students demonstrate each and everything which they learn. If a teacher knows the delicacy of this profession, he/she will use all means to transfer the finest and best quality knowledge, skills and behaviours. Teaching is not a process of give-and-take which is given by teachers and taken by students but it is a process in which both parties (Teachers & Students) are influenced by each other. And a teacher must be able to engage learners effectively, actively and cognitively. If he/she does not do so the learners will lose motivation and interest. Basthomi & Afrilyasanti, (2020) observed in their study that non-verbal communication will be effective if both parties have the same understanding or ability to decode the non-verbal cues. When there is a cultural difference between teachers and learners than the interpretation of non-verbal communication will be non-effective.

When teacher does not use appropriate non-verbal communication, it can hurt students' emotions which may result negligence towards that particular teacher and uninterested in that particular subject. In learning process, it is very important for both parties (Teachers & Learners) to have strong emotional intelligence. The teachers' adverse non-verbal communication may end up as emotional barriers for learners. (The limitation of mind to stop someone to communicate freely his/her thoughts and express his/her emotions is known as emotional barrier.)

And due to teachers' continuous use of negative non-verbal communication there will be a stage where students refuse to speak up at all.

Theme 3.

Effects of teachers' adverse nonverbal communication on learning-outcomes

Different researchers have proved in their studies that the students learning outcomes are more efficacious if teachers used proper and appropriate non-verbal communication. If the teacher is unable to use nonverbal cues according to the situation or requirements of the particular student, then it will be directly affecting the learning outcomes. Giving attention to student's non-verbal reactions teachers need to review their teaching methodology and to improve their communication skills. At higher level students are more mature to give attention towards nonverbal message than the verbal message and they are able to decode teachers' nonverbal cues. They have capability to interpret teachers' non-verbal communication. The teachers of higher-level students should be aware of their students' cultural behaviors perspectives.

Ludvigsson, (2003) claimed that an effective teacher uses non-verbal communication to make a rapport with his/her students to make them feel secure supported. He or she also pays attention to learners' emotional responses and their non-verbal reactions.

According to "Cooper" (a famous scholar), a teacher's efficiency of using non-verbal communication according to learners' and situation's requirements, will improve not only teacher-students' relationship but also develop their cognitive ability and learning efficiency. The negligence of a teacher towards effective use of non-verbal communication will demotivate students and affect their learning efficiency. The teachers' adverse non-verbal communication not only affect the learning process but it will also decrease the learners' potential, attitude,

knowledge and skills to interact with the society and environment in progressive manners.

Riggio & Feldman, (2005) reviewed different searches on effects of teacher's non-verbal behaviors on students' outcomes. They made the case in such a manner for the relevance of non-verbal behavior and learning outcomes that the teacher within a classroom is considered high powered personnel who gets more chances to talk and demonstrate. While students with less power need courage, confidence and permission to speak or demonstrate. They explored different theories regarding teachers' immediacy of non-verbal behavior and students' outcomes, discrete non-verbal communication and differential teachers' non-verbal behaviors. It was found that due to time consumption searches on non-verbal behaviors are ignored. Due to which less attention was paid towards improvement of teachers' non-verbal behaviors.

These themes highlight the wide-ranging effects of adverse non-verbal communication on university students' learning outcomes. It is important for educators to be mindful of their non-verbal behaviors and strive to create a positive and supportive learning environment that promotes student engagement, motivation, and success. By addressing and mitigating adverse non-verbal cues, teachers can enhance the overall learning experience and improve students' learning outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design & Nature of the Study

According to the requirements, the researcher chose the qualitative research method. Ethnographical and case study methodologies were used. An observational approach was used. The interview was a research instrument. Interviews from teachers and focused group interviews from the students were done. The researcher chose covert observation to get an understanding and insights by observing the

actions, behaviours and patterns of non-verbal communications of a group without their knowledge of being observed to find the answers to research questions.

Focused group interviews helped the researcher to get in-depth information & rich data. Richardson & Rabiee, (2001) stated that in a focused group interview, the participants are selected on criteria that they would be able to discuss in detail the topic, they have the same socio-characteristics or are more comfortable to talking the interviewer.

Population of the Study

At the University of Peshawar, there are 9 faculties with 56 departments. In the faculty of Social Science, there are 4 departments with 475 students. The detail of the total population of IER is given below: -

Sr. No	Program	Population
1.	B.Ed. (1.5)	59
2.	B.Ed. (Hon.)	164
3.	HPE	90
4.	M.Phil.	79
5.	Ph.D.	83

Delimitations

Due to time and resources limitation, this study is limited to only students of 1st & 2nd semesters of M.Phil. Education. The observation was done in natural settings as the researcher was part of the class.

Sample Size & Sample Technique

All the (17) students of M.Phil. Education 1st and 2nd semesters were included in sample. The technique of focused group sampling was used for the collection of data.

Data Collection:

For data collection observation, interviews from teachers and focused group interviews from

students were used. A structured interview was conducted according to the following themes: -

1. Importance of non-verbal communication
2. Non-verbal communication in the learning process
3. Teachers' efficiency to use nonverbal communication in class
4. Students' emotional responses towards teachers' adverse nonverbal communication
5. Impact of adverse nonverbal communication on learning outcomes

Pilot Study

For the pilot study, the researcher interviewed different students from different departments to get more in-depth information regarding the topic.

Data Analysis

From gathered data analysis was done to find the answers of research questions in a thematic way which helped the researcher to identify the different issues faced by students while interacting with teachers at higher level and to find the effects of adverse non-verbal behaviour on learning outcomes.

1. Importance of Nonverbal communication in the teaching-learning process at the university level:

- a. Teachers who used more appropriate non-verbal cues (eye contact, body movement, facial expression, distance and paralanguage) during their lecture not only helped them to make good rapport with their students, but students also felt more confident, secure, attentive and motivated within that class. Their concepts were clearer which enhanced their learning outcomes.

- b. The teacher used different ways to make students attentive (who are absent-minded during the class) like, the teacher's movement in the class, gazing at them or changing the tone of voice, to make them attentive.
- c. To encourage shy/reticent students to participate in the class by asking questions and while they were answering, the teacher's appropriate use of facial expression, eyes contact and head movement helped a lot those students and they were participating more confidently in class discussions afterwards.
- d. The students who are attentive, participative and quick-witted teacher's positive behaviour towards them made them give other students a chance to speak, in this way, they remained active and participative and waited for their turn.
- e. Sometimes students' facetious answers disturbed the lecture, in such a situation's calmness and patience of teachers, helped to maintain the tempo of the lecture.

Teachers' silence or ignorance towards mischievous students made them reflect on their actions. **(With reference to observation, teachers' responses and students' discussion)**

2. Students' emotional responses towards teachers' adverse non-verbal communication

- a. The teacher who used facial expressions, tone of voice, eyes or hand movement to degrade students, students felt burdened and uninterested in that subject/class.
- b. The teacher who did not move in the class and called the absent-minded student by name, that student felt ashamed and insulted which demotivated him/her.

- c. If a shy student was asked a question by the teacher or participated in a discussion and the teacher was smirking or winking to other students for making fun, discouraged and insulted that shy/reticent student to participate in any discussion. The student told the interviewer that they started to remain silent purposely or as a reaction to that insult. During that particular class, they were ignorant and did not reply to any question asked by the teacher even if they knew the answer.
 - d. Teachers' adverse behaviour towards intelligent and confident students, made them bored and constriction in that class.
 - e. When the teacher used inappropriate non-verbal cues like lifting eyebrows, crossing arms, or facial expressions to the students' mischievous argument or facetious answers the students purposely or intentionally started to disturb the lecture/class.
 - f. Teachers' continuous use of adverse non-verbal communication caused students' ignorance towards that teacher which did not bring positive behavioural change in students.
 - g. Students expressed their feelings that the teachers' adverse non-verbal cues like aggressive facial expressions, movements of eyes and brows, and taunted accent make them bored, uninterested, unmotivated and they start to ignore teachers' commands. **(With reference to observation, teachers' responses and students' discussion).**
- ## **3. Effects of teachers' adverse nonverbal communication on students' learning outcomes**
- a. Teachers' continuous use of adverse non-verbal communication make students demotivated and they only attend the class for attendance. Their concepts about those particular subjects were not

- clear which affected their learning outcomes.
- b. Teachers' adverse use of non-verbal cues especially, facial expression, eye contact, body movement, tone of voice and spatial distance directly affected the student's learning outcomes. Students didn't participate in any class activity or discussion.
 - c. Teachers' negligence towards appropriate non-verbal communication made students uninterested and burdened in that particular class/subject which affected learning attainments.
 - d. Teachers' continuous use of adverse non-verbal communication stopped students to show their true feelings or thoughts and they became ignorant to follow that teacher's instructions.
 - e. Teachers' negative non-verbal communication caused students' confusion during that particular class and waited impatiently for the class to over due to which they did not pay attention to lecture which affected their learning outcomes.
 - f. As students imagined that the teacher habitually made faces, moves eyes and uses taunted voice tones so they became persistent towards that teacher which resulted in poor learning outcomes.
 - g. Teachers' bossy attitude or considering him/herself a jack of all trades stopped students to share their views, asking questions and participating in discussions. Due to this a healthy and fruitful conversation did not occur and diminished learning outcomes.
 - h. Students' attendance ratio was less in that particular class as they deliberately missed that lecture/class which affected their learning outcomes.

(With reference to observation, teachers' responses and students' discussion)

FINDINGS/CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings:

- It was found in the observation/interview from teachers/focused group interview that non-verbal communication in the teaching-learning process is like oxygen which not only enhances learning outcomes but also gives confidence to learners. Due to positive/appropriate non-verbal communication teachers can bring positive behavioural change in learners. Students feel happy, keen to learn, think critically and become functional. They learn positive use of non-verbal cues for the future.
- However, teachers' carelessness towards non-verbal cues made their teaching ineffective. Students felt bored and discouraged in that class/subject. They thought the task (assigned by that teacher) burden and uninteresting.
- Teachers' continuous use of adverse non-verbal cues like aggressive facial expressions, insulting eye and brow movements, and taunted voice tone made students persistent and ignorant towards the teachers. They stopped participating in all class activities/discussions.
- Student attendance decreased which affected learning outcomes.
- Teachers at higher levels are not being observed so they used the same teaching methodology due to which students were helpless and suppressed.
- Due to unawareness of legal procedures or to avoid mishaps, students remained silent and suffered throughout the semester.
- Teachers also faced adverse non-verbal behaviours during their student life. The

teacher with strong emotional intelligence excluded negativity from his/her behaviour and aimed to observe positivity in their interactions.

- Teachers who were down to earth while guiding their learners is more famous, respectful and a favourite among students.

Conclusion

After data interpretation, it was concluded that teachers and students are aware of the importance of non-verbal communication in the teaching-learning process at a higher level. It helps teachers and learners to demonstrate their true feelings. As non-verbal cues vary in different cultures so it is very important that there should be no cultural differences. To motivate the student and for enhancement of learning outcomes teachers must use appropriate non-verbal communication. By using positive non-verbal communication teachers can not only encourage the students but also develop interest towards studies in their learners. Students felt burdened and pressured in the class of teachers who used adverse non-verbal cues. Their attendance ratio decreased as well as their learning outcomes.

Students also unintentionally observed adverse non-verbal cues behind that particular teacher. Students became persistent towards that teacher who habitually used negative non-verbal cues.

Teachers with weak emotional intelligence failed to make rapport with their students. Overall, non-verbal communication enhances the teaching-learning process by creating a positive learning environment, improving comprehension, reinforcing feedback, and establishing meaningful connections between teachers and university students. By being mindful of their non-verbal cues, teachers can maximize their effectiveness in facilitating student learning and engagement.

Recommendations

On the basis of data interpretation, findings and conclusion it is recommended that:

1. There may be aptitude tests for teachers after a certain period to enhance their communication skills.
2. Observation for teachers may be arranged by under the instructional supervision so that he teachers use different teaching methodologies for the improvement of learning outcomes of students.
3. There may be training, seminars and workshops sessions organized for teachers and students in order to improve their emotional intelligence.
4. There may be a campaign for awareness of appropriate non-verbal communication skills arranged by the concerned quarters.

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