



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Use of Nonverbal Communication while Teaching Primary School Students**

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**ABSTRACT**

In order to improve learning outcomes, classroom management, and student motivation, the present study investigated the importance of nonverbal communication. Teachers utilize a variety of nonverbal cues to aid pupils in understanding difficult concepts. It was survey research intended to investigate primary school teachers' views regarding nonverbal cues. The three research questions that were explored in the study were whether nonverbal communication had any impact on classroom management, student motivation, and learning outcomes. Through the random sampling technique, 244 elementary school teachers from district Attock (Pakistan) made up the study's sample. Descriptive statistics (mean and percentage) were used to analyze the data using SPSS software. The study's finding was that effective classroom management greatly depends on nonverbal communication. Furthermore, they are helpful in boosting pupils' motivation for learning. It is recommended that teachers may receive specialized training in nonverbal communication techniques so that they can communicate better and be able to comprehend the feedback from their students

**KEYWORDS** Classroom Management, Learning Outcomes, Motivation, Nonverbal Communication

**Introduction**

A Our lives depend on communication in many ways. People communicate in a broad range of ways to express their ideas, knowledge, abilities, and thoughts. In daily life, people interact verbally and nonverbally. Nonverbal communication enhances the meaning of words (Ranta & Harmawati, 2017). Nonverbal cues help verbal communication to be more effective. Hand gestures, body language, eye contact, emotional facial expressions, changes in voice pitch or tone, physical postures, and eye contact are examples of nonverbal cues. For instance, a mother would ask her kid if they finished their dinner. Even when the child responds "yes" aloud, his head nods "no" in the opposite direction. By disregarding spoken clues, the mother understands the child's nonverbal clues.

In order to effectively teach and learn, nonverbal communication is essential. The impact of nonverbal communication on students' knowledge ultimately leads to higher subject learning and comprehension. Students' learning outcomes can be improved if teachers use nonverbal cues as an intentional teaching technique to stimulate students' interests in the classroom ((Mehraban, 2017; Wahyuni, 2018).

Teachers' communication skills have long been believed to influence students' learning outcomes, and studies have on occasion identified relationships that support this claim (Houser & Hosek, 2018).

According to Miller (1980), two thirds of communication is nonverbal. Attending class may be as pleasant as going to the theatre if students have a wonderful teacher. With

nonverbal cues like voice, posture, and facial expressions, the teacher can indicate excitement. In the classroom, teachers must be aware of their students' nonverbal cues. The nonverbal environment in the classroom provides context and meaning for the spoken word; therefore, a competent educator combines both verbal and nonverbal elements that contribute to the entire, complex communication system. In addition to voice tone and distance from the students, instructors can also use body language, eye contact, and facial expressions like a smile, anger, or sadness to help students understand their concepts. Instructors can instantly boost student learning through nonverbal communication (Miller, 1988).

Teachers can use their hands and shoulders to emphasize the importance of different ideas and concepts because these body parts have an immense impact on both teaching and learning. Additionally, this motivates students to study, pay attention to their teachers' body language, and understand the significance of the material they are learning. (Phipps, 2012).

The nonverbal interactions between the teacher and students had a big impact on the quantity, quality, and manner of teaching. Because the teachers' limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to understand their verbal conversation, as nonverbal communication can account for 90% of a message's overall impact, it is a crucial part of teaching and learning because these body parts have a significant impact on the teaching and learning processes. Furthermore, nonverbal communication in general and teacher nonverbal behaviors in particular are intended to be the most significant but neglected aspects of the Pakistani educational system (Chaudary & Arif, 2012). So, the current study's aim is to examine Pakistani teachers' perspectives about the importance of nonverbal communication with relevance to motivation and classroom management in the teaching and learning process.

### **Literature Review**

Nonverbal communication, according to Bunglawala (2015), is a powerful tool for communication since it enables people to express ideas and thoughts without using words. That allowed them to keep their integrity since nonverbal cues were used to encourage interpersonal interaction and communication (Bunglawala & Bunglawala, 2015). People could communicate their thoughts and emotions in a way that offered them the ability to give them direction and meaning in addition to providing a way for them to engage with and connect with one another.

### **Nonverbal Communication in Teaching Learning Process**

According to Miller (1998), nonverbal communication during the teaching and learning process has a substantial impact on the achievement of learning outcomes. The success of the entire teaching and learning process depends on the attainment of learning outcomes; hence, the process of creating learning outcomes is essential and demands expert abilities (Miller, 1988). Teachers should be aware of nonverbal cues to help them better interpret the cues that students are giving off for two primary reasons. Improving the capacity to interact with students in a way that promotes learning and to avoid doing so in a way that discourages learning the teacher's perspective, attitude, beliefs, and reciprocal behavioral displays are influenced by the student's nonverbal cues. It takes more than just hearing what is being said to be a good communicator. Nonverbal cues can convey a lot of information, including emotions and morality. A teacher must be aware of many of these subtle clues in order to be an effective student signal receiver (York, 2014).

The movement of body parts, including the hands, feet, legs, and shoulders, can be voluntary or involuntary. Body language is a reliable measure of mood. Body language reveals emotions like anxiety, excitement, and nervousness. In a teaching situation, good

body language may inspire, engage, and motivate students. It might not only offer you the assurance you require to instruct, but it can also reassure your students that you are truly an expert in the subject you are teaching.

While teaching and learning, voice pitch or tone is extremely important. A teacher can control the classroom noise by speaking loudly. The pitch of a word can completely alter how it is understood. Teachers can utilize this technique to assist pupils in understanding the meanings of various terms. The tone of voice a teacher uses when instructing students in poetry should be acceptable. It attracts the students' interest and curiosity. According to Miller, the distance between the teacher and the students has a considerable effect on the communication process. By keeping their distance, teachers can easily transmit feelings of approval or rejection.

Eye contact has an effect on students' performance when it comes to effective classroom management. Eye contact is a very effective way for a teacher to engage students in learning and efficiently control the classroom. A teacher's smile can be a very effective tool. Smiling encourages children to learn more by grabbing their attention and piquing their curiosity in the classroom. Regrettably, it could be OK to display anger in the classroom if pupils start to lose interest in the teaching-learning process or start to drift off. Two very effective tools in a teacher's toolbox are a smile and rage, both of which, when applied effectively and with purpose, can enhance pupils' learning. The learning atmosphere in the classroom can be permanently changed by teachers who comprehend and use eye contact. Teachers may be able to better meet the learning objectives of their pupils by using this technique. As teachers maintain eye contact with children throughout the teaching and learning process, children become more responsive. Establishing eye contact encourages students to pay attention in class, which increases their memory abilities and ultimately their academic performance (Zeki & Sciences, 2009).

Teachers can effectively drive students' interest by using nonverbal cues like facial expressions to help them understand subjects as they are being taught and learned. The teachers' facial expressions would draw the students' attention, which would eventually result in the students' learning objectives being met (Dragon et al., 2008).

In Mudassar Zulfiqar's opinion (2014) one of a teacher's smartest tools is their understanding of head motions. This technique allows a teacher to evaluate the level of student engagement in a particular subject or concept. By using this process, teachers can evaluate their own methods or teaching philosophies. As it's crucial for students to be able to read one another's head movements in a real classroom, instructors should equip themselves with this equipment. (Haneef, Faisal, Alvi, & Zulfiqar, 2014)

### **Nonverbal Communication in Classroom Management**

Snyder (1998) asserts that the majority of literature explains how the teacher's job is satisfied via the employment of eyes and facial expressions. Teachers manage classrooms with the aid of a variety of additional related responsibilities (Snyder, 1998). Eye contact is typically utilized in the classroom to indicate to a student that the teacher is paying attention, according to Gower and Walter (1983). Instructors need to make sure that everyone is focused, communicate to a student, and to encourage collaboration when trying to come up with ideas. (Gower, Walters, & Phillips, 1983)

A teacher's trustworthiness and credibility are influenced by how they make eye contact with their students and project a confident attitude, regardless of their expertise, experience, education, or rank. The NLP approach to eye contact is based on the notion that effective eye contact encourages rapport in a manner similar to this (Thomas, Cruickshank, Herrlander, Birgerson, Reid, & te Riele, 2022; Zeki & Sciences, 2009).

According to Pollitt (2006), failing to make eye contact with pupils when speaking to them may be perceived as a lack of confidence, which makes it more likely that the teacher may find it difficult to maintain order (Pollitt & Management, 2006). Gower and Walters (1983) also discover that gestures and mimicry can promote rapport-building. When a teacher doesn't address the class directly, it gives the impression that they are insecure and makes the students feel uneasy (Gower et al., 1983). In order to influence their students in a persuasive but unambiguous way, teachers must coordinate their body language, speaking voice, eye contact, and attire. So, it makes sense to assume that a teacher's confidence can be inferred from their facial expression and eye contact.

Ledbury et al. (2004) claim that by assessing the children's facial expressions to see whether they comprehend, teachers can quickly determine what needs to be changed or repeated. In addition to listening to students, he advises teachers to watch students' complete assignments in order to search for indicators of boredom. Eye contact should be used as a tool for the instructor to communicate as well as a way to examine the messages that students can convey nonverbally through their eyes, imitation, and gestures. (Ledbury, White, & Darn, 2004)

According to Parker (2006), making eye contact with students when speaking or listening to them conveys excitement for the discussion and an interest in what the student has to say. This promotes the involvement of the students (McAtamney & Parker, 2006). According to Ledbury et al. (2004), keeping eye contact saves time and effort (Ledbury et al., 2004). Using the eyes and faces of their students to convey specific messages, such as praise and condemnation. Pekta (1988), cited in Ergin and Birol (2005), asserts that in addition to their voices and intonation, teachers can interact with pupils through making eye contact and displaying facial emotions. (Ergin & Birol, 2005)

### **Importance of Nonverbal Communication for Teachers**

Verbal and nonverbal communication have a strong link. As communication skills are more critical than ever in the teaching profession, body language becomes increasingly important. Without effective body language, it is impossible to interact with the students. Teachers in the field of education should be more conscious of their own body language because children are more aware of it and try to imitate it. According to Stanton (2004), pupils were more focused on the actions and symbols than the discourse. These hand signals and gestures make the students more engaged during lectures. By using nonverbal cues, teachers were able to keep students' attention whether they were leaving lectures or talking about a subject. Nonverbal cues can therefore more effectively engage or motivate students (Stanton & Stanton, 2004). Instructors should always move their bodies in the right way when teaching. Teaching is acting in a way that adapts according on the circumstance. Body movement during education enhanced motivation and success (Butt & Shafiq, 2013)

According to Zwozdiak-Myers and Capel (2005), the development of students depends on a teacher's effectiveness. One of the abilities teachers should have is the ability to communicate effectively with students. All people must possess these social abilities in order to connect and communicate with others. The instructor must be able to influence, interact, and motivate students both vocally and nonverbally. Socially adept educators will closely monitor their students' spoken and nonverbal clues. Teachers must have the ability to explain in a way that ensures that students understand what is being taught completely. Thus, as a result, both teaching and learning will become more effective. Also, teachers with good social skills may easily motivate students and resolve conflicts. They are socially aware and have an excellent intuition for how children will behave and feel. Hence, one of the standards of achievement is social aptitude (Zwozdiak-Myers & Capel, 2005).

A nonverbal communication strategy that uses multiple nonverbal mediums to convey a message. The instructor must be able to communicate with the students in the class

because interpersonal relationships depend on it. To effectively communicate with students, instructors must master nonverbal cues like touch, eye contact, standing apart from the class, and body language. According to Jackson (1967), nonverbal communication accounts for around 75% of classroom management (Watzlawick & Beavin, 1967). According to Young (2014), vocal inflection reveals mood, emotion, and psychological arousal. Also, it could convey social information through gestures and poses. Understanding the significance of body language in the teaching profession is crucial. Teachers use their body language during teaching, both intentionally and unintentionally (Young & Psychotherapy, 2014).

According to Pease (1988), more than their verbal fluency and subject matter expertise, teachers' nonverbal communication in the classroom makes a stronger impression. In the language classroom, body language is used to convey ideas through gestures and movement. According to studies done in educational settings, nonverbal behaviors seem to communicate ideas in a distinct and clear way. These non-verbal cues have the power to communicate meaning in a way that is more authentic and clear than just speaking (Pease, 1988).

Without the nonverbal communication that occurs in the classroom, teachers would not be able to evaluate their teaching strategies and methods as frequently. The enhancement of message delivery is the second motivation for mastering nonverbal communication. Both practicing nonverbal "sending" techniques and becoming skilled receivers are crucial. As well as the instructions they provide to their pupils through nonverbal clues, instructors frequently miss their own nonverbal cues. It has been stated further that up to 82 percent of teacher messages are nonverbal, and only 18 percent of them are audible. Instructors can transmit their enthusiasm, friendliness, assertiveness, confidence, or displeasure through their facial expressions, voice intonation, gestures, and use of space. Teachers routinely use praise-giving smiles, winks, scowls, and the "evil eye" to reward or modify student behavior.

## **Material and Methods**

### **Participants**

The study's participants were teachers in primary schools. 288 primary school instructors were chosen randomly by the researcher. The researcher got the information directly from the respondents. Before beginning to gather data, the researcher first received authorization from the department of education. Following that, the researcher was able to collect data from District Attock primary school instructors. 288 teachers responded to the 300 questionnaires that the researcher gave to the teachers.

### **Research Instrument**

A survey form was used to collect data on the effectiveness of nonverbal communication in terms of student outcomes and motivation. There were 23 queries about the importance and worth of nonverbal speech. The research was descriptive in nature.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was organized and examined once it was gathered. Software (SPSS) was employed for analysis. The percentage and mean descriptive statistics were used to examine the data.

## Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Primary Teachers' point of views about the effectiveness of nonverbal communication regarding students' learning outcome**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	UD	Mean
Teachers' facial expressions have a favorable influence on the classroom teaching and learning process.	77.1%	5.6%	17.4%	3.97
Regular eye contact develops students' attention towards learning	62.5%	9.0%	28.5%	3.75
Maintaining eye contact with students helps them focus on learning.	70.5%	4.5%	25.0%	3.87
The teachers' body language helps the pupils learn stories more effectively.	71.5%	7.3%	21.2%	3.89
The teacher's hands should move while lecturing to ensure that the pupils comprehend the material.	69.1%	10.4%	20.5%	3.86
Students understand poems better when teachers speak with a rise and fall in their voice.	72.2%	5.9%	21.9%	3.89

The majority of respondents, according to the results, concur that students' learning outcomes are improved by facial expression, eye contact, body language, and voice tone. Despite the 5.6% of respondents who disagreed with the notion that facial expressions had no effect on learning, the majority of respondents agreed that eye contact made the classroom environment more favorable to learning. The findings showed that body movement can help teachers educate more effectively. Similarly, the rise and decline in instructors' tones helped them comprehend the passage better. Only 20.5% of respondents were uncertain about hand motions, which is great for assisting students in recognizing the lesson.

**Table 2**  
**Primary teachers' point of views about the usefulness of nonverbal communication regarding students' motivation**

Statements	Agree	Disagree	UD	Mean
Clapping is the best approach to show appreciation for a student's performance.	79.2%	3.1%	17.7%	4.07
When the teacher is seated in the classroom, the students become uninterested and unmotivated.	62.8%	12.5%	24.7%	3.70
The teacher's smile encourages children to learn.	74.3%	4.5%	21.2%	3.89
Students learn better when teachers use gestures during lessons.	61.5%	11.1%	27.4%	3.67
The motivation of students to learn is increased when teachers speak in a soft voice.	59.3%	17.1%	23.6%	3.63
During instruction, students become puzzled when the teacher approaches them.	51.4%	16.3%	32.3%	3.47

The result revealed that clapping can enhance students' motivation towards learning. Some of the respondents disagreed with this statement that students don't feel unmotivated when teachers sit during teaching. While most of the respondents gave their opinions in favor of the idea that the soft pitch of the teacher's voice and the spatial distance during teaching are important in increasing motivation, the teachers also believe that gestures increase motivation during teaching.

**Table 3**  
**Primary teachers' point of views regarding the importance of nonverbal communication**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	UD	Mean
Personal space between the teacher and students improves the learning atmosphere in the classroom.	53.1%	14.6%	32.3%	3.56
Teachers should be conscious of their own body movements when teaching.	84.7%	2.5%	12.8%	4.04
Teachers need to be careful of their own voice tone while instructing.	73.2%	9.8%	17.0%	3.90
Teachers' appropriate body movement assists learners in comprehending the subject.	67.0%	12.2%	39.6%	3.46
Through eye contact, you may quickly determine how your students are feeling.	80.2%	6.6%	13.2%	3.95
A teacher's face expression is an important tool for classroom management.	85.8%	2.4%	11.8%	4.17
To express "excellent job," giving the thumbs up is helpful.	81.2%	4.2%	14.6%	4.00

The results of the analysis show that most teachers believe that teachers must be conscious of their own body movement and tone of voice during teaching. They also believe that facial expression is an important tool in managing classrooms. 80.2% of respondents gave importance to eye contact; they agreed that through eye contact, you can easily understand the mood of your students. Teachers also favor the statement that personal distance between teacher and student is more beneficial for learning.

## Discussion

The main objective of the research was to investigate how nonverbal speech is employed to run a primary-level school. It was found that the majority of primary school teachers believed it was a good notion to use silent signals in the classroom to motivate students. A positive correlation has been found between immediate physical contact and students' greater desire and interest in their subject matter.

According to the research, most educators stated that maintaining eye contact with their students helped them stay motivated and concentrated on their studies. Students also mentioned that eye contact gives them a sense of importance and confidence, which is in line with Ergin and Birol's (2005) theories that say that when someone looks you in the eye, it can be taken as an indication that they are interested in you or that they care about you, which gives you a sense of importance. Eye contact is a potent instrument for grabbing and holding someone's attention, motivating, focusing, and energizing them. Cognitive scientists assert that only when pupils are paying attention—that is, when they are listening to the cues—does real learning take place. (Cruickshank et al., 2003). The authors, Bambaero and Shokrpour (2017), also state that the more verbal and nonverbal communication teachers utilize, the more effective their instruction and students' academic advancement.

According to the study analysis, the majority of the teachers concur that nonverbal cues enhance the learning environment in the classroom. Using visual signals, teachers can draw in their audience and motivate them to pay attention to the lesson. There is compelling proof in favour of setting up a classroom atmosphere where students are naturally motivated to learn. (Eccles, 2000, cited in Santrock, 2000). When instructors intentionally use nonverbal cues to pique students' interests in the classroom, learning results for the students can be enhanced (Mehrabian, 2017; Wahyuni, 2018).

The vast majority of participants in the current study agreed that nonverbal communication like body movement, facial expression, and gesture was very helpful for raising students' motivation and improving learning results. Nonverbal communication through actions like eye contact, a smile, body posture, gestures, and the utilization of physical space increases learning and engagement (Andersen, Andersen, & Jensen, 1979).

The human face is incredibly expressive and capable of expressing a wide range of universal emotions. Unlike culturally specific facial expressions, the human face may convey happiness, sadness, rage, surprise, fear, and hatred without using words (Segal, 2018). Facial expression is the nonverbal communication of teachers that is most influenced by the students. Especially when they see their teachers' smiles, students are inspired to learn more and are more likely to love the course material (Megawati & Hartono, 2020).

Allen, Witt, & Wheelless, (2006) examined the effectiveness of nonverbal communication (NVC) for class management among practicing primary teachers, found the same results. The teaching and learning processes will benefit from the teachers' abilities to efficiently manage and arrange the classroom. If the teacher effectively employs nonverbal communication in the classroom, students will perform well because they will be motivated and love learning. Primary teachers' communication techniques strategically improve the expected learning outcomes (Allen et al., 2006).

The majority of those surveyed concurred that teachers' hand gestures and other physical actions help their pupils comprehend the content they are presenting. They also concurred that when teachers move their hands, students retain knowledge much more rapidly. When teachers try to use positive nonverbal emotional strategies, students show high levels of engagement and a greater feeling that they have learned from the teacher. Students exhibit high levels of classroom enjoyment and a greater sense that they have learned from the instructor when teachers make an attempt to use positive nonverbal emotional strategies. (Gryphon, 1985).

Instructors can use behavioral signals to pique students' interest in the topic of the course. When parents and peers are unable to inspire students to read, teachers' are typically the only people who can. For instance, incorporating appropriate humor into lessons can help students feel more emotionally invested in the subject matter, which will increase their natural motivation and aid in learning. (Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin, 2010). One of the most commonly cited reasons why children adore to read is the teacher's obvious passion for the subject. (Bromley, Winters, & Schlimmer, 1994)

## **Conclusion**

According to the results of the data analysis, teachers' nonverbal communication helps create a productive learning environment. Students feel attentive and interested in the learning process in this setting. Students' motivation, retention, and degree of understanding increased as a result of nonverbal communication. Students performed well when teachers used nonverbal clues to advise them. Students' learning abilities increased through nonverbal communication. Activities are not being completed successfully, according to teachers and students.

## **Recommendations**

Teachers can use nonverbal communication techniques to engage the students and keep their focus throughout the lesson. It is also recommended that teachers may receive specialized training in nonverbal communication techniques so they can communicate better and be able to comprehend the feedback from their students. Teachers may advise utilizing visual cues to encourage students and establish a secure atmosphere in the classroom. Early learners struggle to understand the instruction successfully; however, by using the proper body language, hand gestures, and eye contact, they can understand the subject matter with ease. As a consequence, teachers may learn how to use these skills. Both pre-service and in-service teacher training programmers can cover microteaching.



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