

The Impact of Non-Verbal Communication in Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple

Nur Diana Abu Bakar¹, Nan Zakiah Megat Ibrahim², Nurul Zaitul Itri Alias^{3*}

*Corresponding Author: zaitul@uptm.edu.my

Abstract

Nonverbal communication, including body language, facial expressions, and interpersonal communication, plays a vital role in romantic relationships among married couples. These nonverbal cues influence emotional intimacy, conflict resolution, and marital satisfaction. Body language, such as gestures, posture, and touch, conveys emotions and reinforces relational bonds, while facial expressions provide essential emotional cues that enhance understanding and empathy. Interpersonal communication, integrating verbal and nonverbal elements, fosters connection and reduces misunderstandings. This study explores the impact of nonverbal communication on marital dynamics through theories like Mehrabian's Communication Model, Gottman's Theory of Marital Stability, and Attachment Theory. It also highlights the role of nonverbal cues in conflict resolution and stress management. Future research should examine cross-cultural differences, the effects of digital communication, and neurobiological perspectives. Understanding these aspects can provide valuable insights for relationship counseling, marital therapy, and strengthening emotional bonds among couples.) to provide a solid framework for examining the factors involved and the resulting impact. The study collected data from 301 respondents at Taman Nusa Bayu using questionnaires, employing a quantitative research method. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis, and the results were presented in tables to identify the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

Keywords

Body language, facial expressions, interpersonal communication, romantic relationships, married couples, nonverbal communication

1. Introduction

Interpersonal interactions, especially romantic ones, heavily rely on nonverbal communication. Relationship dynamics can be greatly impacted by a married couple's comprehension and use of nonverbal signs, since they are frequently negotiating the intricacies of new romantic experiences. According to Burgoon et al. (2019), nonverbal communication includes a range of actions that transmit relational intents and emotional messages, such as body language, eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. According to research, good communication and relationship happiness are closely related. Nonverbal clues can have a positive or negative impact on emotions of fulfillment in love relationships between married couples. Positive nonverbal cues that promote comprehension

and connection, like attentive body language and suitable facial expressions, increase the satisfaction of a relationship overall (Kleinke, 2020). On the other hand, unfavorable nonverbal cues like avoidance or disinterest can cause miscommunications and discontent. In romantic relationships, emotional intimacy is crucial to establishing closeness and trust.

Nonverbal communication has a big influence on how young people express and view emotional closeness. Touch, closeness, and nonverbal cues (such nodding) can all improve emotions of support and intimacy (Horan et al., 2022). Emotional closeness requires mutual understanding and deeper connections, which are fostered when young people express their feelings nonverbally. Any relationship will inevitably have challenges, and how young people handle these issues might determine how long a relationship lasts. In conflict situations, nonverbal communication is essential since it has the power to either increase tensions or promote resolution. According to research, young couples that use constructive nonverbal communication techniques, such keeping eye contact and keeping their bodies open, are more likely to settle disputes peacefully (Gonzalez Mena & Eshbaugh, 2021). This capacity to successfully handle conflict can have a significant impact on the relationship's health. Furthermore, effective communication involves both being able to express ideas clearly and comprehending what others are saying. Intimacy, trust, and conflict resolution are all enhanced by good communication in love relationships. Studies have demonstrated that nonverbal cues have a substantial influence on how communications are understood and can support or contradict spoken communication (Kleinke, 2020). When a young person verbally displays affection, but their body language conveys disinterest, for instance, it might cause confusion and misconceptions. Based on the explanation, past research has shown that there are three factors contributing to The Effect of Nonverbal Communication in Romantic Relationship which is Face Expression, Body Language and Interpersonal Communication.

Although nonverbal communication plays a crucial role in intimacy, emotional expression, and conflict resolution, its effects on romantic relationships among young people are still poorly understood. Young people frequently use nonverbal clues including body language, facial emotions, and closeness to guide their romantic encounters (Floyd & McPhee, 2019). But misinterpretations of these nonverbal cues can result in relationship problems and lower levels of pleasure (Carpenter & McEwan, 2021). According to studies, young people are increasingly forming romantic relationships via texting and social media, demonstrating how the digital age has changed the way nonverbal communication is communicated and understood in romantic settings (Meier & Gray, 2021). The effectiveness of nonverbal communication in digital media and its effects on the dynamics of relationships among young people are called into question by this change (Huang & Wang, 2023). Furthermore, there is a knowledge gap about how these elements support successful romantic relationships since previous research frequently ignores the particular developmental difficulties that young people have when perceiving and using nonverbal cues (Thompson & Parrott, 2022). The purpose of this study is to examine how nonverbal communication affects romantic relationships between young people, with a particular emphasis on the ways in which nonverbal cues affect emotional expression, conflict resolution, and relationship satisfaction in general. The research aims to offer useful insights for improving communication techniques and encouraging healthier love relationships throughout this developmental stage by addressing these factors. Due to that this research aim to fulfill the objectives of (1) To determine the relationship between facial expression and romantic relationship among married couple, (2) To examine the relationship between body language and romantic relationship among married couple, (3) To identify the relationship between interpersonal communication and romantic relationship among married couple. This study also test hypothesis; (H1) There is a relationship between facial expressions and romantic relationship among married couple; (H2) There is a relationship between body language and romantic relationship among married couple; (H3) There is a relationship between interpersonal communication and romantic relationship among married couple.

2. Literature Review

Nonverbal communication

Facial expressions are essential for emotional communication because they enable people to convey a variety of emotions, including joy, sorrow, rage, and surprise. According to research, married couple are especially sensitive to facial expressions, which have a big impact on how they feel and perceive relationships (Floyd & McPhee, 2019). Individuals can know each other's emotions, intentions and beliefs through facial expressions. (Keltner & Haidt 2022). Facial expressions of emotions tend to serve important pieces of information and social functions in romantic relationship among married couple. It can influence the other partner's behavior towards the expresser of the communication. For example, facial expressions of sadness and fear can signal that the other partner is in distress and needs sympathy and support in the romantic relationship. (Marsh et al. 2022).

Body language plays an important role in romantic relationships, serving as a powerful form of nonverbal communication that can improve connection, convey affection, and reveal underlying emotions. Posture, gestures,

and movements are examples of body language, which can convey defensiveness, openness, or confidence. While negative cues may create barriers, positive body language can promote intimacy and connection (Meier & Gray, 2021). Body language is one of the nonverbal communications that is engaged in a romantic relationship. It can engage attention and also increase trust in a romantic relationship. People tend to significantly choose to show their affection through body language such as in eye contact, nodding rather than verbal communication. (Kingstone, 2019). It attracts more individual's attention, thus making it intentional when one wants to approach someone.

Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal communication is a development and maintenance of romantic relationships, serving as the way through which partners express emotions, resolve conflicts, and build intimacy. Thus, they can either enhance connection or lead to misunderstandings (Burgoon et al., 2016). Interpersonal communication has a profound impact on romantic relationships. It enhances intimacy, trust, and conflict resolution if it was used with the right and positive way. However, misinterpretations or negative nonverbal cues can lead to misunderstandings and emotional disconnection. Understanding and improving nonverbal communication skills can help couples maintain a healthy and fulfilling relationship.

Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple

Romantic relationships among married couples involve emotional, psychological, and physical connections that evolve over time. While marriage provides stability and commitment, maintaining romance requires continuous effort in communication, intimacy, and mutual support (Gottman & Silver, 2015). Successful marriages are characterized by emotional closeness, shared experiences, and effective conflict resolution (Fincham & Beach, 2010). Romantic relationships between married couple require continuous effort to retain emotional and physical intimacy. Effective communication, shared experiences, and mutual support are key factors in maintaining a fulfilling marriage. By prioritizing each other and adapting to life's changes together, couples can nurture a lasting and meaningful romantic connection. (Aaron, 2022).

Theoretical Framework

Nonverbal Communication Theory examines the various forms of nonverbal signals employed in interpersonal interactions, encompassing facial expressions, gestures, body language, eye contact, and proxemics. This theory emphasizes that a significant portion of communication occurs without spoken words, conveying emotions and intentions in nuanced ways. According to Burgoon et al. (2020), nonverbal communication articulates complex meanings that verbal language might not fully capture. For instance, a simple smile can convey warmth and acceptance, while a furrowed brow can indicate confusion or concern. This richness of nonverbal communication plays a pivotal role in understanding interpersonal dynamics, particularly in romantic relationships. The theory identifies several key components of nonverbal communication. Facial expressions can express a wide array of emotions, such as happiness, sadness, anger, and surprise. Research indicates that these expressions are universally recognized, allowing individuals to interpret emotions across different cultures (Ekman & Friesen, 2019). Gestures, including hand movements and body orientation, complement or substitute verbal messages. For example, a thumbs-up can signify approval, while a wave may signal greeting or farewell. However, cultural differences can influence the meanings of specific gestures, making context crucial for accurate interpretation (Argyle, 2021).

Body language, which encompasses posture, gait, and movement, reveals emotional states and confidence levels. Open body language fosters trust and engagement, while closed or defensive postures may suggest discomfort or resistance (Burgoon et al., 2020). Eye contact serves as a powerful nonverbal cue in establishing connection and intimacy. It conveys interest and attentiveness, while a lack of eye contact may signal disinterest or avoidance. Studies show that sustained eye contact can deepen emotional bonds and enhance feelings of connection between partners (Knapp & Hall, 2020). Lastly, proxemics examines how physical distance impacts communication. Different distances can signal intimacy, authority, or discomfort, with close proximity often indicating affection and distance suggesting formality or unease (Hall, 1966).

In romantic relationships, nonverbal communication plays a crucial role in shaping emotional expression and relational dynamics. Positive nonverbal cues can significantly enhance relationship satisfaction and intimacy. For instance, open body language—such as leaning in towards a partner, maintaining eye contact, and mirroring gestures—creates a sense of closeness and shared understanding. Research indicates that these behaviors promote feelings of connectedness, making partners feel valued and heard (Knapp & Hall, 2020). Conversely, negative nonverbal cues can lead to misunderstandings and feelings of disconnection. Behaviors such as crossed arms, lack of eye contact, or turning away can signal defensiveness or disengagement, potentially escalating

conflicts and reducing relationship satisfaction. Misinterpretations of nonverbal signals are common; for instance, a partner who avoids eye contact may be perceived as uninterested, when they may simply be feeling shy or overwhelmed (Floyd, 2019). Moreover, nonverbal communication serves as a critical tool for conflict resolution. During disagreements, the way individuals use nonverbal cues can either escalate tensions or facilitate understanding. Maintaining a calm demeanor, using open body language, and employing soothing tones can help de-escalate conflicts and promote productive dialogue (Floyd & McPhee, 2019). By consciously utilizing positive nonverbal communication, partners can create a more supportive atmosphere that encourages open discussion and mutual understanding.

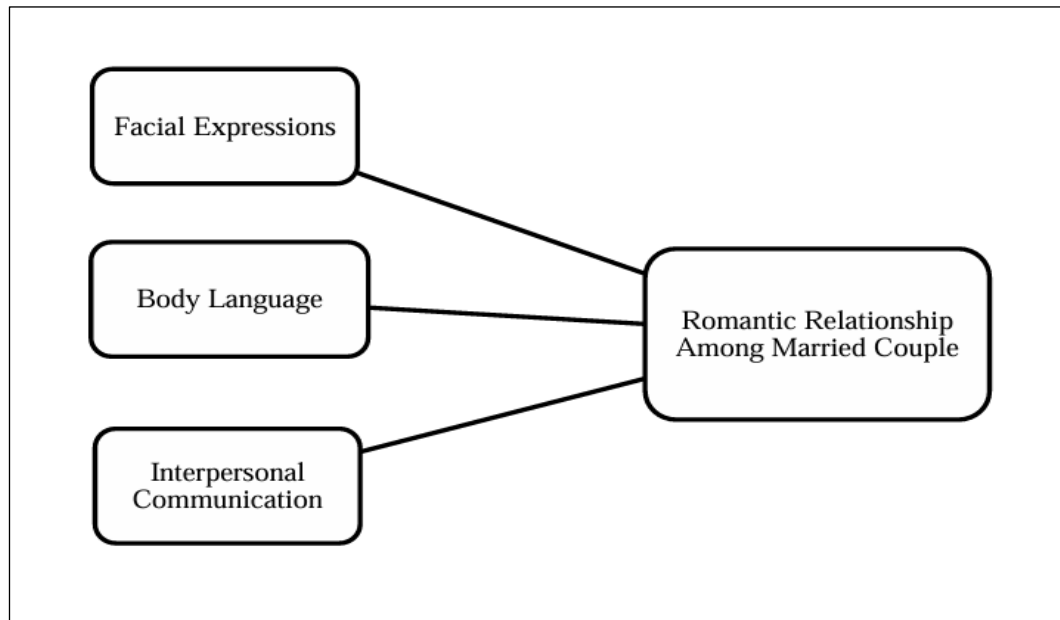


Fig. 1 *Research Framework*

3. Methodology

A questionnaire was developed for this research study. The questionnaire comprises five components: demographics, facial expressions, body language, interpersonal communication, and romantic relationships among married couples. The selected respondent demographic for this research comprises married couples residing in Taman Nusa Bayu, Iskandar Puteri, Johor Bahru. The study's target demographic comprises married couples in Taman Nusa Bayu aged between 20 and 60 years. This demographic is ideal for examining romantic relationships due to its typical association with significant social and relational development. The sample technique employed in the research will be the multistage technique. Multistage sampling is a sophisticated sampling method that entails selecting samples through multiple stages. This method is especially advantageous when the population being studied is extensive and geographically dispersed. In multistage sampling, the population is segmented into clusters or stages, from which samples are subsequently chosen in a hierarchical fashion (Sedgwick, 2015). According to the Israel sampling pro. The initial phase of the data collection process involves identifying an appropriate population group for sampling and research. In this study, the target population is determined to be among married couple at the Taman Nusa Bayu. Once the population and sample for the research are determined, we must obtain permission from the lecturer before distributing the questionnaire to respondents. Approval for the questionnaire was previously granted by the lecturer during the proposal stage of the study. Given that this research employs a quantitative approach, the next step is to distribute the questionnaire after obtaining approval from the lecturer. The questionnaire is designed using Google Forms, and once it is finalized, the Google Form was used to send the questionnaire via social media and WhatsApp. cedure (2006), a population of 3,500 necessitates the selection of 336 respondents for research purposes.

4. Analysis

Profile of respondents

This subtopic covered the respondent profiles in this study's response. Table 4.1 illustrates the respondents'

demographic including gender, age and races. The table indicates that 301 people responded to the survey, with 146 (48.5%) men and 155(51.5%) women. The biggest group of respondents, 123(40.9%), are between the ages of 30 until 40, followed by 86 (28.6%) between the ages of 20 until 30, while 62 (20.6%) respondents are between the ages of 40 until 50. Last but not least, 30 (10.0%) are between 50 until 60 years old. According to Table 4.1, 100 (33.2%) of respondents are Malay. Aside from that, 128respondents (42.5%) are Chinese, while 73 (24.3%) are Indian. Table 1 explain on the respondent's profile.

Table 1: Frequency of Respondents

Demographic Factors	N	%
Gender		
Male	146	48.5
Female	155	51.5
Age		
20 – 30 years old	86	28.6
31- 40 years old	123	40.9
41 – 50 years old	62	20.6
51 – 60 years old	30	10.0
Race		
Malay	100	33.2
Indian	73	24.3
Chinese	128	42.5

Instrument Reliability

In this study, the instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha values, which could be used to determine the internal reliability of the instruments utilized for this research. The variables are facial expression, body language, interpersonal communication and romantic relationship among married couple. Table 4.2 displays a facial expression variable with a Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted of $\alpha = .920$ and $\alpha = .917$ for body language. Furthermore, the alpha values for interpersonal communication and romantic relationship among married couple are $\alpha = .912$ and $\alpha = .880$. Thus, the Cronbach's Alpha values overall are excellent and good for the research objectives.

Table 2: Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

Variable	Items	α
Facial Expression	16	.920
Body Language	15	.917
Interpersonal	15	.912
Communication		
Romantic relationship among married couple	10	.880

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between Facial Expression and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

In this section, the differences between Facial Expression and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple will be explained as the first objective of the study is to examine the relationship between these two variables. This revealed a moderate relationship between Facial Expression and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple, with a significant value or ($r = .603$, $p > 0.01$). The result in Table 3 indicated that these two factors will have an impact on one another, therefore, the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 3 : Correlation between Facial Expression and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple

Facial expression	Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple
r	.603**
n	301
p	0.01

Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple

The second objective of the study is to examine the relationship between body language and romantic relationship among married couple, hence in this part, the hypothesis between body language and romantic relationship among married couple will be discussed. This revealed a moderate relationship between body language and romantic relationship among married couple with a significant value of ($r = .573$, $p > 0.01$). The result in Table 4 indicated that these two factors will connect with one another. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted

Table 4: Correlation between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple

Body language	Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple
r	.573**
n	301
p	.001

Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

The third objective of the study is to analyze the relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple, whereby the hypothesis relating the two will be examined. A moderate relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple, with a significant value of ($r = .427$, $p > 0.01$). The outcome in Table 5 demonstrated these two elements correlated and the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5 : Correlation between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple

Body language	Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple
r	.510**
n	301
p	.001

5. Discussion and Recommendation

Objective 1: To examine the relationship between facial expression and romantic relationship among married couple.

According to the findings, this research successfully achieved the objective of the study which is to examine the relationship between facial expression and romantic relationship among married couple. The hypothesis is that there is a relationship between facial expression and romantic relationship among married couple. The result is .603 which is that these two variables have moderate relationship and will have an impact on one another. Facial expression and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple are related because it is one of the crucial roles in nonverbal communication that serve as a powerful way of expressing emotions. these influences in every dynamic, satisfaction and overall emotional connection among married couple. Facial expressions play a crucial role in human communication, serving as powerful indicators of emotions and intentions. In romantic relationships, particularly among married couples, these nonverbal cues significantly influence relationship dynamics, satisfaction, and overall emotional connection. Understanding the relationship between facial expressions and romantic relationships can provide valuable insights into marital stability and emotional well-being. 59 Facial expressions also can be one of the conflict resolutions in marriages during disagreements. By using positive facial expressions, such as a warm smile can help to reduce the tension. Past researchers clearly proved that there is a relationship between facial expression and romantic relationship among married couple. This can be seen from the study by Gottman, J. M. (2021) that explained the importance of facial expression and emotional connection through relationship. Thus, there is a relationship between Facial Expression and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

Objective 2: To identify the relationship between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

Supported by the finding, this research managed to achieve the second objective which is to identify the relationship between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. The hypothesis is there is a relationship between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. The result is .573, indicating that the relationship between these two variables is moderate and will influence one another. Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple are related due to the fact that it is one of the nonverbal communication tools that can convey emotions more accurately than words. It can be seen through gestures, eye contact, posture and it can impact the quality of the relationship. For example, a reassuring nod can be seen as a way to convey love between spouses. Next, positive body language can help the partners to feel in care. Past researchers clearly proven that there is a relationship between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. This can be seen from the study by Mehrabian, (2019) that disclosed the nonverbal communication constitutes a significant portion of interpersonal interactions, influencing how emotions are perceived and responded to in a marriage Hence, there is a relationship between Body Language and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

Objective 3: To analyze the relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

Supported by the finding, this research managed to achieve the third objective which is to analyze the relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. The hypothesis is there is a relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. The result is .510, indicating that the relationship between these two variables is moderate and will influence one another. Interpersonal communication is one of the nonverbal communication aspects of romantic relationships, particularly among married couple. Effective interpersonal communication fosters trust, and long-term satisfaction in marriage, while poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and relationship dissatisfaction. Understanding how interpersonal communication influences romantic relationships can provide valuable insights into marital stability and emotional well-being. Interpersonal communication allows married couples to express emotions, thoughts, and concerns openly. Past researchers clearly proved that there is a relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. This can be seen from the study by (Knapp & Daly, 2022). that disclosed the importance of Interpersonal Communication in Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple. Hence, there is a relationship between Interpersonal Communication and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple.

Contribution to the Theory

Several theories in communication and psychology highlight the significance of nonverbal communication in romantic relationships. One of the foundational theories is Mehrabian's Communication Model, which suggests that

93% of communication is nonverbal—comprising 55% body language, 38% vocal tone, and only 7% verbal content. This model underscores the importance of nonverbal cues in expressing emotions and maintaining emotional intimacy in marriage. Another key theoretical contribution is Gottman's Theory of Marital Stability and Relationship Satisfaction, which emphasizes the role of nonverbal behaviors in predicting marital outcomes. According to Gottman's research, specific nonverbal cues—such as eye contact, facial expressions of contempt, and affectionate gestures—serve as indicators of relationship success or failure. His concept of the "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" (criticism, contempt, defensiveness, and stonewalling) highlights how negative nonverbal communication patterns can erode marital stability to connect to the theory, the researcher could conclude that the relationship between one variable and Romantic Relationship Among Married Couple is strong.

Implication of Study

According to the outcomes of this study, the researcher holds the view that nonverbal communication has a significant influence on the married couple. This assessment stems from the observation of a moderate association between the three factors, namely Facial Expression, Body Language and Interpersonal Communication. The study highlights that the proficiency in using the nonverbal communication is not limited to married couple. This is because the married couple have found diverse ways to effectively utilize nonverbal communication in their relationship. They use the nonverbal communication, as a source of learning, a means to stay connected with a partner, a way to enhance and improve their communication, a source of staying informed on various topics, and much more. Aside from that, the researcher finds that there is a positive outcome and insight when using nonverbal communication as a communication tool, and this is because married couple can adapt their way of communicating and showing their love teaching based on these three variables. The researcher also finds that nonverbal communication is a valuable communication tool for married couple due to several key factors. One of it is partner can track their way or emotions of their partner through these variables. They can observe which nonverbal communication has the most effectiveness, likes, used, helping them understand what resonates with their partner.

Recommendations

For future research on this topic, it would be advisable for researchers to Nonverbal communication norms vary across cultures, and future research should explore how cultural differences influence romantic interactions in marriage. Comparative studies examining Western and non-Western couples can provide insights into how gestures, facial expressions, and touch are interpreted differently in various cultural settings. Next, research should explore the connection between nonverbal communication and mental health in marriage. Examining how nonverbal cues contribute to emotional regulation, stress reduction, and overall psychological well-being among couples can offer practical implications for marital therapy.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of the paper.

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