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**I SEE WHAT YOU SAY: INFLUENTIAL NONVERBAL SIGNALS OF
FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES ON CUSTOMER OUTCOMES**

by

Shuang Wu, B.A.,M.B.A.

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Business Administration

COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

August 2018

LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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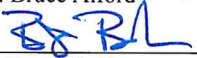
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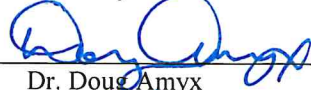
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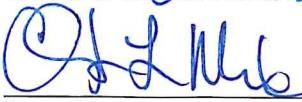

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the influential nonverbal signals of frontline employees on customer outcomes. Frontline employees play a vital role in initiating and maintaining customer relationships. The interactions between customers and employees influence not only the immediate reactions, including both affective and cognitive responses, but also customer outcomes, like purchase intention, satisfaction, perceived service quality, and positive word-of-mouth. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are employed in this dissertation.

Previous studies examined the effects of employee nonverbal signals on customers' cognitive responses, but limited research has been done on the affective responses of customers. Affect-based trust, positive affect, negative affect, and rapport are measured in this research to capture the emotional responses of customers during interactions with employees. This research gives an integrated review of the literature on nonverbal signals. The qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews, provides the fundamental elements for the experimental design. The results of the qualitative study also answer the research questions and address the importance of nonverbal signals during interactions. Four sets of nonverbal signals are used to test the proposed hypotheses. The results of this study show the effect of employee nonverbal signals on social judgments (warmth and competence), affect-based trust, and negative emotions. These immediate responses further influence customer outcomes.

This research provides an integrated review of nonverbal communication literature in marketing, investigates the importance and influence of nonverbal signals using both qualitative and quantitative methods, and proposes future research opportunities.

DEDICATION

To my family, thank you for your love and support.

Special thanks to my mom. Xie xie wo de mama.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The service values or culture of firms in the hospitality industry all include a goal of creating memorable and exceptional experience for all customers. Employees are expected to perform with professional appearance, language and behavior in serving guests. One of the service values of The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is “the employee is always responsive to the expressed and unexpressed wishes and needs of our guests (The Ritz-Carlton, 2017).” The interaction between customer and employee is not limited to verbal communication. Customers see employees, not just hear them.

Singapore Airlines is well known for their superior services, including in-flight service and customer service before and after flight. The story of the cabin crew of Singapore Airlines tells us about the training through pouring the coffee artfully to displaying an adequate level of eye contact in serving passengers (Lindberg, n.d.). Employees understand customers and respond to them with standardized service and personalized extra care (Heracleous and Wirtz, 2010). The service culture in Singapore Airlines is devoted across the organization by employees. Flight attendants crouch to serve the customers because passengers are seated for most of the time. Sometimes they might kneel to talk closer and in lower voice with customers. This enables the flight attendants to make eye contact with customers at the same level and keep the proxemics

close and the conversation private. These behaviors match the image of caring and serving customers in detail.

In 2007, an article in the Wall Street Journal described the selling etiquette performed by Toyota employees when they started to sell Lexus in Japan (Chozick, 2007). Toyota tried to compete with other major luxury car brands by bringing “a flavor of customer service” that is hard to copy by the European rivals. The employees, interacting directly with customers, are trained to perform in a certain manner and standards called the Samurai behaviors, which come from an ancient Japanese hospitality tradition. The “waiting position” of Samurai standard is assumed by leaning 5-10 degrees forward when a customer is looking at a car. Employees need to bow more deeply to a customer who purchased a car than a casual window shopper. And employees put their left hand over their right hand with fingers together. According to the etiquette expert, this is a posture originally designed for samurais to show that they were not about to draw their swords. They are also required to practice the “Lexus Face,” a closed-mouth smile. These Samurai behaviors are required of employees when serving customers in Lexus. Behaviors influence the interactions between customers and employees, which further influence customer perceptions of the product and the brand.

The nonverbal communication of employees is an essential element in creating and maintaining outstanding customer experience. Marketers invest resources in creating an outstanding service culture through recruitment, training and rewards, managing a consistent image across channels, and building long-term relationship with customers. Frontline employees are trained to build rapport during interactions with customers. This type of interactive skill includes initiating pleasant conversation, asking questions, or

using humor in interaction. The interaction further contributes to perceived service quality including responsiveness, empathy, and assurance (Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler, 2013). Some firms do corporate training to improve customer-contact employees' communication and listening skills, their ability to read customers' body language, and how to use improvisation to build immediate rapport with customers through quality interaction (Levere, 2010).

The communication skills, verbal and nonverbal, of frontline employees have been emphasized in both the training and reward process by marketers. Has nonverbal communication been studied in the marketing literature? How does nonverbal communication of frontline employees influence customer outcomes? This chapter provides an introduction to relevant research on relationship marketing, frontline employees and nonverbal communication. After describing the purpose of this dissertation, the outline of this dissertation and research questions are presented.

Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing has evolved to a theory of relationship marketing and has been mentioned dramatically for the past two decades in both business and academic research (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, and Evans, 2006). The focus of customer management has evolved from transaction to relationship and recently to engagement (Pansari and Kumar, 2016). The number of articles on topics such as “service” and “engagement” has increased radically in the past five years (Brodie, 2017).

Previous research investigates effects of both customer-focused and seller-focused antecedents on customer outcomes. Palmatier et al. (2006) also review the dyadic

antecedents, customer-focused relational mediators, moderators and dyadic outcomes (shown in Figure 1.1 by Palmatier et al. 2006). Communication between customers and seller refers to the amount, frequency, and quality of information shared between exchange partners (Palmatier et al., 2006). However, the literature shows a lack of focus on nonverbal communication during service provider and customer interactions. The customer-focused relational mediators are mostly cognitive responses from customers. This research aims to include both cognitive and emotional responses of customers that further influence customer-focused outcomes.

Rapport contributes to the customer outcomes such as satisfaction, loyalty and word-of-mouth through increasing the feeling of control in a relationship, and the level of commitment toward a relationship (Gremler and Gwinner, 2008). Baumann and Meunier-FitzHugh (2014) suggest that rational cognition-based trust arises during initial discrete interactions, while both cognition-based and affect-based trust emerges during relational interactions. According to neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), rapport and trust are suggested to be developed through synchronization of modes of communication between communicators (Wood, 2006). Neuro-linguistic programming proposes a communication approach that combines cognitive theory, split-brain processing and sensory perception. Furthermore, rapport and trust building could be understood through investigating the communication process, rather than the content of a message (Wood, 2006). The NLP process also points out the importance of nonverbal signals of communicators in influencing rapport and trust building. Frontline employees, interacting with customers directly, are crucial in relationship building.

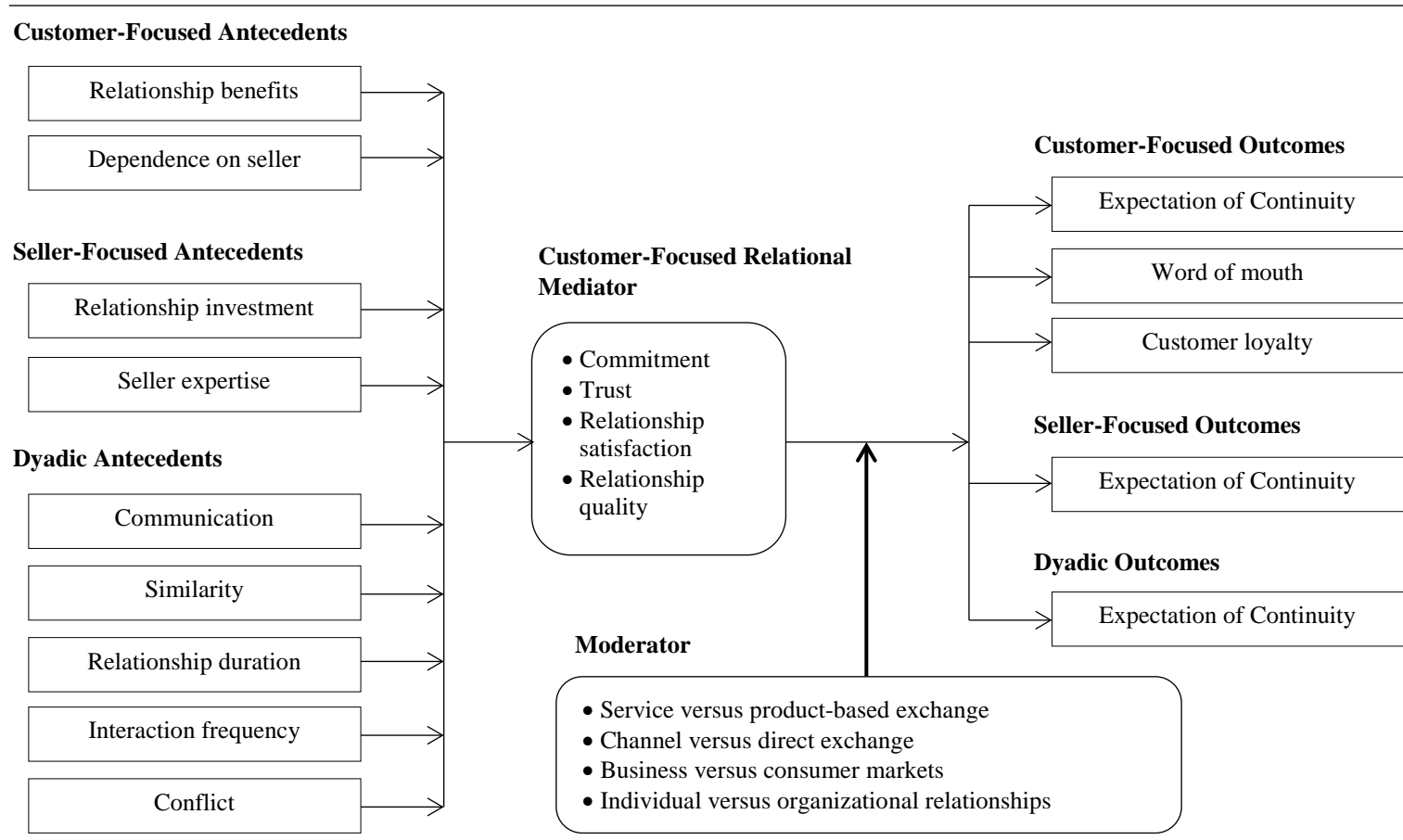


Figure 1.1: Relational Mediator Meta-Analytic Framework (Palmatier et al., 2006)

Frontline Employees

Frontline employees, directly interacting with customers, play a vital role in implementing relationship marketing strategies. Interactions between customers and employees are considered as the “moment of truth” (Zeithaml, Bitner, and Gremler, 2012). Frontline employees, also known as the boundary spanner of a firm, need to convey the organization’s values from the inside to end customers. The communications, both verbal and nonverbal, of frontline employees contribute to interaction outcomes between employees and customers.

Emotional displays of a frontline employee have been shown to influence a customer’s emotions through emotional contagion (Pugh, 2001). Customers’ affect is influenced through perceiving the nonverbal signals of employees during interactions. Individuals learn to use nonverbal signals as a communication vehicle from childhood and could consciously and unconsciously interpret nonverbal signals as meanings, such as intimacy, immediacy, involvement, and dominance, in communications (Sundaram and Webster, 2000).

Frontline employees have been suggested to influence the flow of the interaction between customers and employees, facilitate emotional connection between customers and firms, and influence the encounter satisfaction (Zeithaml et al. 2012; Sierra and MacQuitty, 2005; Barger and Grandey, 2006; Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, and Sideman, 2005). In this dissertation, the author specifically aims to investigate the role of nonverbal signals of frontline employees in influencing customer outcomes.

Nonverbal Communication

The environment, including the nonverbal behaviors of people around us, influences our perceptions about the surroundings, including formality, warmth, privacy, familiarity, constraint, and distance (Knapp, 1980, p.53). Studies of nonverbal communication have expanded from communication and psychology disciplines to marketing literature. Studies in communication and psychology have presented ways of categorizing and studying the role of nonverbal behaviors. And marketing studies have investigated the effects of nonverbal signals on customer perceptions and judgments of marketers such as friendliness, warmth, and trust (Price, Arnould and Tierney, 1995; Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, and Sideman, 2005; Wang, Mao, Li, and Liu, 2017; and Manning, Ahearne, and Reece, 2014).

The criteria of cataloguing methods of nonverbal behaviors vary from the functionality of behaviors, the nature of interaction, the body parts involved in behaviors to the role of communicator in interactions (Bonoma and Felder, 1977). Based on the function, Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972) categorize nonverbal behaviors to five major categories, including emblem, illustrator, affect display, regular, and adaptor. Wiener and colleagues categorize nonverbal communications to search, correction, regulators and message modulations (Wiener, Devoe, Rubinow, and Geller, 1972). Argyle (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977) provides a cataloguing method of eight types: sign language, illustrations used during speech, synchronizing signals and feedback, prosodic signals, feedback, emotions and interpersonal attitudes, rituals and ceremonies, and sequences of social acts.

Furthermore, Branigan and Humphries (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977) categorize nonverbal behaviors based on the movements of body parts such as mouth region, eyebrows, eyelids and eyes, gaze direction, additional facial movements, head movements, hands and arms, lower limb, and trunk. Jenkins and Johnson (1977) suggest that body language includes hand movements, facial expression, eye contact, posture, proxemics and body rhythms. Hulbert and Capon (1972) present a classification scheme for interpersonal communication based on the sender role and the receiver role. The sender role could be classified as one of four types: static and uncontrollable, static and controllable, low frequency dynamic, and high frequency dynamic. Meanwhile, the receivers perceive the signs from visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory channels which are basically the five senses except taste.

Certain nonverbal behaviors are linked to certain mental statuses and are able to express feelings. Expansive and open postures are linked with power (Carney, Cuddy and Yap, 2010). Hunched and threatened postures evoke depressed feelings and stress (Riskind and Gotay, 1982). Upright posture induces pride (Stepper and Strack, 1993). Self-touching behavior symbolizes anxiety (Harrigan, Lucic, Kay, McLaney, and Rosenthal, 1991). Facial expressions have been mostly studied as smile in displaying emotions (Pugh, 2001). Close distance means intimacy and is linked to self-disclosure and liking (Mehrabian, 1971).

Previous research in psychology has investigated the influence of nonverbal behaviors on human interaction, including the movements of body parts, facial expressions, and proxemics. Human interactions during retailing encounters, service encounters and selling processes are considered important factors in influencing

consumer evaluations and perceptions (Hulber and Capon, 1972; Stewart, Hecker, and Graham, 1987; Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal, and Voss, 2002). The literature shows a lack of consensus in categorizing nonverbal signals. Communication between customers and employees is considered as a dyadic antecedent in relationship building. Nonverbal signals are essential elements of human interaction. This dissertation intends to investigate the effects of nonverbal signals that belong to the categories in which the sender role is dynamic during interpersonal communication (Hulbert and Capon, 1972).

Purpose of the Study

Nonverbal signals have been studied in communication and psychology examining their influence on people's perceptions and evaluations of communicators and messages. Relationship marketing has looked at the effects of dyadic antecedents, including communications, on customer outcomes. However, the nonverbal communication between seller and customer in the commercial context is still lacking for studies.

This research aims to investigate both emotional and cognitive responses of customers that further influence customer-focused outcomes. The first section of this research intends to identify the nonverbal behaviors noticed by customers while interacting with employees. These behaviors could be managed and trained during training programs and emphasized with reward systems. The qualitative study also aims to understand the importance of nonverbal signals during interactions between employees and customers.

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees influence customer outcomes and relationship building. This dissertation means to link the nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees to customer outcomes, such as satisfaction, word-of-mouth, service quality, and purchase intention, through rapport and trust building. This dissertation could expand the existing literature on nonverbal communication of frontline employees, employee-customer interface, and emotional responses in relationship marketing. This research will include not only positive emotional responses, but also negative emotional responses as immediate reactions from customers.

Research Questions

From the preceding discussions, we see the vital role of frontline employee in customer relationship building and customer outcomes. The nonverbal signals conveyed by frontline employees are the major interests of this dissertation.

This dissertation will explore the following questions:

1. What are the typical nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees noticed by customers?
2. Do customers care about nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees?
3. How do nonverbal behaviors influence customer outcomes?

Contributions of Research

This research seeks to contribute to marketing theory, methodology and practice. Firstly, by reviewing the relevant literature of nonverbal communications in

communication and marketing, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the current stage of marketing research on nonverbal communication. This research prompts further investigation of nonverbal communications of employees in various contexts. Theoretical contributions are tied to the conceptualization of emotional response of customers during interaction with frontline employees. The framework includes the immediate reactions and behavioral intentions of customers based on interacting with employees. The study of interactions between employees and customers contributes to relationship marketing and frontline employee research by studying the interpersonal interaction between employees and customers. The notion of System 1 and System 2 thinking are brought into this research to explain the effects of nonverbal signals.

For practice, this research provides managers with insights to improve returns on their employee recruitment, training and rewards, and other investments. Managers need to control the information delivered during each touchpoint across channels, including face-to-face interactions between customers and employees, the image of employees posted on websites, printed advertisements and commercials. The nonverbal signals of employees are salient to customers from the initial stage of relationship building. Nonverbal signals of employees need to be measured and controlled from the initial stage of interaction. Managers should allocate resources in routinely training employees and managing nonverbal communications of employees.

This research employs both qualitative method and experimental design to investigate the influential nonverbal communications of frontline employees. The qualitative study will answer the first and second research questions of this dissertation.

The interviews are conducted from the receivers' perspective in understanding how receivers perceive nonverbal signals from the senders. The experimental design holds the other factors consistent, including the verbal communication and the service environment, to investigate the effect of nonverbal signals of employees on customer judgments and feelings.

Organization of the Study

Chapter 1 is an overview of the background and purpose of this study. Chapter 2 provides a review of literature on relationship building, customer engagement, the role of frontline employees, and nonverbal communication. The proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses are also presented at the end of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 covers the research methodology including the design of each study, measurement, the proposed data collection, and analysis to be conducted. Chapter 4 presents the results of the qualitative study and the experimental design, including the manipulation check, measurement model assessment, and hypotheses testing. Chapter 5 closes this dissertation with discussion of the results, implications and contributions of this study, limitations, and future research. Figure 1.2 provides a conceptual framework of this dissertation.

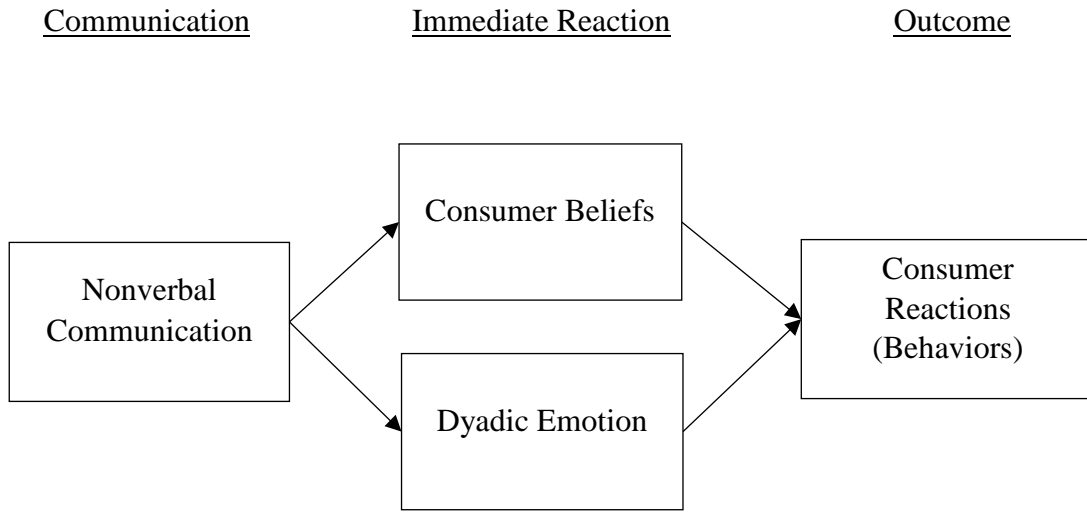


Figure 1.2: A Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES

Chapter 2 reviews relevant research on relationship marketing, the role of frontline employees in marketing, and nonverbal communication in marketing literature. The last part of this chapter proposes the conceptual framework.

Relationship Marketing

Relationship marketing has emerged as one of the dominant streams in both business practice and academic research (Palmatier, Dant, Grewal, and Evans, 2006). The effectiveness of relationship marketing has been a major concern to both managers and researchers with the major shift from transactional exchanges to relational exchanges. Research shows that relationship marketing is more effective when the relationship is built between individuals and when the relationship is more critical to customers (Palmatier et al., 2006). With the evolving service-dominant logic of marketing, the focuses on intangible resources, cocreation and value, and relationships have gained more and more recognition. The foundational premise of S-D logic suggests that “a service-centered view is inherently beneficiary oriented and relational.” Furthermore, value cocreation is enabled by the reciprocity of exchange and the existence of shared institutions (Vargo and Lusch, 2016, p.8). Relationship marketing suggests the ongoing

process of customer relationship building from the initial interaction through the post purchase service.

Customer Engagement

Creating and maintaining customer engagement is a way to build and enhance relationship marketing. Customer engagement has become an emerging topic in academic marketing and in marketing practice. Engagement has been considered as a core element in relationship marketing and in managing customer experience. The word “engagement” has been used widely in business practice, research, and education. The recent works on customer engagement focus on building toward a theory of customer engagement and considering customer engagement marketing as a strategy.

The special issue of JAMS (Understanding and Managing Customer Engagement Using Customer Relationship Management) (2017) calls for both conceptual and empirical studies on customer engagement. Venkatesan (2017) presents an editorial paper on, *Executing on a Customer Engagement Strategy*, referring to the recent papers on customer engagement including the conceptualization, scale development, and validation of customer engagement.

The marketing discipline has evolved from focusing on customer transactions to relationship marketing (Pansari and Kumar, 2017). Kumar et al. (2010, p.297) define customer engagement as “the active interactions of a customer with a firm, with prospects and with other customers, whether they are transactional or nontransactional in nature.” This definition includes the interaction between customer and firm that covers multiple channels and time periods. Researchers, focusing on moving customer engagement to a

new strategy, propose the effectiveness of customer engagement on firm performance and customer loyalty (Harmeling, Moffett, Arnold, and Carlson, 2017; Homburg, Jozié, and Kuehnl, 2017).

Hollebeek, Srivastava, and Chen (2017) conceptualize customer engagement by extending the framework developed by Brodie et al. in 2011 and the S-D logic proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004, 2016). The authors present the revised, S-D logic-informed fundamental proposition of customer engagement and define customer engagement as “a customer’s motivationally driven, volitional investment of focal operant resources (including cognitive, emotional, behavioral and social knowledge and skills), and operand resources (e.g. equipment) into brand interaction in service systems (Hollebeek et al., 2017, p.7).” While customer relationship management focuses on customer interactions and relationships, the authors focus on the interactive nature of customer engagement and view interaction as “mutual or reciprocal action or influence (adapted from Vargo and Lusch, 2016).” This conceptualization covers the interactive nature between customers and brand, as well as the product, the people, and the firm as a whole.

The three levels of customer engagement proposed by Grewal, Roggeveen, Sisodia and Nordfält (2017) are listed below:

Level 1: delivering outstanding customer experience.

Level 2: facilitating an emotional connection: sense an emotional link to its purpose and values.

Level 3: creating a shared identity and shared value which defines customer’s own self-concept.

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is considered an essential element in relationship marketing. The meta-analysis of factors influencing relationship marketing conducted by Palmatier et al. (2006) shows that relationship investment generates feelings of reciprocity, which further influence both customer-focused outcomes and seller objective performance. Preven, Bove, and Johnson (2009) consider reciprocity as a key norm in interpersonal relationship building, which could enhance personal well-being, provide motivation to develop, and maintain relationships beyond the economic benefits.

The affective response to reciprocity has been applied in explaining the effectiveness of relationship marketing. Researchers (Palmatier, Jarvis, Bechhoff, and Kardes, 2009; Fazal E. Hasan, Mortimer, Lings, and Neale, 2017) have examined gratitude as both an antecedent and consequence in relationship marketing. Gratitude performs as the antecedent of customer commitment, customer trust, seller performance outcomes (e.g. purchase intention and share of wallet) and customer overall satisfaction. Gratitude is studied as the consequence of relationship investment and reciprocity. Fazal E. Hasan et al. (2017) conceptualize gratitude as the positive emotional response, which doesn't include behavioral outcomes. Meanwhile, reciprocity is defined by the authors as "a social norm that people treat others voluntarily as they treat you, including mutual exchange of benefits (Fazal E. Hasan et al., 2017, p.36)." These emotional responses of customers further influence their perceptions.

The rule of reciprocation has been widely applied in influencing research, showing that people pay back what others provide to them (Cialdini, 2009, p.19). According to Gouldner (1960), reciprocity is also a moral norm which suggests that

people are obligated to repay the benefits they received besides being a pattern of exchange and beliefs. The author further suggests that “the norm of reciprocity is a universal norm with two interrelated, minimal demands: (1) people should help those who have helped them, and (2) people should not injure those who have helped them. (Gouldner, 1960, p.171).” This rule could be applied to explain the interpersonal relationship between buyer and seller, with seller investment as the benefits given to customers.

Jacobs, Evans, Kleine and Landry (2001) use social penetration theory to explain the use of disclosing intimate personal information between individuals to build personal relationship in initial sales encounter. These social disclosures contribute to the business relationship and interaction quality. Intimate personal information is commonly shared with people whom we know, or whom we are familiar with. Applying the norm of reciprocity, we are more likely to exchange intimate personal information with others who disclose their intimate personal information to us. All of this and the reciprocal nature of interaction, point out the importance of relationship investment from both buyers and sellers.

However, as suggested by Palmatier and colleagues (2006), the lack of any measure of reciprocity between exchange partners is the major problem in incorporating reciprocity in a relationship marketing framework. The other two constructs that have been discussed in influencing customer relationships are rapport and trust. Rapport has been considered as an emotional outcome during customer-employee interaction (Lim, Lee and Foo, 2017), whereas, trust has been studied as a mediating factor in relationship marketing (Palmatier et al., 2006).

Rapport

Relationship building is related to the interaction between two partners. Rapport is defined as harmonious interpersonal relations characterized by shared positive feelings, mutual attention, and enjoyable and connective interactions, and works like “social glue” connecting people (Lim et al., 2017). Rapport plays an important role in initiating the relationship building, as well as mediating the relationship between interaction and customer-related outcomes (Medler-Liraz, 2016). The author also includes customer’s emotional behavior such as greeting, smile and eye contact. Behaviors like these positively contribute to rapport. This gives a suggestion on the influence of behaviors of the communicator on rapport building.

Gremler and Gwinner (2008) provide a categorization of rapport-building behaviors of employees in retail settings using the critical incident technique. While the initial four groups of rapport-building behaviors are attentive, imitative, courteous, and common grounding behaviors, the authors present five major categories with fourteen subcategories. Three of the five categories cover the existing groups, and two are added to represent some behaviors that have not been discussed frequently. Imitative behavior from previous literature is not confirmed in the study of Gremler and Gwinner (2008); the authors suggest that the reason might be the lack of consciousness of mimicry behavior and the limitation of the CIT technique. The effect of mimicry will be discussed individually later this chapter.

Nonverbal behaviors, such as eye contact, physical proximity, and back-channel responses (e.g. head nods), have been considered as predictors of attentiveness in

previous literature. Smiling and polite behaviors show courtesy, and mimicking behaviors such as posture and gestures are imitative behaviors (Gremler and Gwinner, 2008).

One way in which nonverbal communication is being used to build rapport in interactions is through managing one's facial expressions. Politeness theory suggests that the use of nonverbal behavior is to smooth the social interaction and politeness could be communicated without consciousness (Puccinelli, Motyka and Grewal, 2010). The study conducted by Puccinelli et al. (2010) focuses on the importance of interpreting customers' expressions in the retail context. Customers might hide their true feelings due to the situation, personal expressivity, display rules, and social status. This research further points out the importance of understanding nonverbal communication, which could improve rapport in interpersonal communication and advance understanding of customer feedback, customer attitude and response. Meanwhile, the facial expression could be the supplement or substitute of verbal information. Observing customer nonverbal behavior may be the most effective way to determine customer reaction to a retail environment.

In the marketing education literature, research has been done investigating the effectiveness of using nonverbal communication to build student rapport in marketing education (Lincoln, 2008). The author proposes the effect of the instructor's nonverbal communications, including proxemics, kinetics, objects and paralanguage, on students' internal responses, which further influence students' evaluations of their instructor including enthusiasm, likability, empathy, friendliness, competence, and rapport. Education is considered as a type of service. This further suggests the importance of rapport in service delivery.

Interpersonal communication is a two-way interaction in which rapport can be built between two partners. Researchers present that mimicking others could create affiliation and rapport, and mimicking the behavior of strangers, both verbal and nonverbal, enhance their liking for the individual and their behaviors (Jacob et al., 2011). As people prefer to say yes to individuals they know and like (Cialdini, 2009, p.172) and liking plays a critical role in developing an interpersonal relationship, mimicry positively contributes to rapport building.

Another affective response that has been discussed in business interactions is comfort. Comfort mediates the effect of interaction behaviors in service encounters on overall service quality and customer satisfaction (Lloyd and Luk, 2011). Comfort is a positive emotion arising from the interaction between customers and service providers and benefits the perceived service quality and satisfaction. The authors define comfort as “an emotion characterized by feeling at ease due to lack of anxiety in a service interaction and emotion is normally referred to as a mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts (Lloyd and Luk, 2011, p.178).” The feeling of comfort enhances the rapport of the interpersonal interaction through diminishing negative emotions, such as anxiety.

Rapport contributes to satisfaction, loyalty and word-of-mouth communication by creating positive interaction between customers and employees (Gemler and Gwinner, 2000). The two dimensions of rapport are enjoyable interaction and personal connection. Enjoyable interaction represents the feeling of care and friendliness during the interaction, while personal connection is defined as the perceived bond between two parties (Gemler and Gwinner, 2000).

As a service recovery strategy, rapport influences consumer responses to service failure. DeWitt and Brady (2003) address that existing rapport between customer and employee increases postfailure customer satisfaction and repatronage intentions. Rapport also decreases negative word of mouth. The study points out the positive effect of smooth interaction between customer and employee in service recovery and customer complaint processes, and further suggests the significant role of rapport from the initial interaction in customer service.

In this research, rapport is defined as a customer's positive feeling of having an enjoyable interaction and personal connection with an employee, representing a harmonious interpersonal relation between two interactants (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000; Lim et al., 2017).

Trust

Trust is a key element in relationship marketing. Since marketing theory and practice has shifted interests to relational exchanges, the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing implies trust and commitment as two key mediating variables (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Morgan and Hunt (1994) conceptualize trust as "existing when one party has confidence in exchange partner's reliability and integrity (p.23)." The effects of dyadic antecedents, including relationship investment from the seller, on customer-focused and objective performance outcomes are mediated by trust between two parties (Palmatier et al., 2006). Communication between sellers and customers is considered as a dyadic antecedent in relationship marketing.

Trust has been studied in behavioral science as a vital role in relationships between individuals as well as between individuals and organizations (Orth, Bouzdine-Chameeva, and Brand, 2013). Trust has not only been studied in interpersonal relationship as an essential element, but also been included as a mediating factor in the relationship between specific nonverbal communication and product evaluation. Orth, Bouzdine-Chameeva, and Brand (2013) investigate the relationship between trust and nonverbal behaviors of a salesperson in the retail context. A salesperson who directly interacts with customers in retail stores is considered as the social factor, which effectively influences product value perceptions and store patronage intentions (Baker, Parasuraman, Grewal and Voss, 2002). Orth and colleagues (2013) propose that a salesperson's touch increases customer trust. Trust plays a mediating role in the positive relationship between touch and product evaluation such as attractiveness, quality and purchase intention. The authors further suggest that the supporting evidence of the relationship between trust and touch may come from previous findings that certain forms of touch remind individuals of maternal physical contact and trust in early stage life. This evidence could be further applied in explaining the positive effect of touch in interpersonal relationship building and liking.

A study on the determinants of trust in a service provider suggests the moderating effect of length of relationship (Coulter and Coulter, 2002). The results show that the "person-related" service representative characteristics are more influential in the early stage of relationship in the business to business context. The "person-related" characteristics such as empathy, politeness, and similarity are more like "peripheral cues." These reveal the importance of social factors in relationship building and maintenance.

The length of relationship is linked to the stage of the relationship building. Reciprocity, rapport, and trust are essential elements in customer relationship marketing. Rapport plays a significant role in the explorative stage of relationship building and trust contributes to the continuity of relationship.

As related to the co-creation of value during customer relationships, Baumann and Meunier-FitzHugh (2014) suggest that trust is the facilitator of the co-creation during the interaction. Interpersonal trust between salesperson and buyer is suggested to consist of two distinct but highly interrelated facets: cognition-based trust and affect-based trust. Cognition-based trust relies on a rational basis, for example, knowledge about the trustee from previous experience. The accumulated knowledge enables the buyer to make a tentative prediction. According to their conceptual framework, during initial discrete interaction, rational cognition-based trust arises. When the evaluation of the interaction outcome is positive, cognition-based trust and additional affect-based trust emerges over the future interaction. Affect-based trust composes the emotional ties between individuals in the relationship dyad which generates feelings of security. Moreover, the connection is perceived to be reliable and strong (Baumann and Meunier-FitzHugh, 2014).

To consider both initial discrete interaction and relational interaction, both cognition-based trust and affect-based interpersonal trust are included in this dissertation for further investigation. In service relationships, cognitive trust and affective trust have been studied as distinctive dimensions of trust that have different antecedents. Service provider expertise and product performance are antecedents of cognitive trust, while similarity is an antecedent of affective trust (Johnson and Grayson, 2005). Results of their study provide the potential interest and need to investigate other cues of salespeople on

two dimensions of trust. Previous research has looked at the effects of salespeople' cues on trust in general (Wood, Boles and Babin, 2008). The two dimensions of trust, affective and cognitive, should be investigated separately, in linking to different cues of salespeople. Neuro-linguistics programming proposes that rapport and trust are built through synchronization of modes of communication between communicators, and nonverbal signals are suggested as an important mode of communication (Wood, 2006).

In this research, affect-based trust is defined as the feelings of confidence towards a partner, generated by the level of care and concern the partner displays; cognition-based trust is defined as "a customer's confidence or willingness to rely on a service provider's competence and reliability" (Johnson and Grayson, 2005, p.501). To capture both the cognitive and emotional responses of customers during interactions with employees, rapport, cognition-based trust and affect-based trust are included in the conceptual framework for this research.

Affect

Emotions could be conveyed through facial expressions, which further influence the affective states of each other through emotional contagion (Sundaram and Webster, 2000; Pugh, 2001). Nonverbal signals, including smile and eye contact, have been studied as the display of positive emotion, which positively related to customers' positive affect (Pugh, 2001). Negative affect, for example angry, has been investigated to be transferred between communicators through emotional contagion (Dallimore, Sparks, and Butcher, 2007). According to Jung and Yoon (2011), nonverbal signals of employees influence customers' emotional responses and customer satisfaction. The emotional contagion theory suggests that the emotional state of a person affects the other person's emotion

during the process of interpersonal communication. Yuksel (2008) also provides the linkage between nonverbal service behaviors and customer affective assessment using social exchange theory. For this research, positive affect is included as an immediate reaction from the customer after interacting with the frontline employee.

Frontline Employees

With the development and wide usage of technology, many products and services are delivered through self-service technology. However, people are still significant in producing and maintaining superior customer relationships for many organizations. For example, flight attendants, shopping assistants, personal bankers, and instructors are highly involved in customer relationship building and directly interact with customers. Even with the technology-mediated service, the smart interactive service such as remote repair of equipment, remote diagnosis and remote training that require significant human interaction are growing across industries (Wunderlich, Wangenheim, and Bitner, 2013).

A relational approach is suggested to be more effective when a connection is built between individuals rather than an individual and organizations; an interpersonal relationship between customer and salespeople is stronger, more intense, and last longer than an individual-to-organization connection (Palmatier et al. 2006; Baumann and Meunier-FitzHugh, 2014).

Process and people are considered as two elements of the expanded marketing mix for services. The frontline employee is an essential part of the bilateral interaction during service encounters. Both frontline employees and customers are contributing to the mutual communication process. The flow of the interaction is influenced by everyone

involved in the “moment of truth,” which is the interaction between employees and customers (Zeithaml et al., 2012).

According to Booms and Bitner (1981), customer interface is one of the exclusive problems related to service firms. The process including the interaction between customers and service providers could bring problems to the firms. The involvement of human behavior and interpersonal communication brings ambiguities in service delivery and complicates the process. With the evolving service economy and the focus on service for any type of firms including those in manufacturing, people and process are essential components of the marketing mix strategy.

Frontline employees play essential roles in delivering customer experience, facilitating an emotional connection, and creating a shared identity and value. Frontline employees engaging in the direct interaction with customers should understand the importance of their behaviors – both verbal and nonverbal.

It is important for frontline employees (FLEs) to understand the importance of customer service. The service models of frontline employees proposed by Di Mascio (2010) suggest that the interpersonal behaviors of FLEs influence the service model, which is a combination of how FLEs perceive themselves, their customers, their objectives and how they assess the quality of service provided. In understanding the interaction between FLEs and customers, action identification theory suggests that when people gain experience in an action, people move to higher construal levels which contain a more general understanding of the action and focus on why rather than details and how. The interpersonal theory proposed by Leary in 1957 (as cited in Di Mascio, 2010) represents two dimensions underlying all interpersonal behaviors: affiliation and control.

Affiliation represents “the regard a person has for another,” and control underlines “the degree to which a person attempts to control another’s behavior (Di Mascio, 2010, p.69).”

In understanding the two orthogonal dimensions of interpersonal behavior (shown in Figure 2.1), the author suggests detachment or cold-heartedness at one end and agreeableness and warmth at the other end of the affiliation dimension. As for control dimension, assuredness and dominance is at one end and unassuredness and submissiveness is at the other end. These two dimensions will be further discussed with communication style mentioned later in this chapter.

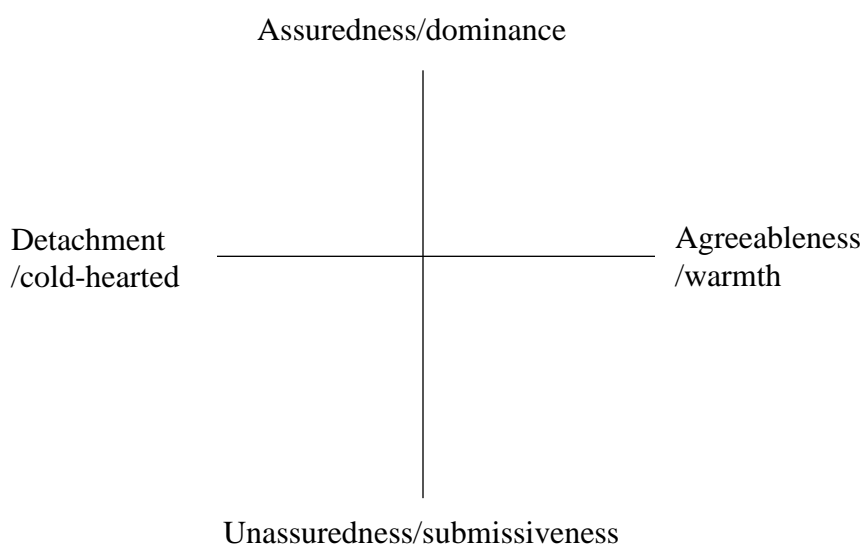


Figure 2.1: Dimensions of Interpersonal Behaviors (Di Mascio, 2010)

Frontline employees, as the boundary spanner in a firm, are sometimes known as the emotional labor who need to manage emotions with customers as a part of the work (Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen and Sideman, 2005). Hochschild (2003, p.7) defined the term “emotional labor” as the “management of feelings to create publicly observable facial and bodily display.” Hochschild further suggests two processes implied in

emotional labor: deep acting and surface acting. Deep acting requires individuals to modify feelings to match the required expression, whereas in surface acting, individuals modify expressions without changing inner feeling (Grandey, 2003). The encounter satisfaction perceived by customer is influenced by the cognitive appraisal of service quality, mood from the interaction and the quality of interpersonal performance (Barger and Grandey, 2006; Grandey et al., 2005).

Frontline employees with relational exchange will focus on social exchange. A social exchange creates a sense of shared responsibility in service settings, influencing the customer's positive emotional response (Sierra and MacQuitty, 2005). The interpersonal communication between FLEs and customers contributes to the long-term relationship.

Wood, Boles and Babin (2008) present how customers form trustworthiness perceptions during an initial sales encounter. The results of the study show that verbal and nonverbal cues of a salesperson, including a business's physical appearance, influence the trustworthiness perceptions, the perceived expertise and likeability of a salesperson, and a firm's capability. The positive cues of a salesperson, which play an important role in influencing customer perceived impressions, includes appearing to listen to customer, making frequent eye contact, smiling a lot, having a friendly face, and greeting a customer with a firm handshake. These nonverbal signals positively affect trust through perceptions of likeability and expertise of a salesperson (Wood, Boles, and Babin, 2008).

The effect of employees in influencing customer outcomes, such as satisfaction, loyalty intention, word-of-mouth has been supported in marketing literature (Keh, Ren,

Hill and Li, 2013; Manzur and Jogaratnam, 2006; McKechnie, Grant, and Bagaria, 2007). The effect of emotional labor on individual well-being, including job satisfaction, and organizational well-being, in term of organization performance, has been investigated as well (Grandey, 2000). Nonverbal communications between employees and customers are dyadic in nature, and the emotional displays of both communicators are influencing the feelings, perceptions, and judgments of both senders and receivers.

Nonverbal Communication

Customer perceptions are influenced by interacting with employees, both verbally and nonverbally. Nonverbal communication has been studied in several disciplines such as communication, psychology, and anthropology. Nonverbal messages are “silent messages,” and the actions rather than our speech contribute to our everyday interactions with others and influence our intimate, social and working relationships (Mehrabian, 1971). The three dimensions of Mehrabian’s communication model are verbal, vocal and visual elements. Body movements have been studied in the context of attitudes of liking, status and power, and deception. The effects of nonverbal communication on attitudes arise from a combination of body movements. Mehrabian’s research (as cited in Knapp, 1980, pp.135-136) shows that liking is positively associated with a forward lean, close proximity, more eye gaze, openness of arms and body, direct body orientation, touching, postural relaxation, and positive facial and vocal expressions. Other researchers have investigated similar behaviors under the label of warm versus cold to liking/disliking. Table 2.1 shows some typical cold versus warm behaviors adapted from previous research. Clore et al. (as cited in Knapp, 1980) provide a list of behaviors, limited to a

female's actions towards a male, and ask people to rate the behaviors as conveying liking or disliking.

Table 2.1: Cold and Warm Nonverbal Behaviors (Knapp, 1980)

Cold behavior	Warm behavior
Gives a cold stare	Looks into his eyes
Sneers	Touches his hand
Gives a fake yawn	Moves toward him
Frowns	Smiles frequently
Moves away from him	Grins
Looks away	Sits directly facing him
Pouts	Raises eyebrows
Picks her hand	Nods head affirmatively
Adapted from G.L. Clore, N. H. Wiggins, and S. Itkin, "Judging Attraction from Nonverbal Behavior: The Gain Phenomenon," <i>Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology</i> 43(1975): 491-497.	

Nonverbal behaviors have also been shown to have stronger effects than verbal strategy in gaining compliance (Segrin, 1993). The author reviews the theories used in previous studies in explaining the relationship between nonverbal behaviors and compliance. (1) Expectancy theory suggests that people have expectations about the appropriate level of behavior which determines the positive or negative arousal produced by the violation of expectations. (2) Speech accommodation theory proposes that "people may change their communication behaviors when interacting with others as a function of their attitudes toward each other (p.170)." The style of the communicator could influence the perception of attitudes and behavior of the partner. (3) Demand theory: nonverbal behaviors could function as demands in certain sufficient degree, which produces arousal. Individuals respond to these behaviors through complying with the request and reduce the negative arousal. (4) Arousal intimacy theory: some nonverbal behaviors including gaze,

touch, and close space are suggested to produce perceptions of intimacy between the communicators. Nonverbal behaviors that display intimacy could lead to a change in the receiver's arousal positively or negatively.

Williams, Spiro and Fine (1990) propose an interaction/communication model and suggest the content rules, code rules and style rules in communication.

Communication content is defined as the ideational material contained in the message. Communication code is composed of both verbal and nonverbal symbolic expressions. Verbal codes are grammar, syntax, pronunciation, language etc. Nonverbal codes are voice qualities, body movements, spatial distances etc. Nonverbal communications could enhance or distract from verbal efforts by communicating feelings, preferences, or liking in support or contradiction of verbal message (Williams et al., 1990).

Knapp (1980, pp.54-55) suggest that our surroundings, including the nonverbal communication of the others, influence our perceptions of formality, warmth, privacy, familiarity, constraint, and distance. Less relaxed and more superficial and stylized communication behaviors are perceived as more formal. Relaxed and comfortable communication behaviors encourage us to feel psychologically warm. Enclosed environments usually suggest greater privacy. With greater privacy, the speaking distance is close and more personal messages might be exchanged. When we are in unfamiliar environments, which are laden with ritual and norms we do not yet know, we are hesitant to move too quickly. When we meet a new person, we are typically cautious, deliberate, and conventional in our responses. The intensity of perceptions of constraint is related to the space available to us in the environment. Sometimes our responses within a given environment will be influenced by how close or far away we must conduct our

communication with another. This may reflect actual physical distance (an office on a different floor, a house in another part of the city) or it may reflect psychological distance (barriers separating people who are physically close (Knapp, 1980, pp.54-55).

Studies in communication widely support the influence of nonverbal signals on communication outcomes. In this section, the author first presents the categories of nonverbal signals proposed by the literature, and then reviews the relevant studies in marketing and psychology, showing the effectiveness of nonverbal signals on customer perceptions, attitudes, evaluations and behaviors.

Categories of Nonverbal Signals

Nonverbal signals can be generally summarized as body motion or kinesics, physical characteristics, touching and body contact, paralanguage (such as voice qualities), proxemics, artifacts, and environmental factors (Bonoma and Felder, 1977). According to Mehrabian (1972, p.1), “nonverbal behaviors refer to actions as distinct from speech.” It thus includes facial expressions, hand and arm gestures, postures, positions, and various movements of the body, legs and feet. The nonverbal behaviors put more emphasis on the movements of body parts that are visible.

Nonverbal communication can be categorized based on different criteria including functions, movements of body parts and roles of sender and receiver. Nonverbal cues are used for a specific purpose, or a more general purpose. Some nonverbal cues are used to communicate and convey meanings, and some are used to express emotions and intentions (Knapp, 1980, p.4). According to Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972), there are five major categories of nonverbal behaviors based on the functions.

Emblem refers to the small class of nonverbal acts that can be accurately translated to words. Knapp (1980, p.125) suggests that some emblems are used across several cultures such as nodding the head for agreement, clapping for approval, raising one's hand for attention, and rubbing hands to indicate coldness. These nonverbal communications have been translated to verbal meanings suggesting the sender's feeling and intention. Emblems are widely used when speech is blocked, for example, waving at your friend in a crowded and noisy party.

Illustrator is considered as a part of the speech and emphasis. The body movements and the speech are tightly linked. This type of nonverbal behaviors can be used to emphasize a word, point to present objects, sketch a path of thought, or depict a reference (Knapp, 1980, p.6). When you try to describe the size of an object, when you talk to your friend, or when you try to make sure everyone understands the concept during a presentation, you will use illustrators to achieve these goals.

Affect display is the third function. This category is focused on facial expressions that display the sender's affective states. Affect displays can enhance, contradict or be unrelated to verbal affective statements. And the affect displays can occur intentionally or not, with awareness or without awareness (Knapp, 1980, p.7).

A regulator works as the initiator and terminator of a speech. These nonverbal behaviors can tell the speaker to continue, elaborate, hurry up or repeat. Greetings and good-byes can be conveyed with nonverbal communication including eye contact, facial expression and certain gestures as suggested by Knapp (1980, p.7). Movements such as handshakes and hand waves are used during communication. Other emblematic gestures

such as the peace sign, raised fist, or the “thumbs up” gesture are often used in greeting process.

Adaptor, the last category, refers to movements for the satisfaction of bodily needs. It also implies the response to certain learning situations, such as learning to perform some instrumental action, learning to manage our emotions, or learning to get along with others (Knapp, 1980, p.8). Ekman and Friesen’s examination of psychiatric patients and normal individuals suggests that adaptors are most used when a person’s psychological discomfort and anxiety increase (as cited in Knapp, 1980, p.134). But a person may “freeze” if the level of anxiety is too high. Certain self-adaptors are associated with certain feelings such as self-grooming (running fingers through the hair).

Bonoma and Felder (1977) list two more examples of the general cataloguing method of nonverbal communication besides Ekman and Friesen’s classification. Wiener and colleagues categorize nonverbal communications to search, correction, regulators and message modulations. Search occurs when the speaker is searching for a word to use in verbal communication and the speaker has to pause longer than a stop. Corrections are nonverbal behaviors used to address the change of verbal expressions. Regulators are behaviors that are used as cues for checking encoding, decoding, and speaking (Wiener, Devoe, Rubinow, and Geller, 1972). Argyle (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977) provides a cataloguing method of eight types: sign language, illustrations used during speech, synchronizing signals and feedback used during speech, prosodic signals, feedback of others, emotions and interpersonal attitudes, rituals and ceremonies, and sequences of social acts.

Furthermore, Branigan and Humphries (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977) categorize nonverbal behaviors based on the movements of body parts including mouth region, eyebrows, eyelids and eyes, gaze direction, additional facial expressions, head movements, hands and arms, lower limb, and trunk.

Jenkins and Johnson (1977) suggest that body language includes hand movements, facial expression, eye contact, posture, proxemics, and body rhythms. Hand movements are further categorized using Ekman and Friensen's (1972) classification including emblems, illustrators, and adaptors. Facial expressions include smiling, frowning, forehead wrinkling, and expression of true feelings such as fear, anger, and sadness. Eye contact is visual behavior that can display the individual difference and work as the instrument of power. Postures can be used in interpersonal relationship to promote rapport of the interaction. Proxemics is studied in using personal distance zone and social space. Additionally, body rhythms include synchrony showing the receiver is following the speaker and taking speaking turns.

Hulbert and Capon (1972) present a classification scheme for interpersonal communication based on the receiver role and the sender role in their study. The receivers perceive signs from visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory channels which are basically the five senses except taste. Meanwhile, the sender role can be classified as one of the four types: static and uncontrollable, static and controllable, low frequency dynamic and high frequency dynamic.

As mentioned in the section on employee behaviors in rapport building, the five categories of rapport-building behaviors defined by Gremler and Gwinner (2008) give a categorization of verbal and nonverbal behaviors in retailing settings. The verbal and

nonverbal behaviors described by customers in commercial settings reveal the five categories of behaviors. The descriptions of the five major categories are listed in Table 2.2. Behaviors under each category contribute to rapport-building during interactions between customers and employees.

Table 2.2: Five Categories of Nonverbal Behaviors in Commercial Settings (Gremier and Gwinner, 2008)

Uncommonly attentive behavior	Employee performs out-of-the-ordinary or above-and-beyond actions to build rapport.
Common grounding behavior	Employee seeks to discover through serendipity something that he or she has in common with the customer.
Courteous behavior	Employee demonstrates genuinely courteous behavior that makes the interaction enjoyable and might not be considered in the company's best interest.
Connecting behavior	Employee explicitly attempts to develop a connection with the customer through a bond or sense of affiliation.
Information sharing behavior	Employee attempts to share information with or gather information from the customer to understand and serve his or her needs better.

Table 2.3 shows classifications of nonverbal communication in the literature reviewed. The numbers of categories and criteria used to classify the signals vary from study to study. The literature shows no consensus in categorizing the nonverbal signals. This research adapted one of the categorizing criteria proposed by Hulbert and Capon (1972) to discuss the relevant nonverbal signals studied in the marketing and communication literature.

Table 2.3: Categories of Nonverbal Signals

Authors	Number of Categories	Criteria	List of Categories
Ekman and Friesen (1969, 1972)	Five categories	Based on the function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Emblem b. Illustrator c. Affect display d. Regular e. Adaptor
Wiener, Devoe, Rubinow, and Geller (1972)	Four categories	Based on nonverbal signals' relationship with verbal communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Search b. Correction c. Regulators d. Message modulations
Hulbert and Capon (1972)	Ten categories	Based on the roles of receiver and sender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sender role: static or dynamic b. Receiver role: visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory
Argle (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977)	Eight types		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Sign language b. Illustrations used during speech c. Synchronizing signals and feedback, d. Prosodic signals, e. Feedback, f. Emotions and interpersonal attitudes, g. Rituals and ceremonies, h. Sequences of social acts.
Branigan and Humphries (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977)	Nine categories	Based on the movements of body parts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mouth region b. Eyebrows c. Eyelids and eyes d. Gaze direction e. Additional facial f. Head movements g. Hands and arms h. Lower limb i. Trunk
Jenkins and Johnson (1977)	Six categories		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hand movements b. Facial expression c. Eye contact d. Posture e. Proxemics f. Body rhythms

The Influential Nonverbal Signals

As there are various ways of looking at nonverbal signals, the first step of this study is to list the relevant nonverbal signals based on one categorizing method. Nonverbal signals can be categorized in various ways discussed above, including functions, moves of body parts and roles of sender and receiver. To organize the related studies reviewed in this research, the categorization of Hulbert and Capon (1972) is adapted, shown in Table 2.4. Hulbert and Capon (1972) provide the classification scheme for interpersonal communication based on the sender role and receiver role. For this dissertation, the nonverbal signals are those in the category of a combination of dynamic and visual, as well as in the category of a combination of dynamic and tactile, specifically touching behavior. The major nonverbal signals in this research belong to the visual inputs of the receiver. For instance, appearance is not included, because the color of the employee's attire would not change during an interaction; the voice quality is not included, as voice is not visually perceived. In this dissertation, kinesics (posture, gesture and facial expression), proxemics, touching, and direction are studied as the major influencers in interpersonal communication.

Table 2.4: Nonverbal Signals Related to Roles of Sender and Receiver (Hulbert and Capon, 1972)

Receiver role	Sender role			
	A Static Uncontrollable	B Static Controllable	C Dynamic (low frequency)	D Dynamic (high frequency)
1. Visual	a. Physical features (race, sex, age, etc.)	a. Clothing (style, neatness) b. Physical features (hair style, facial hair)	a. Posture b. Axial orientation c. Distance	a. Body movement b. Facial expression c. Gesture d. Head orientation
2. Auditory	a. Voice set	a. Accent	a. Temporal speech b. Accent c. Voice qualities	a. Vocalizations b. Verbal
3. Tactile and olfactory		a. Personal odor	a. Touching behavior b. Thermal	

The following sections review studies on nonverbal behaviors in marketing and communication and provide a guideline in investigating the relevant nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees during interaction.

Kinesics

Kinesics (posture, gesture and facial expression) of the sender convey the emotions that influence the receiver's perceptions and judgments of the sender, including trust, warmth, liking and etc. (Puccinelli et al., 2010; Manning et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2017; Knapp, 1980). The conveyed feelings of the sender can be positive or negative

(Strack, Martin and Stepper, 1988; Riskind and Gotay, 1982; Reinhard and Sporer, 2008), which suggest the mixed effect of nonverbal signals on customer outcomes.

Posture. Posture refers to the position of the whole body while communicating. Previous research in marketing investigates the effect of server posture on restaurant tipping (Lynn and Mynier, 1993). The authors suggest that squatting down next to the tables during the initial visit to the table increases the tips from those tables compared to standing.

Certain postures are linked with certain perceptions and judgments of the communicator. According to Carney et al. (2010), open postures are used by human and other animals to express power. While closed positions are related to powerlessness. Displaying powerful postures increases individual's neuroendocrine level, feeling of power and tolerance for risk. The authors further illustrate the idea that displays of power cause advantaged and adaptive psychological, physiological, and behavioral changes (Carney et al., 2010). The hunched, threatened postures, as opposed to a relaxed posture (e.g. an expansive and upright posture) provoke more depressed feelings and more stress (Riskind and Gotay, 1982). This study suggests the effect of physical postures on emotional experience and behavior using self-perception theory. The self-perception theory assumes that "when internal cues for emotions are weak, ambiguous, or unavailable, a person is functionally in the same position as an outside observer who must infer his/her emotions from self-observations" (Riskind and Gotay, 1982, p.275). The postures of individuals serve as cues for interpretation.

The postures of a sender do not only influence the receiver's perceptions, but also the sender's feelings. Strack, Martin and Stepper (1988) imply that inhibiting and facilitating typical muscles related to smile increases enjoyment. The experimental procedure, using a different approach to facilitate the facial muscles, reduces the participants' attention towards their faces and interpretation of their facial actions. The findings suggest that individuals' facial expression can influence emotional experience without cognitive processing of recognizing the emotional meaning of the facial expression. Another study conducted by Stepper and Strack in 1993 also supports this finding. Stepper and Strack (1993) reveal that the upright posture induces pride. Individuals' posture influences specific posture related feelings, and the influence is not mediated by any interpretational factors. The findings demonstrate that feelings can be affected by sensory input without cognitive interpretation. The study further illustrates the difference between noetic and experiential representation: noetic representation is more focused on knowledge or related to propositional representations in cognitive psychology. While experiential representation is closely related to sensory process that does not require inferences based on semantic interpretation of the stimuli. In addition, the results suggest a difference between reporting feelings and making judgments.

Moreover, postures of the sender also influence the receiver's behaviors, which reflect the receiver's feelings. Holland, Wolf, Looser, and Cuddy (2017) suggest that individuals try to avert their gaze from the face of people who display dominance with their postures. This study actually brings up both the sender and the receiver's nonverbal behaviors including the facial expression and eye contact. Nonverbal cues such as gaze aversion, adaptors (as mentioned above that can occur when there is a feeling of anxiety)

and posture shifts can be considered as the basis for credibility attributes (Reinhard and Sporer, 2008).

Leigh and Summers (2002) study the buyers' impression of salespeople' nonverbal cues in the industrial selling setting. Five nonverbal cues including eye gaze, hesitations, gestures, clothing and posture are studied in influencing buyers' perceptions of salespeople and evaluation of the videotaped sale presentation. Gesture and posture show no effect in this study with the manipulation of neutral level versus restricted level in gesture and formal versus informal posture. However this research might specify the importance of the nature of the context and the expectations of customers in a selling context. The division of formal and informal posture is not an effective way to investigate the impact of nonverbal signals. This result calls for future research to investigate the effect of nonverbal signals using effective manipulation.

Gesture. Gestures refer to the movements of a body part, especially hand and head, in communication. As mentioned above, certain gestures are used to replace words such as waving one's hand to say goodbye and nodding one's head to say yes. Gestures have been mostly investigated together with other nonverbal cues in marketing literature. Leigh and Summers (2002) suggest that gestures should be studied as part of an overall nonverbal cue pattern, because even strong manipulations of arm and hand gestures show little impact on the buyers' social impression of the salespeople. Harrigan and colleagues (1991) suggest that self-touching behavior is related to the feeling of anxiety. For instance, hand rubbing is positively related to anxiety, and self-touching of the nose is perceived as more expressive and warm than touching hand or arm.

Facial Expression. Face conveys communication of emotions, attitudes and intentions (Knapp, 1980, p.161). Facial expression is one of the most expressive ways in interpersonal communication as it can convey the true feelings of an individual with or without awareness, and intentionally or unintentionally. The experimental results of Mehrabian's study show that the total degree of liking previewed by others consists of 55 percent facial liking, 38 percent vocal liking and only 7 percent verbal liking (1971, p.43).

Puccinelli and colleagues (2010) suggest that customers' facial expressions can lead to how they feel. This is consistent with the results mentioned earlier that certain postures can affect the feelings of the individual, such as a power posture will enhance confidence. Mimicking the positive facial expression of the partner can affect the individual's emotion.

Smiling has been considered as an essential display of nonverbal communication in service encounters. Smiling increases the trust perceived by others (Manning et al. 2014). Smiling service providers receive higher evaluations of customer satisfaction than neutral service providers (Söderlund and Rosengren, 2008). Authentic smiling also increases perceived service quality (Andrzejewski and Mooney, 2016). Wang, Mao, Li, and Liu (2017) suggest that people smile to build rapport in interpersonal communication, and smiles also are interpreted as an intention to build friendship by the observer. The authors hypothesize that smile intensity influences two fundamental dimensions of social judgments –warmth and competence. According to Wang et al. (2017, p.787), “a broad smile displayed by the marketer (defined as someone who promote or sells a product or service) is perceived as warmer and less competent compared to a slight smile.” Smiling,

a part of facial expressions, has been proven to influence the customer perceptions of the marketer.

Facial expressions are suggested to convey emotions of the sender, which further influence the receiver's emotions. Pugh (2001) investigates the antecedents and consequences of employees' emotional displays. The research points out the importance of emotional labor in organizations. Customers' emotions can be influenced by employees' affects through the emotional contagion in service process. The emotional displays used in this study include smile and eye contact. Employee emotional expressiveness is defined as the use of nonverbal communication to convey emotions (Pugh, 2001). Employees are trained to manage their emotional displays. We, as human beings, also learn personal display rules to display affect appropriately in some situations. Another important aspect is that we might state multiple emotions on our face, which is referred as "affect blends" (Knapp, 1980).

Dallimore, Sparks, and Butcher (2007) examine the emotional contagion in a service failure context, as measured by facial displays and affective states of the customers and the service provider. The authors suggest the importance to manage the emotional contagion, showing that the facial displays of angry customers will be mimicked by service providers, which leads to stronger negative affective states of the service provider than those exposed to customers without angry facial displays. This research points out the potential need to investigate the dyadic emotional contagion process during service encounters.

However, customer emotions are not only changed by the extent of employee smiling, but also influenced by the authenticity of the emotional labor display (Henning-

Thurau, Groth, Paul and Gremler, 2006). The authenticity of emotional labor reflects the genuineness of the smile in this study. The deep acting and surface acting of emotional labor have been discussed in literature, and it is measured by the self-evaluation of the employee. As mentioned previously, the authenticity of positive displays is considered as the quality of interpersonal performance, which affects the encounter satisfaction and perceived employee friendliness (Grandey et al., 2005).

Proxemics

Proxemics is related to the study of using distance such as personal space and social distance (Knapp, 1980, p.10). Literature has discussed proxemics with four primary distance zones: intimate space, personal space, social distance, and public zone (Hashimoto and Borders, 2005). In American culture, intimate space is the space from zero to two feet within which the most personal interactions take place. Personal space is from two to four feet where most everyday social interactions take place. Social distance is from four to twelve feet that are considered as formal speaking environment. Public zone is beyond twelve feet.

Closeness is also linked with liking (Mehrabian, 1971). The behavior of being close to a person indicates the feelings and attitudes toward the person. The author uses the example in a social setting to help illustrate the relationship between the two terms: a person being addressed or looked at by the speaker most is perceived to be more liked and admired than those whom had be barely mentioned. People notice the avoidance or the approach behavior of others in social settings to interpret the attitudes and intentions

of the others. Furthermore, getting closer to others symbolizes the tendency to self-disclosure (Mehrabian, 1971).

Price, Arnould, and Tierney (1995) investigate the effect of intimate proxemics on evaluations of the service encounter using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative study suggests the three dimensions of extended, affective, intimate service encounters —duration, affective content and proxemics. Intimate service encounters in this study refer to situations in which the distance between provider and customer is within 36 inches. The authors propose that intimate proxemics increase feelings of involvement, attachment and interactions, which lead to boundary open transactions. Furthermore, intimate proxemics benefit the overall evaluation of service encounters. This proposition might be limited by particular factors, including gender, culture, length of relationship and service type (new service or not) as recommended by Hashimoto and Borders (2005).

Hashimoto and Borders (2005) examine the effect of proxemics on travelers during sales contacts in hotels by adjusting the conversational distance between travelers and salespeople when they are standing facing each other with no barriers. The results of their study indicate that customers react negatively and shorten the encounter by withdrawing if the salesperson invades their intimate space without a proper relationship. According to the conflict and intimacy equilibrium model, developed by Argyle, Dean and Cook (as cited in Hashimoto and Borders, 2005), a person needs to decide the distance by acting to approach or to withdraw when a stranger approaches. The other model mentioned by the authors is the arousal or attribution theory which suggests that a physiological arousal occurs when the distance between two individuals decreases.

Taking the possible situational and personal factors into consideration, a recent study investigates the effect of personal space encroachment on purchase intention through a feeling of acceptance in a retail store setting (Esmark and Noble, 2016). Compared to the study with travelers in hotel setting, the study done by Esmark and Noble (2016) examines how the physical proximity between the shopper and employees increases the shopper's feeling of acceptance, which leads to higher purchase intention. However, the effect of physical proximity on acceptance is moderated by the negative affect –anxiety and the importance of being in-group to the shopper. The importance of being in-group is considered a personal factor that moderates the effect of personal space on consumer behavior.

Spatial distance cues, with or without reference to the self, can influence people's emotional experiences and evaluations (Williams and Bargh, 2008). Results of proxemics studies on customer responses and behaviors seem to suggest a similar conclusion as the effects of kinesics. The positive effect of intimate distance might be moderated by personal or situational factors, such as gender and relationship length (Hashimoto and Borders, 2005).

Touch

Interpersonal touch has been considered as an influential nonverbal behavior in human interaction. Touch has gained attention recently in a marketing context by influencing customer perception (Orth, Bouzdine-Chameeva, and Brand, 2013).

Touching behavior is used to communicate attitudes, such as dominance, affection and

liking (Knapp, 1980). However, touch can mean different things in various conditions and can be used differently in diverse cultures.

In marketing literature, touching behaviors have been studied in the context of a restaurant, showing that touch increases the tipping amount of customers, but not the performance ratings of the server, the restaurant's atmosphere, or the dining experience. The authors advocate that touch effects can occur without consciousness (Crusco and Wetzel, 1984). Studies of touch in retail settings show that touching a customer in a store increases their shopping time, evaluation of the store and the amount of shopping (Hornik, 1992). However, the role of touch differs from culture to culture. One study was conducted in Israel (Sundaram and Webster, 2000), which shows that touch is perceived as a statement of closeness, warmth, affection, and empathy. The usage of touch increases the perceived friendliness and empathy of the service encounters.

In the context of retailing, touch creates trust between customers and salespeople, which further influences product evaluation (Orth, Bouzdine-Chameeva, and Brand, 2013). The authors also propose the moderating effects of need for touch and personal touching behavior on the relationship between touch and trust. The personal touching behavior scale used by Orth et al. (2013) is adapted from Larsen and LeRoux, which incorporates the moderating effects of cultural differences and personal characteristics.

More recently, Webb and Peck (2015) develop and validate a scale measuring the comfort with interpersonal touch, which is defined as "the degree to which an individual is comfortable with intentional interpersonal touch from or to another person" (p.62). Previous research has focused on the positive effect of touch from the perspective of the

receiver. Incorporating this scale in touch research can account for the difference between individuals' perceptions of comfort and interpersonal touch.

Martin (2012) conducted a study on the negative effects of touch in a retail setting. This study investigates the negative effect of accidental interpersonal touch on consumer evaluations and shopping time. However, this type of touch does not belong to the realm of intentional interpersonal touch studies. Only intentional interpersonal touch behaviors will be included in this current study. Some of the common types of touch in Western culture are patting on the head, back or shoulder, shaking hands, and holding hands (Knapp, 1980, p.152).

Direction

As mentioned in the beginning of this dissertation, a flight attendant will crouch to serve passengers, and restaurant server squats to take orders; the direction of the eye contact also influences the perceptions of communicators. Peracchino and Meyers-Levy (2005) suggest that the stylistic properties of advertisement pictures affect perceptions of individuals when they engage in ample processing or are high need for cognition. When people are under heuristic processing, general assumptions are made using our former experience that imply that “objects that are high or above eye level tend to be relatively dominant, powerful, and superior; whereas, those that are low or below eye level are subordinate, weak, and inferior (Meyers-Levy and Peracchino, 1992, p.456).”

The other aspect related to direction is eye gaze. Eye behaviors are associated with various expressions (Knapp, 1980). We are following certain eye-related norms, such as not looking too long at a stranger or looking at someone's certain body parts.

Gaze and mutual gaze are mostly discussed and used for communication purposes. Gaze is an individual's looking behavior, while mutual gaze refers to the situation when the two communicators are looking at each other. Gaze and mutual gaze are used to initiate or end the channel of communication, to monitor feedback during communication, to express emotions, and to indicate the nature of the interpersonal relationship. Gaze and mutual gaze are suggested to have an inverse u-shaped relationship with status. Gaze is also positively related to evaluations like friendly, favorable and liking. The link between gaze and dominance, potency or confidence is not clear, but more gazing will occur when an individual is trying to dominate or influence his or her partner. Gaze decreases with negative attitudes, but could be increased (motivated) by hostility or affection, which suggests interest and involvement in the interpersonal relationship. Knapp (1980) also suggests that gazing psychologically reduces the distance between the communicators. Eye contact, which has been widely used and discussed in marketing literature, is the condition of mutual gaze.

The Mixed Effect of Nonverbal Signals

To investigate the effects of nonverbal signals on customer outcomes, Table 2.5 and Table 2.6 provide an overview of the relevant marketing literature involving 26 studies of nonverbal signals in a marketing context, both empirically and conceptually. Study contexts, major dependent variables and moderators, and research methods are presented in the table. The mixed effects of nonverbal signals reveal the need to incorporate a way to combine several nonverbal signals together in influencing customer perceptions, evaluations and judgments. Since some nonverbal signals positively affect

customer judgments, while others negatively affect customer judgments, the first objective of this study is to seek the nonverbal signals noticed by customers in commercial settings when interacting with frontline employees. The employment of a qualitative study will be able to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the typical nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees noticed by customers?
2. Do customers care about nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees?

Table 2.5: Empirical Studies of Nonverbal Communication in Marketing

Research	Study context	Moderator	Mediator	Outcomes	Nonverbal signals	Data Origin
Hornik (1992)	Retail	Gender, attractiveness		Shopping time, customer evaluations of the store and the server, amount of tipping	Touch	Field experiment
Peterson, Cannito and Brown (1995)	Personal selling			Perceptions of salespeople	Voice characteristics	Experiment
Gabbott and Hogg (2000)	Service encounters	Gender, culture, and personal characteristics		Perceptions of a service event, service quality, overall evaluation of the service	Posture, eye contact, smiling, nodding, vocal tone and intonation, and touch	Experiment
Leigh and Summers (2002)	Industrial salesperson			Social impressions, evaluations of the sales presentation	Eye gaze, posture, gesture, speech hesitation, and professional attire	Experiment
Grandey, Fisk, Mattila, Jansen, and Sideman (2005)	Service encounters	Context busyness and quality of task performance	Employee friendliness	Encounter satisfaction	Smile	Field experiment
Hashimoto and Borders (2005)	Service encounters (hotels)	Gender		Image of salesperson and satisfaction	Proxemics	Experiment
Peterson (2005)	Personal selling			Number of sales,	Body angle, face,	Field

	(for education/training purpose)			self-report of effectiveness of the training, self-report of usefulness	arms, hands, and legs	experiment
Henning-Thurau, Groth, Paul and Gremler (2006)	Service encounters		Positive affect, rapport, and satisfaction	Intention	Smile	Experiment
Söderlund and Rosengren (2008)	Service encounters		Appraisal of worker's emotional state, positive emotions of customer, attitudes	Satisfaction	Smile	Experiment
Lee and Lim (2010)	Retail and service encounters	Emotional receptivity		Attitudes, positive feelings, and behavior intention	Intensity of nonverbal expressed emotion (facial expression, voice intonation, and gestures)	Experiment + field experiment
Jacob, Guéguen, Martin, and Boulbry (2011)	Retail		Customer judgment	Buying behavior and product choice	Nonverbal mimicry	Experiment
Orth, Bouzdine-Chameeva, and Brand (2013)	Retail	Culture of touching behavior and need for touch	Trust	Product evaluation	Touch	Interviews + Experiment

Kulesza, Szypowska, Jarman, and Dolinski (2014)	Retail	Attractiveness		Purchase amounts, customer service ratings, and willingness to return	Nonverbal mimicry	Field experiment
Bashir and Rule (2014)	Retail			Source trait ratings, and perceived accuracy of information	Clothing color and facial width-to-height ratio	Experiment
Esmark and Noble (2016)	Retail	Anxiety, and in-group importance	Acceptance	Purchase intention	Proxemics	Field experiment + survey data
Wang, Mao, Li, and Liu (2017)	Marketer (defined as someone who promotes or sells a product or service)	Perceiver's regulatory focus and consumption risk	Social judgements	Purchase intention	Smile	Experiment + survey data

Table 2.6: Conceptual Studies of Nonverbal Communication in Marketing

Research	Study context	Moderator	Mediator	Nonverbal signals
Hulbert and Capon (1972)	Marketing			Visual, auditory, tactile and olfactory
Bonoma and Felder (1977)	Marketing			Nonverbal signals based on psychological dimensions: status and evaluation
Stewart, Hecker, and Graham (1987)	Marketing			Paralinguistic phenomena, temporal characteristics of language, facial expression, body kinesics, gesture, proxemics, eye movements, touch and pictures or symbolic artifacts.
Price, Arnould, and Tierney (1995)	Service encounters			Proxemics
Sundaram and Webster (1998)	Service encounters	Verbal elements	Affect	Kinesics, paralanguage, proxemics, and physical appearance
Sundaram and Webster (2000)	Service encounters		Affect	Paralanguage, kinetics, proxemics, and physical appearance
Gabbott and Hogg (2001)	Service encounters			Proxemics, kinesics, oculosics, and vocalics
Kidwell and Hasford (2014)	Retail	Emotional ability	Nonverbal communication	Facial expression, eye contact, motions and gesture, posture, physical similarity, and perceived similarity

Communication Style

In communication, the nonverbal signals discussed above would not occur solely in influencing the outcomes. One nonverbal signal is not isolated from other nonverbal signals of the communicator. Nonverbal communications have been studied in the form of communication style which integrates different nonverbal signals. Communicator style can affect the perceived attraction of the individual (Norton and Pettegrew, 1977), the persuasiveness of the information (Bashir and Rule, 2014), effectiveness of sales strategy (Fennis and Stel, 2011), and customer perceptions (Notarantonio and Cohen, 1990). Nonverbal signals partially form the communication style of the communicator in terms of displaying the perceived dimensions of communicator style, such as openness, dominance, and friendliness (Notarantonio and Cohen, 1990).

According to Norton and Pettegrew (1977), communication style is a pervasive part of one's interpersonal image. Some communication styles are found to be more attractive such as dominant/open style. The least attractive style is not-dominant and not-open. Communication style can be managed to a certain domain, which is different from the personality of the individual. However, the findings can be affected by context, situation and time (Norton and Pettegrew, 1977).

As mentioned earlier, the characteristics of frontline employees that emerged from the findings of Di Mascio (2010) are consistent with the two dimensions suggested by interpersonal theory. The affiliation dimension includes detachment or cold-heartedness at one end and agreeable and warmth at the other end. The control dimension has assuredness and dominance at one end and unassuredness and submissiveness at the other end.

A service provider's communication style has been categorized as affiliation communication style and dominance communication style (Webster and Sundaram, 2009). The social interaction model developed by Ben-Sira (as cited in Webster and Sundaram, 2009) suggest that "affiliation communication style includes behaviors designed to establish and maintain a positive relationship between communication and listener include those communicate concern, friendliness, empathy, warmth, compassion, humor and social orientation. While dominance communication style includes behaviors establish and maintain the communicator's control in the interaction, such as conciseness, hurriedness, direction-giving, guidance-giving, verbally exaggerating to emphasize a point, and a tendency to dramatize, argue, and gesture when communicating (p.105)." Webster and Sundaram (2009) further propose the moderating effects of service criticality and service nature. When customers have less knowledge and a feeling of anxiety, they are more likely to rely on the affective component of the provider's communication. The affective component refers to the mode of the communicator, which contains the verbal and nonverbal behaviors of communicator, such as level of interest in customers, concern about customers' problem, and time allocation (Webster and Sundaram, 2009).

A study conducted by Bashir and Rule (2014) focuses on the effect of dominance-related communicator cues on customers' judgments of information delivered by the retail employees. This study further links nonverbal communication of retail employees to customer judgments. The two communicator cues displaying dominance are clothing color and facial height-to-width ratio. The results of the study suggest that customers rate information more accurate when the communicator is wearing red than white or blue, or

when the facial height-to-width ratio of the communicator is high versus low. Because red has been supported to be associated with dominance, power, and authority, and individuals with high facial height-to-width ratio are perceived as more dominant than individuals with low facial height-to-width ratio (Bashir and Rule, 2014). The study manipulates the communicator photos with colors of cloth or ties and the facial height-to-width ratio to test the effect of the two cues on customer perceptions. Besides the two factors used in this study, other nonverbal cues of frontline employees can be included in influencing the perceived dominance, which further influence consumer's judgment of information, a person, a store, or a brand.

Nonverbal communication has also been studied as the influencer of initial impressions of instructor competence in terms of likability and trustworthiness. The results suggest that instructors perceived as expressive, warm, and involved are likely to be rated as highly competent (Guerrero and Miller, 1998). The authors suggest that five dimensions of nonverbal behaviors represent both involvement and conversational skill: immediacy, expressiveness, altercentrism, smooth interaction management, and composure (Guerrero and Miller, 1998).

Implementing a nonverbal style that fits the verbal influence strategy orientation advances the strategy's effectiveness, whereas a misfit weakens its effect (Fennis and Stel, 2011). Peterson (2005) used nonverbal communication instructions on body angle, face, arms, hands, and legs in training students. For instance, an eager nonverbal style boosts the effect of the approach-oriented strategy (i.e. door-in-the-face technique), while vigilant nonverbal style decreases its effect. The effectiveness of an avoidance-oriented strategy (i.e. disrupt-then-reframe technique) is increased by using vigilant nonverbal

style (Fennis and Stel, 2011). Not only the fit between nonverbal style and communication strategy, but also individual differences, influence the effectiveness of nonverbal communication. However, the research does not specify the detailed instructions of an effective nonverbal communication.

A salesperson should be flexible and adaptive to the customer's communication style (Manning, Ahearne, and Reece, 2014). This strategy helps build rapport during interactions. The four styles of communication are built on the combination of the two important dimensions of human behavior, dominance and sociability. Dominance is defined as "the tendency to control or prevail over others (Manning, Ahearne, and Reece, 2014, p.92)." Individuals tend to influence others with high level of dominance. Some individual characteristics are related to a high level of dominance such as competitive, authoritarian, outgoing, and assertive. Sociability represents "the amount of control we exert over our emotional expressiveness (Manning, Ahearne, and Reece, 2014, p.93)." This dimension helps us understand how much individuals express their feelings freely. Some characteristics associated with a high level of sociability are easygoing, expressive, friendly, and impulsive. Individuals with a low level of sociability tend to control their feelings. The authors present four styles of communication (shown in Table 2.7) based on two dimensions: dominance and sociability:

1. Emotive style combines higher dominance and higher sociability.
2. Directive style combines higher dominance and lower sociability.
3. Reflective style combines lower dominance and lower sociability.
4. Supportive style combines lower dominance and higher sociability.

Table 2.7: Four Styles of Communication (Manning et al., 2014)

Sociability	Dominance	
	High	Low
High	Emotive style Expressive and willing to spend time maintaining and enjoying a large number of relationships	Supportive style Easy to listen and usually do not express their views in a forceful manner.
Low	Directive style Give orders in a firm voice, in charge of everything facet of the operation.	Reflective style Examine all facts carefully before arriving at a decision, a stickler for detail.

Bonoma and Felder (1977) reviewed the study of nonverbal components of interactive behavior in marketing applications. The nonverbal communications, representing different levels of the two psychological dimensions in Figure 2.2, are adopted from Mehrabian, 1972 (as cited in Bonoma and Felder, 1977). Nonverbal components of interactive behavior included in this study are limited to kinesics, proxemics, facial expression, and direction. Appearance attractiveness and voice quality are not discussed in this study.

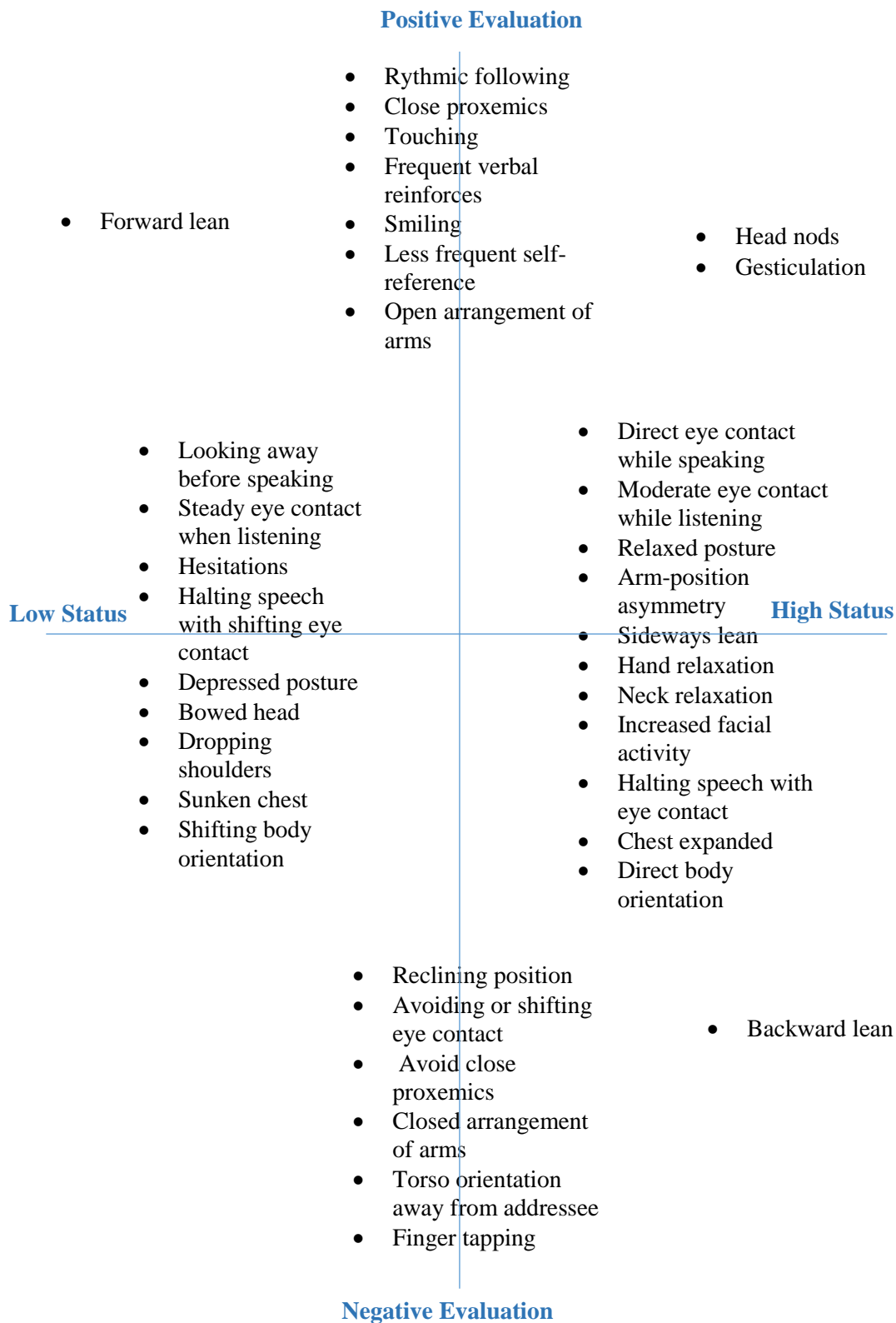


Figure 2.2: Nonverbal Communication Basing on Status and Evaluation (Bonoma and Felder, 1977)

Mehrabian's work (as cited in Knapp, 1980, pp.135-138) points out the role of status in nonverbal communication. High status persons are more likely to have less eye gaze, postural relaxation, greater voice loudness, more frequent use of arms-akimbo, dress ornamentation with power symbols, greater territorial access, more expansive movements and postures, greater height, and more distance. The typical behaviors of high-status individuals might influence the perception of the communicator. Meanwhile, liking shows more forward lean, a closer proximity, more eye gaze, more openness of arms and body, more direct body orientation, more touching, more postural relaxation, and more positive facial and vocal expression than disliking.

Notarantonio and Cohen (1990) investigate the effects of open and dominant communication styles on customers' perceptions, including the interaction, the salesperson, the product, and purchase probability. For product evaluation, a salesperson with a certain degree of dominance, being more persuasive and convincing about the positive attributes of the product, scores higher. For interaction, the evaluation is more positive, because the interaction is more towards a two-way flow rather than one-way communication when the salesperson is less open and allows customers to talk. However, the product type might moderate the effects as innovative products might require more information from the salesperson (Notarantonio and Cohen, 1990). In this research, dominance is positively related to probability of purchase and perceptions of the salesperson. With the limitation of the sales context, this research suggests that consumers evaluate the salesperson, the product and the interaction better when the salespeople do not talk too much about themselves and are confident, enthusiastic, and forceful.

Other Factors Related to Nonverbal Signals

Other characteristics related to the expressiveness of the individual will influence the effect of nonverbal signals on communication outcomes. Facial expressions not only communicate emotion and intentions, but also the intensity of the feeling and desires (Wang et al., 2017). The results show that the consumption context and the customers' regulatory focus moderate the effect of smile intensity on warmth and competence, which further emphasizes the context and individual differences in perceiving nonverbal communication.

Expressive similarity is “the degree to which a target person’s expressive style is perceived to match the evaluator’s receptivity toward the use of nonverbal cues in communication” and relates to the use of nonverbal behavior to express one’s emotion (Lim et al., 2017, p.658). Expressive similarity contributes to the positive outcomes of a successful service delivery, and in contrast, it backfires on the organization in service failure. The expressive similarity between a customer and employee affects the influential communication factor of frontline employees in customer responses. Some other factors have been discussed in the literature to examine the effectiveness of the communication style of employees. The personality characteristics of frontline employee discussed in relevant studies are presented below.

Emotional receptivity is defined as “the person’s disposition toward experiencing a preferred level of emotional intensity (Lee and Ching Lim, 2010, p.1151).” Customer’s emotional receptivity influences the effects of facial expressions, vocalizations, and hand gestures on evaluation of the communicator. When there is a match between a customer’s emotional receptivity and emotion intensity of the marketer, the customer expresses

greater enjoyment and liking towards the marketer. This result supports the importance of the congruence between two communicators and is consistent with the study of Lim and colleagues (2017). The convergence or divergence between customers and salespeople influence relationship building. Only when there is high convergence of emotional ability between customers and salespeople, will positive emotions be generated, and intimate interactions can be created. In other conditions, when either customers or salespeople have low emotional ability, frustration, confusion, and distrust may occur (Kidwell and Hasford, 2014).

Emotional intelligence has been studied in influencing salesperson creativity and the adaptive selling of a salesperson (Lassk and Shepherd, 2013; Chen and Jaramillo, 2014). Mayer and Salovey (as cited in Lassk and Shepherd, 2013) defined emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to access and /or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (p.26).” As nonverbal behaviors communicate emotions, emotional intelligence of individuals can influence the effects of nonverbal behaviors on interactions.

Emotional ability, or “ability-based emotional intelligence” is defined as “the ability to skillfully use emotional information to achieve desired customer outcomes” (Kidwell and Hasford, 2014, p.527). Emotional ability comprises four dimensions: perceiving emotion, facilitating emotion, understanding emotion, and managing emotion (Table 2.8). The authors suggest that emotional abilities impact four aspects of face-to-face interactions, including consumer characteristics, salesperson characteristics,

convergence of emotional abilities, and environmental characteristics. The authors also suggest the moderating role of emotional ability on the effects of nonverbal communication characteristics such as facial expressions, eye contact, gestures, and perceived similarity.

Table 2.8: Four Dimensions of Emotional Ability (Kidwell and Hasford, 2014)

Dimension	Definition
Perceiving emotion	The ability to accurately identify and distinguish emotions that are present in a situation and facial expressions
Facilitating emotion	The ability to appraise emotional information as an input to decision making
Understanding emotion	The ability to comprehend how emotions work together and change over time
Managing emotion	The ability to regulate emotions in oneself and others

Self-monitoring, defined as “the degree to which individuals can and do monitor their self-presentation, expressive behavior, and nonverbal affective display,” is reported to influence the interaction between salesperson and customer (Fine and Schumann, 1992, p.287). The results suggest salesperson perceptions of relationship potential are more positive when the self-monitoring levels of the two communicators are different. This is consistent with the conclusion that the attitude and behavior consistency of a low self-monitor gives cues to a high monitoring communicator who pursues guidance from the partner. The mismatch between the two communicators contributes to the relationship building in this case.

Personal Characteristics

Personal characteristics, such as gender, culture, and attractiveness, are considered as moderators in influencing the effects of nonverbal signals on customer outcomes. The effect of touch on customer perceptions is suggested to be influenced by individual differences, such as need for touch or comfort with interpersonal touch.

As suggested by Gabbott and Hogg (2000), gender is one of the most important determinants of nonverbal communication. Men and women encode and interpret nonverbal cues differently. Men may use different nonverbal cues when communicating with women versus men. Women generally have more smiles, closer distance, and more eye contact than men when listening. Men have a higher level of touch avoidance than women as long as the touch is appropriate (Gabbott and Hogg, 2000).

Previous research has suggested that gender moderates the relationship between salesperson attributes and customer relationship, and female customers are generally more sensitive to relational aspects of a service encounter and men to core aspects (Darley, Luethge, and Thatte, 2008). Nonverbal signals are considered more relational aspects in most conditions. Gabbott and Hogg (2000) suggest that male and female encode and interpret communication cues differently. In this research, gender is included as a moderator that influences the relationship between nonverbal signals and customers' affect, rapport, and trust perceptions.

Stereotype Content Model

As I have reviewed the studies on the effects of nonverbal behaviors, impressions and judgments can be made by exposure to the kinesics, interaction and appearance of the communicator during the communication process (Knapp, 1980; Ames, Fiske, and Todorov, 2011). In our daily life, nonverbal signals provide informational cues in any particular situation (Knapp, 1980, p.21).

The Stereotype Content Model suggests that the two primary dimensions of social perceptions are competence and warmth (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu, 2002). The stereotype content model is applied to explain varied perceptions of social groups, as well as, judgments of individuals, brands and organizations (Wang et al. 2017). Warmth judgments capture the perceived intentions and the evaluations of kindness, friendliness, trustworthiness and helpfulness, and the facets of warmth relate to the dimensions of sociability, positive evaluation, friendly, and open (Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner, 2010). Meanwhile, competence judgments consist of perceived ability and perceptions of effectiveness, intelligence, power and skillfulness. This dimension represents the evaluations of dominance, high status, and powerfulness (Wang et al., 2017).

Relating the meaning conveyed by nonverbal signals discussed above, the two dimensions of stereotype content can cover the major dimensions of customer's perceptions of frontline employees including dominance, control, openness, and affiliation. The Stereotype Content Model portrayed in Table 2.9 illustrates the warmth \times competence interaction. The two variables which are suggested to predict dimensions of stereotypes are status and competition (Fiske, Cuddy, Glick and Xu, 2002).

Table 2.9: Stereotype Content Model (Fiske et al., 2002)

Warmth	Competence	
	Low	High
High	Paternalistic prejudice Low status, not competitive	Admiration High status, not competitive
Low	Contemptuous prejudice Low status, competitive	Envious prejudice High status, competitive

Baumann and Meunier-FitzHugh (2014, p.12) propose the following relationships:

P1: The salesperson's ability and integrity are positively related to the emergence of cognition-based trust on the part of the customer.

P2: The salesperson's benevolence and similarity are positively related to the emergence of affect-based trust on the part of the customer.

Ability is defined as "a set of skills or competences that have been gained within a particular domain and includes technical and market knowledge," and benevolence is defined to include "concepts of positive intentions, altruism, friendliness or desire to help and comprises a benign attitude towards the other party and the willingness to do them good without extrinsic rewards" (Baumann and Meunier-FitzHugh, 2014, p.10). This further suggests the positive relationship between competence and cognition-based trust and the positive relationship between warmth and affect-based trust.

According to the rapport-building behaviors proposed by Gremler and Gwinner (2008), employees, as a major determinant in rapport building, contribute to customer-employee interaction through uncommonly attentive, common grounding, courteous, connecting, and information sharing behaviors. Among these behaviors, courteous behaviors demonstrate the employee's unexpected honesty, civility, and empathy that the employee is truly looking out for the customer (Gremler and Gwinner, 2008). Connecting

behaviors form a bond or sense of affiliation, while information sharing behaviors include giving advice, imparting knowledge and asking questions. The connecting behaviors build the potential link between employee expertise and rapport development. Competence judgment includes perceptions of ability and skill. These two types of rapport building behaviors (courteous behaviors and connecting behaviors) suggest the positive effects of both warmth and competence on rapport. In sum, Figure 2.3 presents a proposed model to be tested in this research.

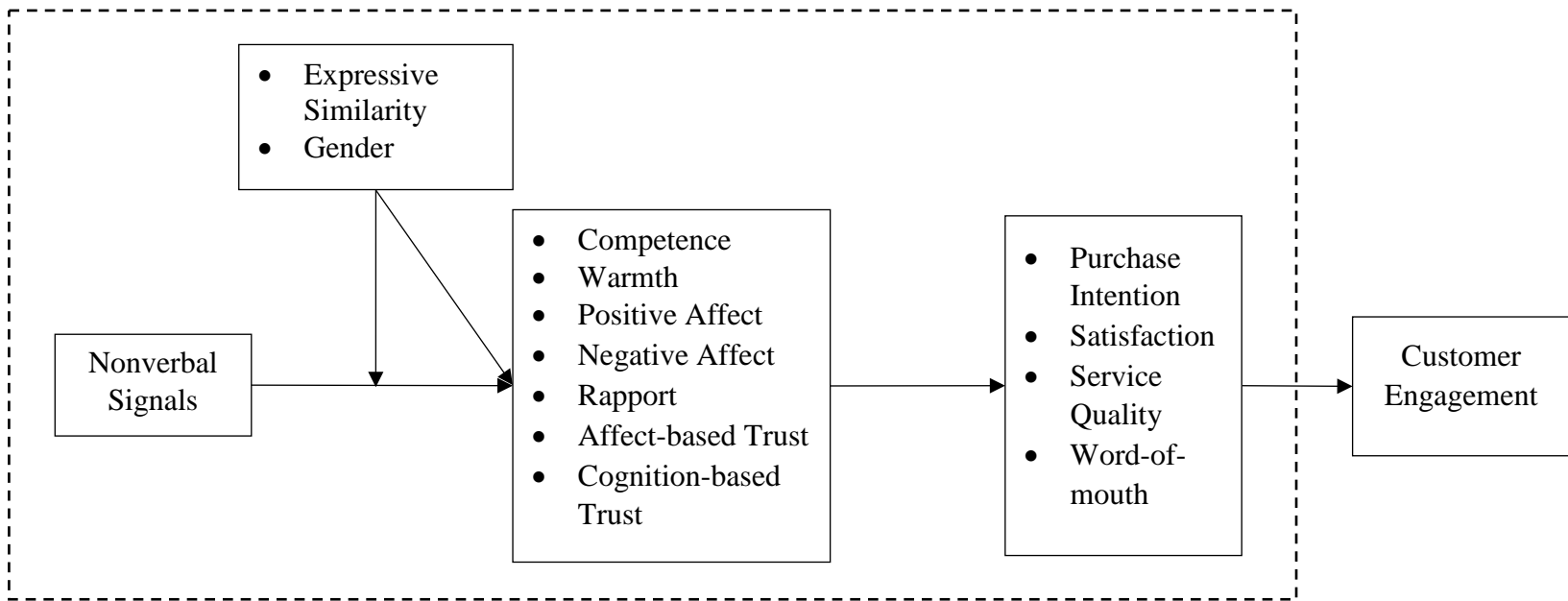


Figure 2.3: A Proposed Model

The model inside the dot lined box is empirically tested in this study.

Hypotheses

The proposed model involves both initiating and maintaining customer relationship through rapport and trust. The measurement of customer engagement from the existing literature can hardly capture customer outcomes after the initial interaction with employees. Future research can investigate the effects of communication style on customer engagement by collecting data with longitudinal measurement.

As suggested by the literature, nonverbal signals, posture, gesture, facial expression, proxemics, touching, and direction displayed by employees are perceived by customers, which further influence customer reactions. The emotional responses of customers can be positive or negative. For example, open and expansive postures symbolize power and dominance, while hunched, threatened postures are linked with depressed feelings and stress (Holland et al., 2017; and Riskind and Gotay, 1982). Facial expressions can convey multiple emotions (Knapp, 1980). Both positive and negative affect of customers can be influenced by employees through emotional contagion. Smiling is positively related to enjoyment, trust, high quality, rapport, warmth, competence, positive emotion, and friendliness (Strack et al., 1988; Manning et al., 2014; Andrzejewski and Mooney, 2016; Wang et al., 2017; Pugh, 2001; and Grandey et al., 2005), while eye gaze aversion shows anxiety (Reinhard and Sporer, 2008). Emotional displays of employees through nonverbal signals influence the affective states, perceived rapport and trust towards the employees. Close proxemics are positively linked to positive emotions unless the intimate space is invaded without proper relationship (Hashimoto and Borders, 2005). Touch is positively linked to friendliness, empathy, and

trust (Sundaram and Webster, 2000; Orth et al., 2013). The nonverbal cues of employees are suggested to influence customers' emotional status through emotional contagion.

According to the definitions of the primary dimensions of social perceptions, warmth judgments capture the perceived intentions and the evaluations of kindness, friendliness, trustworthiness, and helpfulness, and the facets of warmth relate to the dimensions of sociability, positive evaluation, friendliness, and openness (Aaker, Vohs, and Mogilner, 2010). Meanwhile, competence judgments consist of perceived ability and perceptions of effectiveness, intelligence, power, and skillfulness. This dimension of interpersonal judgments can represent the evaluations of dominance, high status, and powerfulness (Wang et al., 2017). The two primary dimensions are closely linked to the two dimensions of nonverbal signals: warmth and dominance. The nonverbal cues of employees are hypothesized to influence customers' perceptions of warmth and competence of the employees. Moreover, warmth and competence perceptions of employees are suggested to influence purchase intention.

Rapport is defined as a customer's positive feeling of having an enjoyable interaction, and personal connection with an employee, which represents a harmonious interpersonal relation between two interactants (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000; Lim et al., 2017). Nonverbal signals, behaviors of employees, should influence the interaction between customers and employees. As for trust, affect-based trust is defined as the feelings of confidence towards a partner, generated by the level of care and concern the partner displays; cognition-based trust is defined as "a customer's confidence or willingness to rely on a service provider's competence and reliability" (Johnson and Grayson, 2005, p.501). Nonverbal signals are shown to convey caring behaviors and

confidence indicators. The immediate responses of customers generated from interacting with employees further influence customer outcomes including purchase intention, satisfaction, service quality and positive word-of-mouth (Grandey et al., 2005; Henning-Thurau et al., 2006; Söderlund and Rosengren, 2008; Jacob et al., 2011; Orth et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2017).

Previous research has suggested the effect of expressive similarity between communicators on perceived rapport with frontline service employees (Lim et al., 2017). Customers who have a similar expressive style to the employee's style are more likely to rate the interaction positively than those who share less similarity. Female customers will be influenced more by nonverbal signals of employees than male customers because females, in general, are more sensitive to relational aspects, including nonverbal communications, than males (Darley et al. 2008; Gabbott and Hogg, 2000).

The following hypotheses are developed basing on the theoretical development:

H1: Nonverbal signals of employees influence customers' perceptions of competence of employees and warmth of employees.

H2: Nonverbal signals of employees influence customers' perceptions of cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, positive affect, negative affect and rapport.

H3: Gender of the customer moderates the effects of nonverbal signals on customers' perceptions of competence, warmth, cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, positive affect, negative affect and rapport.

H4: Expressive similarity between employees and customers is positively related to rapport. Customers with high expressive similarity with employees perceive higher level of rapport than customers who share less similarity with employees.

H5: Warmth, competence, rapport, cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, and positive affect are positively related to purchase intention.

H6: Warmth, competence, rapport, cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, and positive affect are positively related to satisfaction.

H7: Warmth, competence, rapport, cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, and positive affect are positively related to perceived service quality.

H8: Warmth, competence, rapport, cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, and positive affect are positively related to positive word-of-mouth.

H9: Negative affect is negatively related to purchase intention, satisfaction, perceived service quality, and positive word-of-mouth.

CHAPTER 3

METHDOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology used in this dissertation. The multi-method approach, employed to develop the main study and test the associated hypotheses, is described in four sections. The first section discusses the qualitative study in detail, followed by categorizing the results from qualitative study; the second section presents an experimental design. Next, all measurement scales to be used in this study are described. Lastly, the methods and techniques of analysis used to test the hypotheses listed in Chapter 2 are discussed in detail.

Qualitative Study

To understand the importance of nonverbal signals from a customer's perspective, the first step of this study is using face-to-face semi-structured interviews to find out the nonverbal behaviors noticed by customer during interaction with employee and the importance of nonverbal communication in commercial interaction. Semi-structured interviews are often used to gather essay-type response from respondents to open-ended questions. In face-to-face semi-structured interviews, the researcher can ask open questions from more general to specific focused. Using semi-structured interviews can

address very specific issues and get the explanations of responses from respondents. Semi-structured responses are easier to interpret than other qualitative approaches (Babin and Zikmund, 2016). Face-to-face interviews provide the opportunity to ask respondents for clarifications. Participants will be asked to describe an employee and an interaction in by talking or writing down the descriptions. All the questions are prepared ahead of time.

A pretest is conducted before the main qualitative study to ensure the content, refinement and length of the interview. The process of interviewing graduate students provides feedback on the questions. The researcher is able to adjust the questions to provide clear guidelines and generate relevant responses. The final questions of the semi-structured interview are listed below:

- Have you recently interacted with any frontline employee (including salesperson, service provider etc.) or do you have any memorable interactions?
- Could you describe any details you remember about the interaction?
- How do you evaluate (think/feel about) the experience? Positive or negative?
- How do you evaluate (think/feel about) the frontline employee?
- Could you elaborate more on why?
- What made you feel that way? What did she/he do or say?
- How long did you interact with them?
- Did you make any purchase at that time?
- Do you notice other's nonverbal behaviors when communicating?
- Do you use nonverbal behaviors when you communicate?

The purpose of the interview is to identify the nonverbal behaviors that customers recognize during interactions with employees in a commercial setting. Also, the

responses address the importance of nonverbal communication during interactions. Audio files are transcribed to texts and further analyzed by using NVivo11 software by QSR International. The qualitative study is conducted to answer the first two research questions and provide insights about the customer's perspective.

The Experiment

The experiment will be used to test the proposed model. The results of the experiment will answer the third research question and test the hypotheses. Four sets of nonverbal behaviors are created for the scenarios with same verbal descriptions. As previous research (Sundaram and Webster, 2000) suggests, when the service quality is hard to assess, customers depend on the service providers' nonverbal behavior to build attitudes, judgments and perceptions. The four settings are put into a service setting: financial service. Initially, the sample nonverbal signals of each cell are presented in Table 3.1. The nonverbal signals are gathered from previous research on nonverbal communication (Bonoma and Felder, 1977; Knapp, 1980) mentioned in Chapter 2. The final manipulated parts are listed in Table 3.2 after eliminating behaviors that may not be relevant in the service setting. A copy of scenarios used is included in Appendix C and a copy of the measurement scales used is included in Appendix D. The four sets of nonverbal signals are hypothesized to influence receivers' perceptions of the senders.

Table 3.1: Sample Nonverbal Signals

Eye contact, touching, smiling frequently, sits directly facing the customer, nods head affirmatively, smiling, open arrangement of arms, close proxemics, forward lean.	Head nods, using gesticulation such as both of your hands apart and palms facing towards the audience.
Looks away (avoiding or shifting eye contact., cold stare, fake yawn, moves away (avoid close proxemics),	Direct eye contact, pointing, backward lean, finger tapping

Table 3.2: Nonverbal Signals of Each Condition

Cartoon 1 Eye contact, smiling, sits directly facing the customer, open arrangement of arms, handshake, close proximity, forward lean, same eye level	Cartoon 2 Eye contact, smiling, standing direct facing the customer, touching, close proximity, open arrangement of arms, handshake, higher eye level (standing up)
Cartoon 3 Looks away (avoiding or shifting eye contact), no smiling, closed arms, same eye level, distal proximity	Cartoon 4 Direct eye contact, , standing direct facing the customer, pointing, backward lean, open arrangement of arms, higher eye level (standing up), distal proximity

Pretests will be conducted to ensure the success of manipulations that respondents successfully see the scenarios and cartoons. The context of the scenario is a service setting where customers are considerably involved. The main experiment will be administrated online through Qualtrics. The subjects of this study will be general U.S. household population over twenty-five years old. Participants will be randomly assigned to one of the four conditions with the corresponding nonverbal behaviors of frontline employee in the descriptions. After reading the scenario, other key variables of interest,

competence, warmth, rapport, cognition-based trust, affect-based trust, positive and negative affect, expressive similarity, satisfaction, purchase intention, positive word-of-mouth, perceived service quality, and demographic information will be collected.

Conceptual Definition and Measurement Scales

This section presents the measurement scales used in this study. The conceptual model purports to examine the effects of rapport, affect-based trust, cognition-based trust, positive affect, and negative affect on customer outcomes, namely purchase intention, satisfaction, perceived service quality and positive word-of-mouth.

Competence

The competence dimension consists of perceived ability and perceptions of effectiveness, intelligence, power and skillfulness. This dimension of interpersonal judgments can represent the evaluations of dominance, high status, and powerfulness (Wang et al., 2017). The measurement of competence is a four-item scale adapted from Wang et al. (2017).

1. Competent
2. Intelligent
3. Capable
4. Skillful

Warmth

The warmth dimension captures the perceived intentions, the evaluations of kindness, friendliness, trustworthiness and helpfulness, and relates to the dimensions of sociability, positive evaluation, friendliness, and open (Aaker et al., 2010). The measurement of warmth is a four-item scale adapted from Wang et al. (2017).

1. Warmth
2. Kind
3. Friendly
4. Sincere

Positive Affect

Positive affect is the pleasurable emotion generated from the environment. Previous research (Babin, Lee, Kim, and Griffin, 2005) has found the positive effect of positive affect on consumer shopping value, both utilitarian and hedonic. The items used to measure positive affect are adopted from Babin et al. (2005).

1. Excited
2. Energetic
3. Happy
4. Satisfied

Negative Affect

Negative affect relates to the absence of intrinsic rewarding in a consumer experience. The items used to measure negative affect are adopted from Babin et al. (2005).

1. Bored
2. Annoyed
3. Sleepy
4. Angry

Rapport

Rapport is defined as a customer's positive feeling of having an enjoyable interaction and personal connection with an employee, which represents a harmonious interpersonal relation between two interactants (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000; Lim et al., 2017). The two dimensions of rapport are enjoyable interaction and personal connection. Enjoyable interaction represents the feeling of care and friendliness during the interaction, while personal connection is defined as the perceived bond between two parties (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000). Previous research (Hening-Thurau et al., 2006; Lim et al., 2017) used one dimension of the scale to measure rapport, because personal connection dimension suggests a long-term relationship between customer and employee. In this research, perceptions and judgements are based on the initial interaction, and there is a lack of long-term relationship. This study uses the six-item scale adapted from Gremler and Gwinner (2000).

Enjoyable Interaction

1. In thinking about my relationship with this person, I enjoy interacting with this employee.
2. This employee creates a feeling of “warmth” in our relationship.
3. This employee relates well to me.
4. In thinking about my relationship, I have a harmonious relationship with this person.
5. This employee has a good sense of humor.
6. I am comfortable interacting with this employee.

Affect-based Trust

Affect-based trust is defined as the feelings of confidence towards a partner, generated by the level of care and concern the partner displays (Johnson and Grayson, 2005). The measurement scale of affect-based trust is adapted from Johnson and Grayson (2005) and modified for the context in this research.

1. If I share my problems with this employee, I feel he or she would respond caringly.
2. This employee displays a warm and caring attitude towards me.
3. I can talk freely with this employee about my problems at work and know that he or she will want to listen.

Cognition-based Trust

The definition of cognition-based trust is “a customer’s confidence or willingness to rely on a service provider’s competence and reliability” (Johnson and Grayson, 2005).

The measurement scale of cognition-based trust is adapted from Johnson and Grayson (2005) and modified to fit the context in this research.

1. Given by the description of the frontline employee, I have no reservations about acting on his or her advice.
2. Given by the description of the frontline employee, I have good reason to doubt his or her competence. (reversed)
3. I have to be cautious about acting on the advice of this frontline employee, because his or her opinions are questionable. (reversed)
4. I cannot confidently depend on this frontline employee since he/she may complicate my affairs by careless work. (reversed)

Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is defined as the likelihood of making a purchase in the given situation (Esmark and Noble, 2016). This scale uses four, seven-point items, and the items and the extreme verbal anchors for each item are listed below (Oliver and Swan, 1989).

Please rate the likelihood of you purchasing the product.

1. Not at all likely/ very likely
2. Improbable/ probable
3. Impossible/ possible
4. Uncertain/ certain

Satisfaction

Satisfaction in this research is considered as having an affective nature over a cognitive interpretation, which is described as an emotion resulting from appraisals (Babin and Griffin, 1998). Four items are used from Babin, Lee, Kim, and Griffin (2005). Please indicate your agreement with the following statements (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

1. I am satisfied with my decision to get my service here.
2. I feel ____ about getting service from this employee (1 = very bad to 7 = very good).
3. I am ____ (very unsatisfied-very satisfied) with this employee.
4. I am ____% satisfied with the employee (0-100).

Service Quality

Service quality measurement is adopted from Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) to capture the cognitive evaluation of performance based service quality. The overall service quality is measured by three seven-point items.

Please rate the overall service quality you received from this employee:

1. Poor/excellent
2. Inferior/superior
3. Low standards/high standards

Positive Word of Mouth

The measurement scale of positive word of mouth used in this research is adapted from Brügger, Foubert, and Gremler (2011). The authors define positive word of mouth as the expressed likelihood of making positive comments about something specific.

1. I am likely to say positive things about this _____ to other people.
2. I am likely to recommend this _____ to a friend or colleague.
3. I am likely to say positive things about _____ in general to other people.
4. I am likely to encourage friends and relatives to _____.

Expressive Similarity

Expressive similarity is defined as “the degree to which a target person’s expressive style is perceived to match the evaluator’s receptivity toward the use of nonverbal cues in communication” (Lim et al. 2017). Three items are adapted from the study of Lim, Lee and Foo (2017).

1. This employee is like me in terms of our communication style.
2. This employee is similar to me in terms of how he/she uses body language to express himself/herself.
3. This employee is like me when it comes to using nonverbal communication.

Demographic Information

Demographic information of gender, age, ethnicity, income, education and majors, and jobs are asked in the survey. Questions about majors and jobs are asked in a text entry format.

Manipulation Check

The scenario includes pictures of the employee and customer during an interaction in a commercial setting. The content of the conversation between employee and customer will be the exactly same across conditions. The only differences among conditions are the nonverbal signals conveyed by the employee. The nonverbal signals manipulated across conditions are picked from the list of typical behaviors from previous studies, and these behaviors represent at least one from each of the categories discussed in this research. To check the result of the manipulations, questions about the reality of this presentation, the reality of the situation, and the presence of nonverbal signals are asked. Some of the questions are adapted from previous research by Yuksel (2008). Respondents are asked (1) whether the graphical presentation represents a realistic interaction (0=no, 1=yes); (2) whether this situation can happen in real life (0=no, 1=yes); (3) which of the pictures below was depicted in the story that you just saw?

The Analysis

The interviews are recorded for qualitative analysis. The nonverbal behaviors and emotional responses mentioned by participants are picked up by the researcher, and the researcher then groups the nonverbal behaviors based on categories used in this research. Audio files recorded during the semi-structure interviews are transcribed to text and further analyzed using NVivo11 software by QSR International.

Confirmatory factor analysis is performed to validate the measurements used in this study with IBM SPSS Amos software. The multi-item scales used in this research are adapted from previous research; furthermore, confirmatory factor analysis with maximum

likelihood estimation is employed to validate the scales. To assess construct validity, including convergent and discriminant validity, standardized loading estimates should be above 0.5, ideally 0.7 or higher, and average variance extracted above 0.5 are desirable. Construct reliability should be 0.7 or higher to indicate internal consistency (Hair, Back, Babin, Anderson, and Tatham, 2006). AVE greater than each squared correlation between constructs provide evidence of discriminant validity.

One-way ANOVA is conducted to compare means among four different groups to test the H2 and H2. A two-way ANOVA is employed to test H3 by comparing means between treatment groups for competence, warmth, positive and negative affect, rapport, affect-based trust, and cognition-based trust with gender as the moderator. The experiment consists of four conditions. Simple regression is performed to test H4. Multiple regressions are employed to test H5 to H8.

CHAPTER 4

MAIN STUDY AND RESULTS

This dissertation consists of two studies, a qualitative study and an empirical model. This chapter demonstrates the results of the qualitative study, as well as the test results of hypotheses proposed in this dissertation. The results of the qualitative study are presented first, and then the analyses of the hypotheses are discussed.

Qualitative Study

The qualitative study is conducted in the form of a face-to-face semi-structured interview. This study consists of eighteen respondents from a U.S. public university, who are students of several business classes. The respondents were invited to complete an in-person semi-structured interview with the researcher. The sample consists of four female respondents, and fourteen male respondents, with ages ranging from 20-22. Most (94%) of the respondents are currently in college with a concentration in business. The remaining six percent is one non-respondent. The interview includes ten questions, asking respondents about their recent or memorable interaction with a frontline employee. The questions are asked in order from abstract to specific. The respondents' answers were coded using NVivo qualitative analysis software.

Results

The objective of the qualitative study is to answer the first two research questions:

1. What are the typical nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees noticed by customers?
2. Do customers care about nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees?

The first part of the qualitative study results presents the summary of concepts related to research question one. The analysis of the answers of respondents in the semi-structured interviews presents eight concepts. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the concepts.

Table 4.1: Qualitative Analysis Summary of Research Question One

Concepts	Examples	% of respondents mentioned	Categories
Appearance	<p>“He was clean cut, shaving. That’s always nice to me”</p> <p>“About 28, up twenties, a younger man”</p> <p>“He was just wearing short, tennis shoes and shirt, just dressed like a kid...”</p> <p>“She was just kind in a T-shirt, blue jean shorts.”</p> <p>“Just like how he comes as his appearance. Because it was his job, he did show some professionalism”</p>	28% 5/18	Static + controllable and uncontrollable + visual
Voice Tone	<p>“Based on the tone she used whenever she’s communicating. She at least acted to be, you know, she didn’t seem fatigued from working too long”</p> <p>““He upped his enthusiasm, like use his emotions, or just being upbeat about it (voice changed).”</p>	11% 2/18	Dynamic + auditory
Distance (Approach)	<p>“He would say well and got closer again, have his arms on the table, and we look eye to eye again, that’s whenever he would say well look, this’s what we can do.”</p>	22% 4/18	Dynamic (low frequency) + visual

	<p>“Like the second I walked into the store, they came and introduced themselves to me...if I believed it’s negative, if they didn’t come up to me, they are down themselves, they are monotone, didn’t use any hand, they were just work like full of life. I probably go to the next door around.”</p> <p>“As soon as he was free, he walked up to me, I was sitting down, and asked me to come over to his office, and then we started talking. He took the initiative to come over to me and tell me he was ready. He did well.”</p> <p>“The base guys walking out to greet you.”</p>		
Posture	<p>“Just like the pharmaceutical rep, both had good postures, good and positive behavior, kind.”</p> <p>“If you stand up straight and talking like you know what you are talking about, it makes that person seems smarter. If they are just kind like hunched over, scared, nervous and they say something like “I think this... I might...” They are not confident with their answers, makes them seem less knowledgeable and professional.”</p> <p>“Maybe posture, maybe the way they act when they are not at your table, but you can see them, and interaction with other customers.”</p> <p>“Like hands folded, on one leg, off balance”</p>	22% 4/18	
Hand Movements (Gesture)	<p>“He was using gesture, greeting. He uses strong hand signals to drop a point. You could be a salesperson. But if your hands are down in the side, I am not going to be interested and listen to what you are saying.”</p> <p>“There were lots of hands, talking, if you need direction, come on, follow me...”</p> <p>“He definitely used his hands. He used to emphasize what he was saying. This game is going to be almost, just as great as this...”</p> <p>“..., have his arms on the table, and we</p>	28% 5/18	Dynamic (high frequency) + visual

	<p>look eye at eye again...”</p> <p>“Like hands folded, on one leg, off balance”</p>		
Facial Expression	<p>“He was very expressive on his face...”</p> <p>“Yes, you can tell if they didn’t really know what you were asking. You can see on their face. They will smile at you. They looked confused when they don’t know what you are talking about, but they will help you out and try to figure it out.”</p> <p>“Very positive, it wasn’t a straight face, but a positive expression.”</p> <p>“She was smirking a lot.”</p> <p>“He was leaning back and has a shock look on his face...”</p> <p>“They do have sour face.”</p>	33% 6/18	
Smile	<p>“You don’t have to do something special for me if you can just smile and act that you give me the time of the day, you got my business.”</p> <p>“He came up to me smiling and immediately greeted me.”</p> <p>“She was really nice, energetic and smiled.”</p> <p>“He was very happy, like smiling all the time, he was very interactive”</p> <p>“She said “hey” and she smiled”</p> <p>“I think because he was friendly to us, we feel better to ask to do more things and ask him more things. Some people might sit there with no smile. You don’t want to ask them anything.”</p>	33% 6/18	
Eye Contact	<p>“He was not just like sitting there and listening to me. He was like looking at me in the eyes. He is understanding... He was very observant of how I was speaking”</p> <p>“Any eye contact, making it more personal.”</p> <p>“When I entered the store, she initiated eye contact, cause she saw I was kind of walking around trying to decide where I supposed to go.”</p> <p>“And we look eye to eye again, that’s when he says this’s what we could do.”</p>	22% 4/18	

*All respondents mentioned one or more related concepts.

The following section describes each concept and the matching examples in detail.

1. Appearance: Respondents mentioned the physical appearance of employees saying things like “he was clean cut and shaved. That’s always nice to me,” “she was just kind in a T-shirt, blue jean shorts,” and “just like how he comes as his appearance.” The physical appearance and dress of an individual, as parts of nonverbal communication, influence responses of communicators (Knapp, 1980). These parts of nonverbal signals have been suggested to be highly related to physical appearance. In this study, appearance, as a static factor, is not included in the research design. Physical appearance is controlled consistently across conditions by using stick figures in the experimental design.

2. Voice tone: voice quality (paralanguage) is a type of nonverbal signal that is conveyed through the auditory channel. Voice cues have various influences on listener’s perceptions, such as judgment of the speaker, emotions, and persuasion (Knapp, 1980). Respondents mentioned how they could tell the change of the employee’s voice tone and emotion of the employee like “based on the tone she used whenever she’s communicating. She at least acted to be, you know, she didn’t seem fatigued from working too long,” and “He upped his enthusiasm, like use his emotions, or just being upbeat about it.”

3. Distance: the distance between communicators has been discussed with four primary distance zones: intimate space, personal space, social distance, and public zone (Hashimoto and Borders, 2005). Closeness between communicators influences the perceptions of liking, feelings, and attitudes towards each other (Mehrabian, 1971). Individuals notice approaching behaviors of the other person, and distances between them are shortened through approaching. The changes of distance from public zone to social

space or personal space will also affect the perceptions of the receiver. As cited in Knapp (1980), Argyle and Dean suggested that “distance is based on the balance of approach and avoidance forces (p.82)”. Closer distance is often seen when people have high affiliation needs (Knapp, 1980). Respondents mentioned employees’ behaviors of approaching and closing the distance when meeting and serving customers: “he would say well and got closer again, have his arms on the table, and we look eye to eye again, that’s whenever he would say well look, this’s what we can do,” and “he took the initiative to come over to me and tell me he was ready.”

4. Posture: the positions of the whole body or body movements cannot be simply understood or analyzed. But there are some common ideas related to the usage of postures. Postures can be linked to liking or disliking, warmth or coldness, open or closed, status and power, and deception (Knapp, 1980). The respondents mentioned how negative posture could influence their perceptions: “if you stand up straight and talking like know what you are talking about... If they are just kind like hunched over, scared, and nervous...”; “maybe posture, maybe the way they act when they are not at your table, but you can see them, and interaction with other customers,” and “like hands folded, on one leg, off balance.”

5. Gesture/hand movements: gestures, as a subtype of body movements mainly focus on the movements of hands. Gestures are usually accompanied with other nonverbal cues. As mentioned in previous chapter, gestures can be categorized to emblems, affect displays, illustrators, regulators, and adapters (Knapp, 1980). Respondents mentioned employees using hands differently: “he was using gesture, greeting. He uses strong hand signals to drop a point”; “there were lots of hand, talking, if

you need direction, come on, follow me”; “he definitely used his hands. He used to emphasize what he was saying”; “have his arms on the table, and we look eye to eye again...”, and “like hands folded...”

6. Facial expression: facial expression is considered one of the most direct and rich ways to communicate feelings or information. The major focus of facial expression is on the display and interpretation of emotions (Knapp, 1980). Facial expressions are used to facilitate responses to interactions and convey emotional displays. The emotional states of an individual are expressed through his or her face, and receivers can easily perceive the affect. Some facial expressions mentioned by respondents are: “yes, you can tell if they didn’t really know what you were asking. You can see on their face”; “very positive, it wasn’t a straight face, but a positive expression”; “they do have sour face.”

7. Smile: Smiling has been one of the most studied facial expressions. Smile is considered as one of the emblems that could be translated accurately into words like a handshake (Bonoma and Felder, 1977). Barger and Grandey suggest the importance of service with a smile. According to Wang, et al. (2018), smiles can convey positive intent, agreement, or assent and support social interactions. Six out of eighteen respondents mentioned smiling and expressed the positive effects and power of smiling.

8. Eye contact: eye contact has been suggested as a factor that influences communicators’ interpretation of each other such as disinterest (Gabbott and Hogg, 2000). Eye contact offers feedback as a reaction to others in an interaction (Bonoma and Felder, 1977). Eye contact is related to listening behavior but depends on culture (Stewart, Hecker, and Graham, 1987). An equilibrium point is reached in the nonverbal expression of interpersonal intimacy such that any substantial change in one of the nonverbal

behavior leads to a reciprocal change in one or more of the other nonverbal behaviors (Bonoma and Felder, 1977). Eye contact is also positively associated with favorable, high status, and positive evaluation. Respondents mentioned: “he was not just like sitting there and listening to me. He was like looking at me in the eyes. He is understanding... He was very observant of how I was speaking”; “...any eye contact, making it more personal”; “we look eye to eye again, that’s when he says this’s what we could do.”

The described concepts are grouped into higher-level categories using Hulbert and Capon’s categorization of nonverbal behaviors (1972). This categorization method is also used as the guideline to group nonverbal signals in the experimental design of this research. Characteristics of the four categories are presented within the qualitative analysis:

1. Static in nature, controllable and uncontrollable, and received by visual channel of the receiver.
2. Dynamic in nature, controllable, and received by auditory channel of the receiver
3. Dynamic (low frequency) in nature, controllable, and received by visual channel of the receiver.
4. Dynamic (high frequency) in nature, controllable, and received by visual channel of the receiver.

The second part of the qualitative study results address the answers of the second research question by answering the question “do you notice other’s nonverbal behaviors when communicating?” The summary of the 12 responses are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Qualitative Analysis Summary of Research Question Two

Responses	% of respondents
<p>“Oh, without a doubt, especially. I had been in a loan office as internship. It’s like sales. I do exactly what this guy do. Smile, do movements.</p> <p>“Yes, like Walmart is probably a good example, cause you can tell half of the time these people don’t want to be there, or talking to them. You can definitely tell someone is having a bad day, even waiters and waitresses, you can also tell they had a long day or something, you can definitely tell body language and facial expression. Like chick-fil-a, they are always happy there, makes your experience better...”</p> <p>“You can tell when they are interested in satisfying you, they are kind of standing off, you can tell people are interested or not, when they enjoy serving you or not. Any eye contact, making it more personal.”</p> <p>“Yes, I do notice them if I talk to other people. I do notice if they use lots of hands, facial and gestures.”</p> <p>“Yes, I can notice the facial expressions and body motions.”</p> <p>“Yes, I mean if they had anything wrong like personalize. I won’t be able to tell. They had smiling face, look like they are ready to work, help you and get what you need.”</p> <p>“Yes, I think confidence plays a long way, especially your body language. If you stand up straight and talking like know what you are talking about, it makes that person seems smarter. If they are just kind like hunched over, scared, nervous and they say something like “I think this... I might...” They are not confident with their answers, makes them seem less knowledgeable and professional.”</p> <p>“Yes, yes, like their mannerism.”</p> <p>“Like I said, usually I just look for a good attitude, and honest attempts to give me good service, try not to let people know you are fatigue. That you are tired, or you don’t want to be there. Smile, say thank you... Things like that. I was being waited, regular attention, come back and be consistent with your service. Recommendation for food or products, I always really value that... You can really tell, the eyes, if they are not really making effort to smile, maybe posture, maybe the way they act when they are not at your table, but you can</p>	<p>67%</p> <p>12/18 responded directly to Question 9 “Do you notice other’s nonverbal behaviors when communicating?”</p>

<p>see them, and interaction with other customers.</p> <p>“Yes ... You can see everybody right there, while I am waiting, I always look to see the employees, and see how the vibe is for the store that day, because of how they interact with each other, how they interact with the customers. You know, it has been a good day, everybody is happy.”</p> <p>“Yes, I do. I can tell from the first glance if the employee wants to be there or not; if they just want to get through the day. So, whenever I see that, I just kind of ask minimum or talk to them minimum, cause I mean, I don’t know anybody wants to deal with somebody who doesn’t look approachable. Like hands folded, on one leg, off balance, I can tell they don’t want to be there, or have something else going, I will try to find what I can by myself before I ask them for anything.”</p> <p>“I don’t really pay attention to that. But I guess... Some people... Just, I don’t know even what it looks like. I don’t really pay much attention. He came off really friendly, and really nice. I guess some people don’t come off that way. Some employees would be more intimidating to work with. Not as friendly. I think because he was friendly to us, we feel better to ask to do more things and ask him more things. Some people might sit there with no smile. You don’t want to ask them anything.”</p> <p>“Sometimes, it depends. If I go to McDonald’s noon, I know it’s lunch time, but if it’s a normal time, and it takes forever, and might influence my evaluation. If it’s not the restaurant, fault by the particular employee.”</p>	
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Twelve of the eighteen respondents answering the questions directly mentioned that the nonverbal behaviors of employees or communicator are noticed during the interactions. The respondents also mentioned how they process the information and use it to make judgments and decisions such as “you can tell when they are interested in satisfying you...you can tell people are interested or not, when they enjoy serving you or not. Any eye contact makes it more personal”; “like I said, usually I just look for a good attitude, and honest attempts to give me good service, try not to let people know you are

fatigued, that you are tired, or you don't want to be there. Smile, say thank you...things like that.”

Pretest and Pilot Study

Experimental Design

The pilot study of the quantitative study is conducted through Qualtrics using a convenience sample. Fifty-four responses are collected from a public university. The respondents are mainly undergraduate business students. There are four different conditions with the same written scenarios and four different cartoons. Cartoons, rather than pictures or videos, are used to avoid the influence of the physical appearance, such as attractiveness and gender of the employee, and the differences during performance by an actor. Each set of nonverbal signals is a combination of nonverbal behaviors related to warm and dominant behaviors that were mentioned in the interview and previous literature. The full scenarios and cartoons, after adjustment, are available in Appendix C. The goal of the manipulation is to determine whether nonverbal signals influence customers' affect, perceptions of trust and rapport, and social judgments. In the pretest, the respondents were asked (1) whether the graphical presentation represents a realistic interaction (0=no, 1=yes); (2) whether this situation can happen in real life (0=no, 1=yes); (3) which of the pictures below was depicted in the story that you just saw?

Manipulation Check Results

The percentages of respondents who thought the graphical presentation did not represent a realistic interaction and cannot happen in real life are shown in Table 4.3. The

percentage of respondents who choose the right picture they saw is also presented in Table 4.3. The researcher looked at the comments related to the first question and the second question, and then made adjustments in the descriptions and cartoons to realistically represent an interaction.

Table 4.3: Summary of Pilot Study Manipulation Check Results Part One

Questions	Answers	Frequency	Percent
Does the graphical presentation represent a realistic interaction?	No	8	14.8
	Yes	46	85.2
Do situations like this one happen in real life?	No	5	9.3
	Yes	49	90.7
Which of the pictures below was depicted in the story that you just saw?	Wrong answer	21	40.4
	Right answer	31	59.6

For the third question, the means of measured constructs of people who chose the right picture and those who failed to choose the right picture are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Summary of Pilot Study Manipulation Check Part Two

Perceptions	Respondents	N	Mean	F
Competence	Right answer	31	4.81	0.225
	Wrong answer	19	4.67	
Warmth	Right answer	31	5.07	0.001
	Wrong answer	21	5.08	

There are no significant differences between respondents who choose the right picture versus those who failed to choose the right picture. Nonverbal communications are widely used in our daily life. The example Kahneman uses in the beginning of his book, *Thinking Fast and Slow*, shows the face of a woman, and people can tell the

woman is angry and about to shout out without cognitively processing all these cues.

Respondents who saw the nonverbal cues might not be able to choose the right picture that they saw in the survey, but it does not necessarily mean that they did not see it.

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman (2011, pp.20-21) uses System 1 and System 2 to describe activities of our mind.

System 1 operates automatically and quickly, with little or no effort and no sense of voluntary control.

System 2 allocates attention to the effortful mental activities that demand it, including complex computations. The operations of System 2 are often associated with the subjective experience of agency, choice, and concentration.

During the interactions between employees and customers, customers can process information through System 1 or System 2. The mental events that occur automatically are not consciously processed. Certain nonverbal signals can influence customer's judgments and behaviors through System 1 without consciousness. The nonsignificant differences found between respondents who choose the right answer and those who choose the wrong answer provide the evidence of system 1. To ensure that there is no technical issue related to the display of the scenarios and cartoons, the researcher added one question right after the cartoons in the experimental design of the main study. In sum, the manipulation was successful, and some modifications were made for the main study.

Experimental Design Results

The main study of this experiment was conducted using Qualtrics. The sample consists of U.S. household consumers ages 25 and over. This section discusses the sample characteristics, the measurement model assessment and the results of manipulation and hypotheses testing.

Sample Characteristics

Sixty-five subjects were gathered through a Qualtrics Panel. Attention check questions were embedded in the survey to identify those who were speeding and paying no attention during the survey. Some respondents were deleted because of response bias. Subjects that guessed the purpose of the study were eliminated to reduce acquiescence bias. Ten cases were identified and eliminated. The final sample size is 55. Demographic data of the sample is presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Demographic Profile of Sample

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percent
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	28	50.9	50.9
Female	27	49.1	100
<i>Age</i>			
25-34	18	32.7	32.7
35-44	6	10.9	43.6
45-54	8	14.6	58.2
55-64	14	25.4	83.6
65+	9	16.4	100
<i>Ethnicity</i>			
White/Caucasian	39	70.9	70.9
African American	6	10.9	81.8
Hispanic	3	5.5	87.3
Asian	5	9.1	96.4
Native American	1	1.8	98.2
Pacific Islander	0	0	98.2
Other	1	1.8	100
<i>Marital Status</i>			
Single	18	32.7	32.7
Married	25	45.5	78.2
Separated	1	1.8	80.0
Divorced	10	18.2	98.2
Widowed	1	1.8	100
<i>Income</i>			
Under \$20,000	8	14.5	14.5
20,000-49,999	25	45.5	60.0
50,000-79,999	13	23.6	83.6

80,000-99,999	2	10.9	94.5
100,000-149,999	6	3.7	98.2
150,000+	1	1.8	100
<i>Education</i>			
Less than High School	2	3.6	3.6
High School / GED	12	21.8	25.5
Some College	13	23.6	49.1
2-year College Degree	8	14.5	63.6
4-year College Degree	15	27.3	90.9
Master's Degree	5	9.1	100
Doctoral Degree	0	0	100
Professional Degree (JD, MD)	0	0	100
<i>Employment</i>			
Part-time	4	7.3	7.3
Full-time	27	49.1	56.4
Seasonal	0	0	56.4
Student	1	1.8	58.2
I do not work	19	34.5	92.7
Other	4	7.3	100.0

The sample has a similar number of male and female respondents. The age range is from 25 to 77 with a mean of 48 years old. 70.9% of the respondents are White/Caucasian. 45.5% of the respondents are married and 45.5% have an income range from 20,000 to 49,999. 27.3% hold a 4-year college degree and 49.1% are full-time employed.

Measurement Model Assessment

A measurement model with twelve, multiple-item scales was assessed to show the psychometric properties of the measurement. However, the measurement model was assessed using the data including other sets of conditions. Due to the limited sample size of the data for this study, a CFA could not be performed using the sample of 55 respondents. The measurement model assessment is presented in the following section. The descriptive data of the measurement for the sample are presented after the CFA

results. The reliability and convergent validity for the sample of 55 are presented after the CFA results.

The descriptive statistics of the scales suggest adequate data to move forward to validate the scale. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using IBM SPSS Amos 24 to achieve the assessment of the twelve, multiple-item scales model. The initial model produced a χ^2 value of 1814.84 ($p < .001$) and 968 degrees of freedom. The fit indices of this model are shown in Table 4.6 with a comparative fit index (CFI) of .925, and a root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) of .066. According to the fit index cutoff values based on model characteristics, suggested by Hair et al. (2006), these values suggest a reasonably good fit of this model with both a goodness-of-fit index and a badness-of-fit index evaluated.

Table 4.6: Overall CFA Fit Summary

Model	χ^2	df	p	CFI	RMSEA
CFA	1814.84	968	<0.001	.925	.066
Fit Indices for number of variables larger than 30			Significant p-values can be expected	Above .92	Values < .08 with CFI above .92

Table 4.7 provides the standardized loadings. Hair et al. (2006) suggest that standardized loading estimates should be 0.5 or higher, and ideally 0.7 or higher. Next, the measurement model was assessed for construct validity to deal with the accuracy of measurement. Reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity are further assessed. According to Hair et al. (2006), construct validity (CR) values of 0.7 and above, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.5 are ideal. The CFA results presented in Table 4.7 shows that the AVE values all exceed the 50 percent rule of thumb.

Construct reliabilities range from 0.83 for negative affect to 0.97 for positive word-of-mouth. Some of the loading estimates of negative affect and cognition-based trust are below 0.7.

Table 4.7: Summary of CFA Results Including Standardized Loading Estimates

	WA RM	CO MP	PA	NA	CT	AT	RP	PI	PW OM	SAT	SQ	ES
WAR1	0.92											
WAR2	0.92											
WAR3	0.89											
WAR4	0.92											
COM1		0.89										
COM2		0.92										
COM3		0.91										
COM4		0.93										
PA1			0.86									
PA2			0.85									
PA3			0.92									
PA4			0.89									
NA1				0.67								
NA2				0.84								
NA3				0.58								
NA4				0.86								
CT1					0.45							
CT2					0.91							
CT3					0.94							
CT4					0.94							
AT1						0.84						
AT2						0.90						
AT3						0.82						
RP1							0.89					
RP2							0.90					
RP3							0.89					
RP4							0.78					
RP5							0.68					
RP6							0.75					
PI1								0.93				
PI2								0.94				
PI3								0.82				
PI4								0.85				
WOM1									0.96			
WOM2									0.94			
WOM3									0.93			
WOM4									0.94			

SAT1												0.85	
SAT2												0.86	
SAT3												0.92	
SAT4												0.86	
SQ1													0.96
SQ2													0.93
SQ3													0.93
ES1													0.89
ES2													0.92
ES3													0.84

VE	83.6 %	83.0 %	77.2 %	55.5 %	69.7 %	72.8 %	66.8 %	78.4 %	89.2 %	76.4 %	88.1 %	78.4 %
CR	0.95	0.95	0.93	0.83	0.90	0.89	0.92	0.94	0.97	0.93	0.96	0.92

*VE: Variance extracted; CR: Construct Reliability

Moreover, to improve the model and find the potential problem with negative affect and cognition-based trust scales, the standardized residuals output is screened. All standardized residuals are below $|2.5|$, except some standardized residuals between the negative affect variable, “sleepy”, and other variables are higher than $|2.5|$ and below $|4|$. The standardized residuals between the first item of cognition-based trust and other variables are above $|4|$. The factor loading for the item “sleepy” is 0.58, and the factor loading for item 1 of cognition-based trust is 0.45, which is the lowest of the scale. The third item of negative affect and the first item of cognition-based trust are removed from the measurement model for further analysis.

After deleting those two items from the measurement model, the model fit is presented in Table 4.8; the factor loadings, variance extracted, and construct reliability of the new measurement model are presented in table 4.9. Discriminant validity is assessed through comparing the variance-extracted percentages for any two constructs with the

square of the correlation estimate between these two constructs (Hair et al., 2006). The matrix of the squared correlation estimates is presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.8: Overall New CFA Fit Summary

Model	χ^2	df	p	CFI	RMSEA
CFA	1505.09	879	<0.001	.943	.060
Fit Indices for number of variables larger than 30			Significant p-values can be expected	Above .92	Values < .08 with CFI above .92

Table 4.9: Summary of New CFA Results

	WA RM	CO MP	PA	NA	CT	AT	RP	PI	WO M	SAT	SQ	ES
WAR1	0.92											
WAR2	0.92											
WAR3	0.89											
WAR4	0.92											
COM1		0.89										
COM2		0.92										
COM3		0.91										
COM4		0.93										
PA1			0.86									
PA2			0.85									
PA3			0.92									
PA4			0.89									
NA1				0.67								
NA2				0.84								
NA4				0.86								
CT2					0.91							
CT3					0.94							
CT4					0.94							
AT1						0.84						
AT2						0.90						
AT3						0.82						
RP1							0.89					
RP2							0.90					
RP3							0.89					
RP4							0.78					
RP5							0.68					
RP6							0.75					
PI1								0.93				

PI2									0.94				
PI3									0.82				
PI4									0.85				
WOM1										0.96			
WOM2										0.94			
WOM3										0.93			
WOM4										0.94			
SAT1											0.85		
SAT2											0.86		
SAT3											0.92		
SAT4											0.86		
SQ1												0.96	
SQ2												0.93	
SQ3												0.93	
ES1													0.89
ES2													0.92
ES3													0.84
VE	83.6 %	83.0 %	77.2 %	62.8 %	86.3 %	72.8 %	66.8 %	78.4 %	89.2 %	76.4 %	88.1 %	78.4 %	
CR	0.95	0.95	0.93	0.83	0.95	0.89	0.92	0.94	0.97	0.93	0.96	0.92	

*VE: Variance extracted; CR: Construct Reliability

Table 4.10: Interconstruct Correlation Estimates

Φ matrix SQUARED	WAR	COM	PA	NA	CT	AT	RP	PI	WOM	SAT	SQ	ES
WAR	1.00											
COM	0.94	1.00										
PA	0.05	0.55	1.00									
NA	0.27	0.28	0.25	1.00								
CT	0.23	0.24	0.17	0.33	1.00							
AT	0.61	0.53	0.59	0.32	0.21	1.00						
RP	0.56	0.54	0.73	0.37	0.24	0.77	1.00					
PI	0.39	0.39	0.49	0.27	0.21	0.52	0.60	1.00				
WOM	0.42	0.43	0.50	0.30	0.22	0.49	0.59	0.60	1.00			
SAT	0.48	0.45	0.57	0.36	0.28	0.60	0.74	0.76	0.70	1.00		
SQ	0.47	0.46	0.55	0.35	0.23	0.57	0.71	0.76	0.66	0.89	1.00	
ES	0.49	0.47	0.59	0.28	0.16	0.69	0.82	0.47	0.49	0.54	0.52	1.00

Comparing the squared correlations between constructs with the variance extracted, some constructs are highly correlated. Competence and warmth are the two dimensions of the Stereotype Content Model; however they are highly correlated, with a squared correlation of 0.94. The researcher ran a CFA with competence and warmth in one construct to compare with the fit of model with competence and warmth as separate constructs. The comparison of fit of the two measurement models is listed in Table 4.11. The chi-square change of the measurement model is significant, showing that the measurement model with competence and warmth as separate constructs has better fit than the adjusted model. Previous research has used competence and warmth as the two dimensions to measure social judgment (Wang et al., 2017).

Table 4.11: Comparison of Fit

	χ^2	df	p	CFI	RMSEA	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δdf	p
Warmth and competence as separate constructs	1505.09	879	<0.001	.943	.060			
Warmth and competence as one construct	1543.97	890	.000	.940	.060	38.88	11	p<.01

Rapport is highly correlated to affect-based trust as suggested by the CFA results. In this research, rapport is defined as a customer's positive feeling of having an enjoyable interaction with an employee, (Gremler and Gwinner, 2000), while affect-based trust is defined as the feelings of confidence towards a partner, generated by the level of care and concern the partner displays (Johnson and Grayson, 2005). The content is overlapped

between rapport and affect-based trust, which both focus on the feelings generated from the interaction. Rapport is also correlated with satisfaction, service quality and expressiveness similarity. The literature has supported the positive effect of rapport on customer outcomes (Gremler and Gwinner, 2008). Expressive similarity has been suggested to have a positive effect on rapport (Lim et al., 2016).

In sum, the suggested measurement model provides satisfactory psychometric properties. Variable means, standard deviations and correlation coefficients of the sample of 55 used to test the hypotheses of this study are presented in Table 4.12. The Cronbach's alpha shows the appropriate internal consistency of the scales. The final set of measurement items used to test the hypotheses is listed in Appendix D.

Table 4.12: Descriptive Statistics, Reliability Information, and Correlations

Scale	N of Items	M	SD	Cronbach's α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Warmth	4	5.01	1.27	.931	1											
Competence	4	5.05	1.19	.926	.901**	1										
Positive Affect	4	4.55	1.51	.937	.771**	.764**	1									
Negative Affect	3	2.18	1.40	.899	-.591**	-.548**	-.523**	1								
Affect-based Trust	3	4.73	1.05	.904	.760**	.744**	.682**	-.461**	1							
Cognition-based Trust	3	4.45	1.63	.945	.452**	.390**	.203	-.363**	.319*	1						
Rapport	6	4.77	1.01	.890	.749**	.702**	.704**	-.580**	.783**	.401**	1					
Satisfaction	4	5.31	1.21	.935	.584**	.598**	.665**	-.456**	.582**	.239	.787**	1				
Purchase Intention	4	5.31	1.34	.922	.540**	.544**	.676**	-.383**	.492**	.286*	.646**	.810**	1			
Service Quality	4	5.52	1.29	.970	.657**	.663**	.687**	-.458**	.553**	.298*	.737**	.850**	.768**	1		
Word-of-mouth (positive)	4	5.06	1.25	.957	.694**	.653**	.735**	-.515**	.579**	.349**	.748**	.789**	.786**	.819**	1	
Expressive Similarity	3	4.56	1.08	.912	.653**	.619**	.660**	-.483**	.624**	.168	.729**	.634**	.593**	.589**	.652**	1

Note: N=55. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). * correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Manipulation Check Results

The percentage of respondents answering the four manipulation check questions is presented in Table 4.13. The means of measured constructs of people who chose the right picture and those who failed to choose the right picture in the same condition show no significant difference. Nonverbal communication is widely used in our daily life. Individuals can process nonverbal signals through system 1 or system 2 using the concepts provided by Kahneman (2011). The opening example of a woman's angry face illustrates automatic processing when people look at a person's face. Respondents who saw the nonverbal cues might not be able to choose the right picture at the end of the survey, but it does not necessarily mean that they did not see the pictures. Another question was asked right after the scenarios to check if the cartoons were displayed correctly and all respondents recalled the right number assigned to each condition.

Table 4.13: Summary of Main Study Manipulation Check Results

Questions	Answers	Frequency	Percent
Does the graphical presentation represent a realistic interaction?	No	10	18.2
	Yes	45	81.8
Do situations like this one happen in real life?	No	6	10.9
	Yes	49	89.1
Which of the pictures below was depicted in the story that you just saw?	Wrong answer	34	61.8
	Right answer	21	38.2
Just after the cartoon, a big number appeared on the screen, what was that number?	Wrong answer	0	0
	Right answer	55	100

During the interactions between employees and customers, customers can process information through System 1, which operates automatically, or System 2. Nonverbal signals can influence customer's judgments and behaviors through System 1 without consciousness.

Hypotheses Testing

One-way ANOVA is conducted to test H1 and H2. Two-way ANOVA is conducted to test H3. Simple regression is employed to test H4. H5 to H8 are tested using multiple regressions. As mentioned earlier, the data used to test the hypotheses consists of 55 subjects. Twelve subjects viewed condition 1; fifteen subjects viewed condition 2; thirteen subjects viewed condition 3; fifteen viewed condition 4 (Table 4.14).

Table 4.14: Sample Size of Each Condition

Condition		Number of Subjects
1	Eye contact, smiling, sits directly facing the customer, open arrangement of arms, handshake, close proximity, forward lean, same eye level	12
2	Eye contact, smiling, standing direct facing the customer, touching, close proximity, open arrangement of arms, handshake, higher eye level (standing up)	15
3	Looks away (avoiding or shifting eye contact), no smiling, closed arms, same eye level, distal proximity	13
4	Direct eye contact, , standing direct facing the customer, pointing, backward lean, open arrangement of arms, higher eye level (standing up), distal proximity	15

The one-way ANOVA results of nonverbal signals on competence, warmth, affect-based trust, cognition-based trust, positive affect, negative affect, and rapport are

presented in Table 4.15. The ANOVA F values show that at least one condition is different from the other conditions for competence, warmth, affect-based trust and negative affect at the significance level of 0.1. The results did not show significant difference among nonverbal conditions for cognition-based trust, positive affect and rapport. These results support H1 and partially support H2. The post hoc analysis reveals the significant difference between condition 1 and condition 3 (Mean: 5.52 vs. 4.37), and condition 3 and condition 4 (Mean: 4.37 vs. 5.32) for competence; the post hoc analysis also shows the significant difference between condition 1 and condition 3 (Mean: 5.42 vs. 4.21), and condition 3 and condition 4 (Mean: 4.21 vs. 5.28) for warmth. For affect-based trust, the difference is between condition 3 and all other conditions (Mean: 3.97 vs. 5.00, 4.93, and 4.98). For negative affect, the difference is between conditions 1 and 2 (Mean: 1.42 vs. 3.02), conditions 1 and 3 (Mean: 1.42 vs. 2.9), conditions 2 and 4 (Mean: 3.02 vs. 1.33), and conditions 3 and 4 (Mean: 2.9 vs. 1.33).

Table 4.15: Results for H1 and H2

	Conditions	Means	SD	ANOVA F	Sig.
Competence	1	5.52	1.38	2.533	0.067
	2	5.02	.76		
	3	4.37	1.08		
	4	5.32	1.28		
Warmth	1	5.42	1.35	2.613	0.061
	2	5.12	.78		
	3	4.21	1.42		
	4	5.28	1.26		
Affect-based Trust	1	5.00	.88	3.388	0.025
	2	4.93	.71		
	3	3.97	1.18		
	4	4.98	1.10		
Cognition-based Trust	1	4.64	2.34	.590	.624
	2	4.2	1.27		
	3	4.13	1.29		
	4	4.82	1.58		
Positive Affect	1	4.94	1.73	1.476	.232
	2	4.75	1.61		
	3	3.81	1.07		
	4	4.68	1.47		
Negative Affect	1	1.42	.75	8.465	.000
	2	3.02	1.51		
	3	2.9	1.49		
	4	1.33	.62		
Rapport	1	5.13	.86	1.337	.273
	2	4.76	1.01		
	3	4.35	1.21		
	4	4.88	.89		

A two-way MANOVA was employed to test H3, and the results do not reveal a significant interaction between gender and nonverbal signals. H3 is not supported. However, the sample sizes of the conditions are unequal and relatively small. The means of the conditions for men and women are displayed in Figure 4.1 to Figure 4.7.

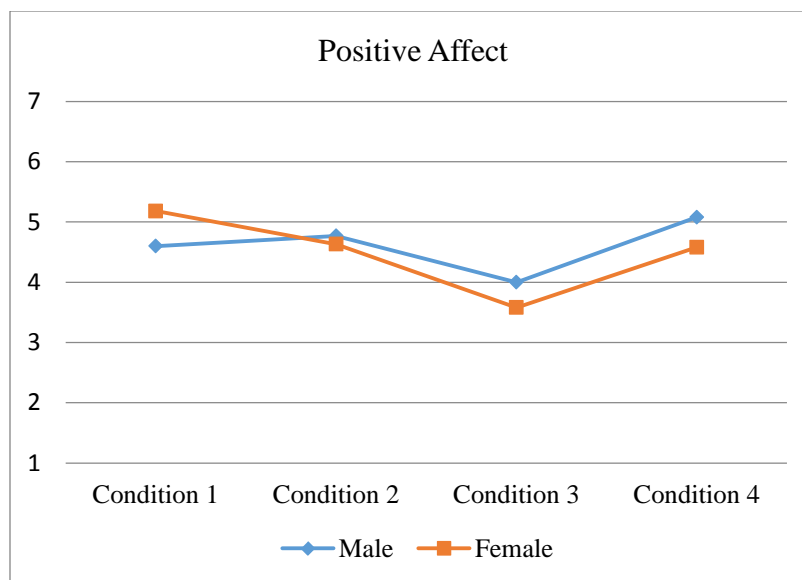


Figure 4.1: Results for Positive Affect

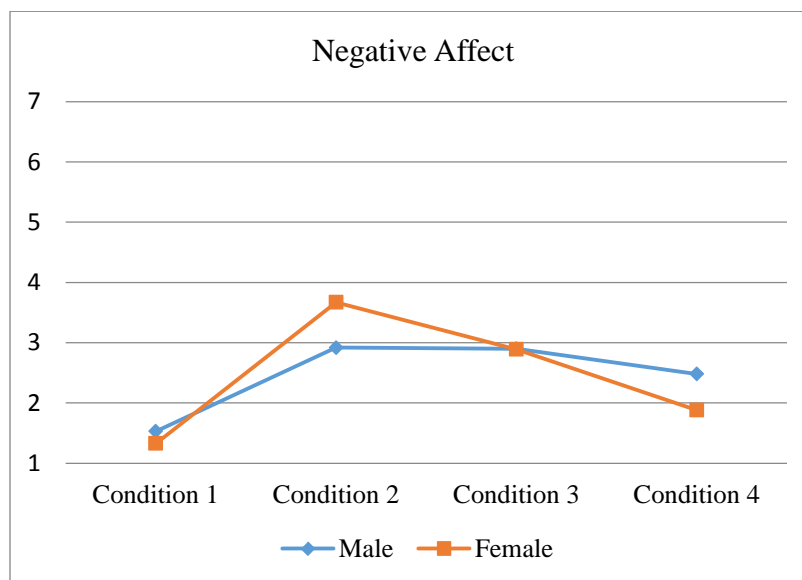


Figure 4.2: Results for Negative Affect

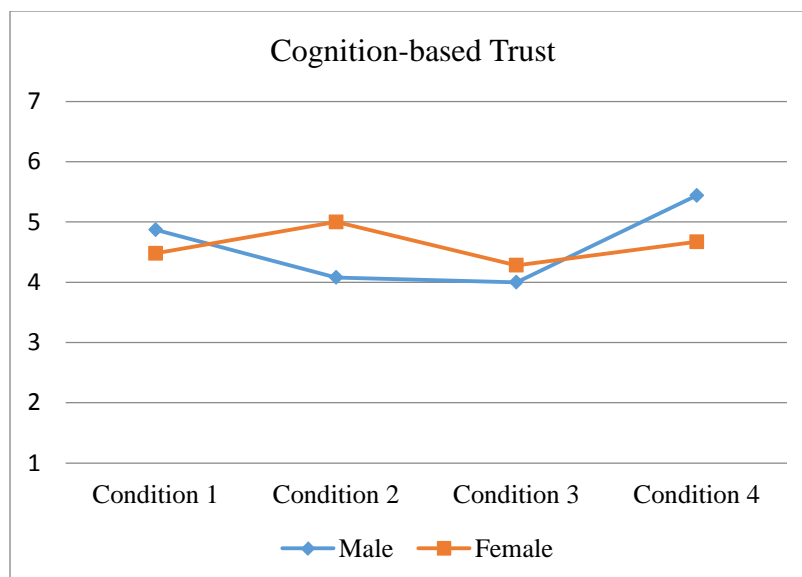


Figure 4.3: Results for Cognition-based Trust

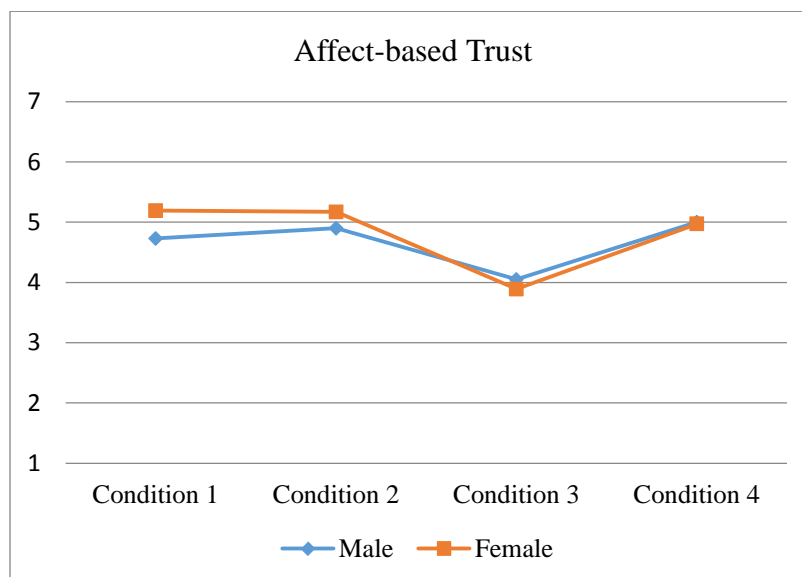


Figure 4.4: Results for Affect-based Trust

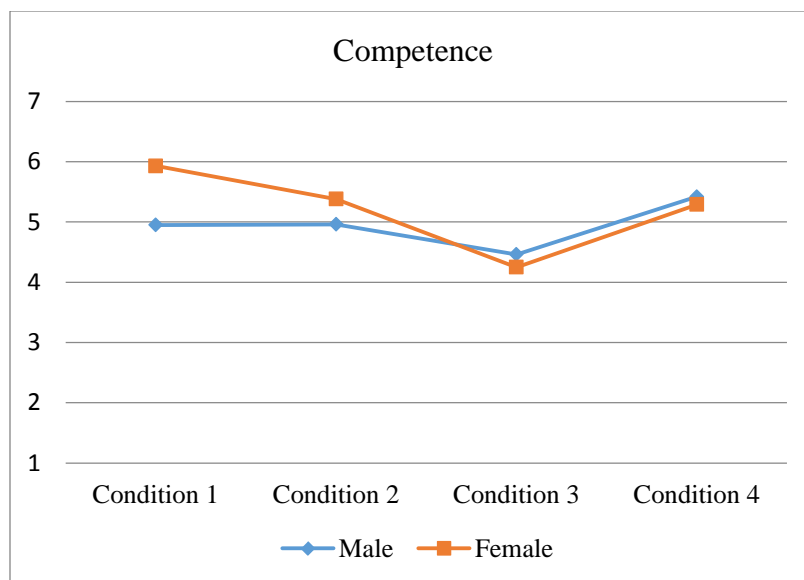


Figure 4.5: Results for Competence

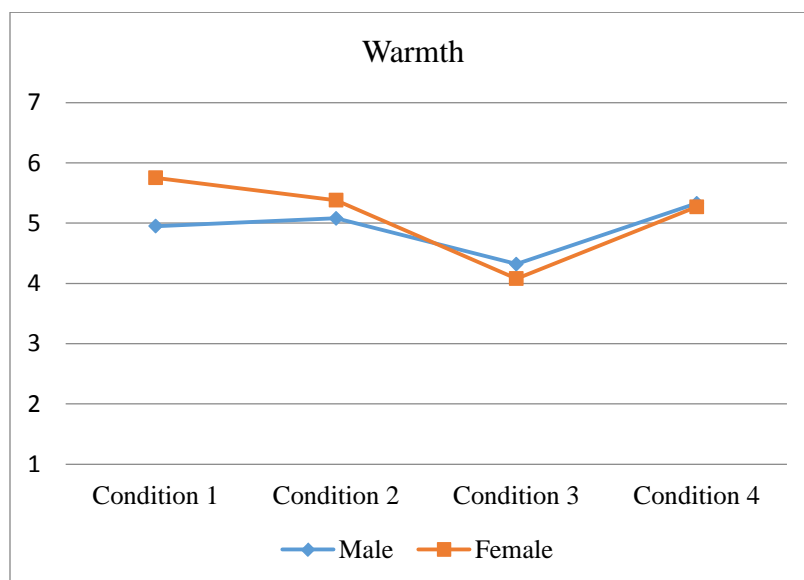


Figure 4.6: Results for Warmth

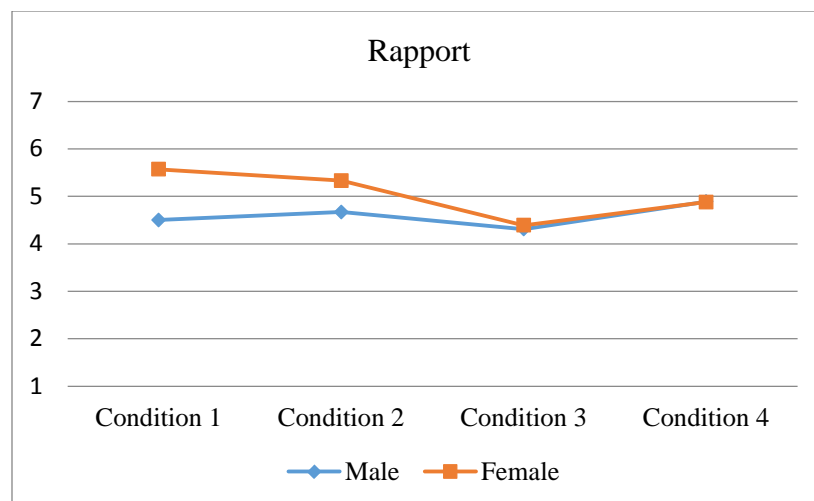


Figure 4.7: Results for Rapport

H4 is tested using simple regression. The simple regression results suggest the significant positive effect of expressive similarity on rapport ($F=60.01$, $p=.000$, $B=.73$, R square=.53, $t=7.75$). The results support H4 that customers who perceive a more similar style of using nonverbal behaviors with the employee rated higher rapport of the interaction than those who perceive less similarity.

Multiple regressions are conducted to test the effect of rapport, positive affect, negative affect, affect-based trust, and cognition-based trust on customer outcomes. The standardized scores of all independent variables are calculated. To assess the potential multicollinearity, the VIF scores of the independent variables are all lower than 5. The ANOVA and t-test results of the multiple regressions are presented in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16: Summary of Hypotheses Five to Eight Testing Results

Hypotheses	DVs	IVs	F	R ²	B	t	Sig
H5	Purchase Intention		11.459	.539			.000
		Affect-based Trust			-.215	-1.313	.195
		Cognition-based Trust			.100	.913	.366
		Rapport			.454	2.498	.016
		Negative Affect			.096	.775	.442
		Positive Affect			.534	3.601	.001
H6	Satisfaction		19.03	.66			.000
		Affect-based Trust			-.179	-1.272	.209
		Cognition-based Trust			-.060	-.642	.524
		Rapport			.784	5.032	.000
		Negative Affect			.033	.313	.756
		Positive Affect			.265	2.082	.043
H7	Service Quality		15.581	.614			.000
		Affect-based Trust			-.199	-1.326	.191
		Cognition-based Trust			.046	.460	.648
		Rapport			.611	3.675	.001
		Negative Affect			.030	.267	.791
		Positive Affect			.399	2.944	.005
H8	Positive Word-of-mouth		19.484	.665			.000
		Affect-based Trust			-.178	-1.273	.209
		Cognition-based Trust			.100	1.077	.287
		Rapport			.503	3.249	.002
		Negative Affect			-.023	-.217	.829
		Positive Affect			.470	3.724	.001

The regression results supported the positive effect of rapport and positive affect on purchase intention, satisfaction, service quality, and positive word-of-mouth. However,

the relationship between negative affect and customer outcomes are not statistically significant (H9 is not supported).

Post Hoc Analysis

A larger difference between conditions 1 and 3 has been suggested from the post hoc analysis. As previous research suggests that social judgments can be formed on brands and firms (Aaker et al., 2010; Fournier and Alvarez, 2012), service type could also be influenced by the fundamental dimensions of social judgments. Therefore, additional research was conducted in a different service setting. The multivariate ANOVA results show the direct effect of service type on warmth, competence, positive affect, negative affect, rapport, and affect-based trust. The effect of nonverbal conditions (condition 1 and 3) is only found for negative affect. Table 4.17 shows the means of the conditions under two different service types.

Table 4.17: Summary of Post Hoc Analysis Results

	Service Type	Nonverbal Condition	Means
Rapport*	Financial	1	4.97
		3	4.39
	Eye doctor	1	5.15
		3	5.47
Affect-based Trust*	Financial	1	4.80
		3	4.10
	Eye doctor	1	5.78
		3	5.96
Cognition-based Trust	Financial	1	5.27
		3	4.14
	Eye doctor	1	5.33
		3	5.25
Positive Affect*	Financial	1	4.63
		3	3.88

	Eye doctor	1	4.96
		3	5.27
Negative Affect*,**	Financial	1	1.40
		3	2.79
	Eye doctor	1	1.49
		3	1.46
Warmth*	Financial	1	5.33
		3	4.50
	Eye doctor	1	5.63
		3	5.78
Competence*	Financial	1	5.20
		3	4.27
	Eye doctor	1	5.71
		3	5.77

* significant differences between service types (financial service and eye doctor) at the significance level of .05.

** significant differences between condition 1 and 3 at the significance level of .05.

The interaction of service type and nonverbal condition is only observed on rapport, affect-based trust and negative affect at the significance level of 0.1. Figure 4.8, 4.9 and 4.10 show the interactions.

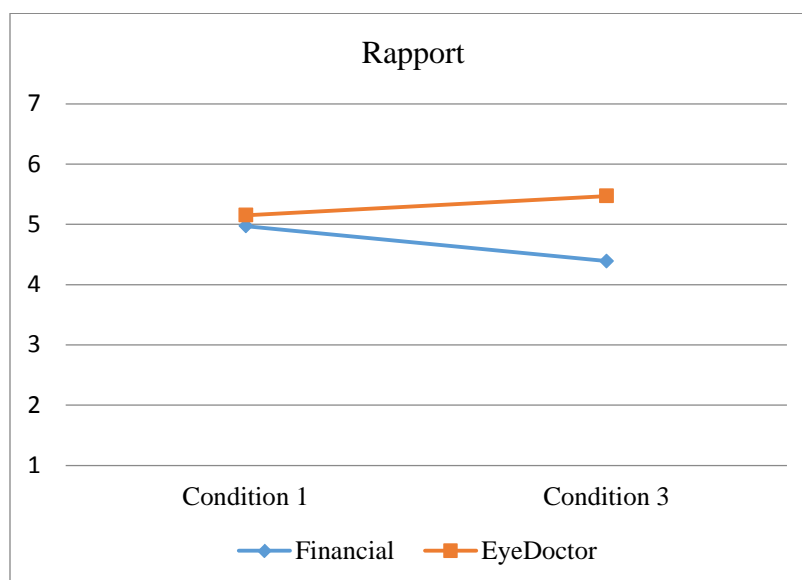


Figure 4.8: Interaction Results for Rapport

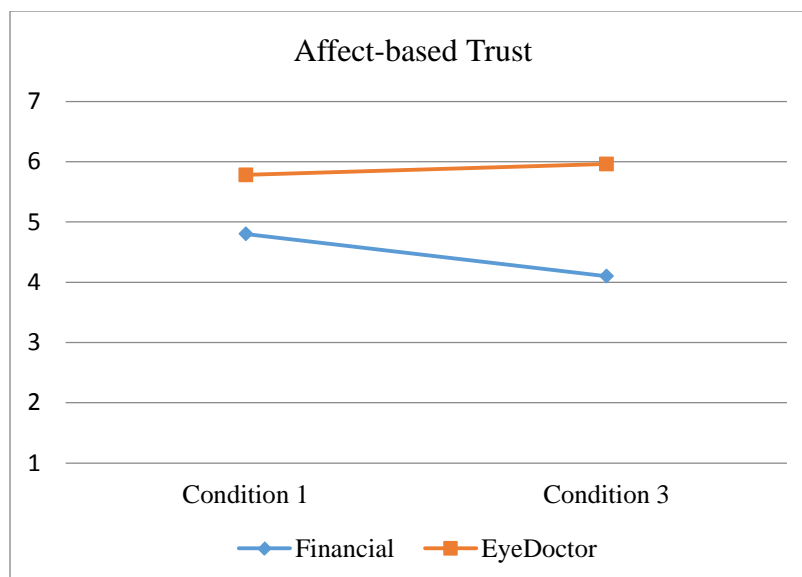


Figure 4.9: Interaction Results for Affect-based Trust

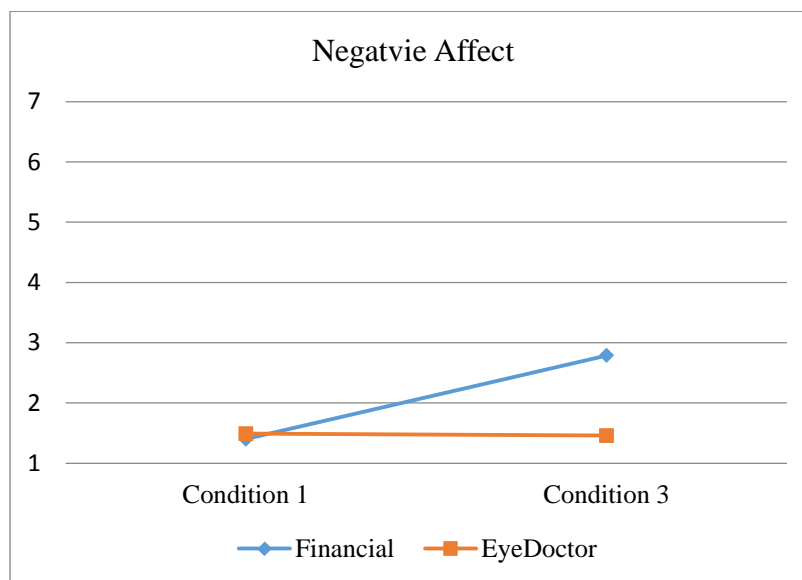


Figure 4.10: Interaction Results for Negative Affect

Overall Conclusion

This chapter presents and explains the results of the qualitative study and the experimental design. Concepts generated from the semi-structured interview are

presented and used to answer the first and the second research question. The results of a pretest and pilot study were listed before the main study. The measurement model is tested to show the reliability and validity of the multi-item scales. Hypotheses are tested using the analysis planned in Chapter 3. Hypotheses 1 and 4 are supported. Hypotheses 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are partially supported. Hypothesis 3 and 9 are not supported. The summary of hypotheses testing is presented in table 4.18.

Table 4.18: Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses	Results	Analysis
H1	Supported	Compared means using ANOVA
H2	Partially supported	Compared means using ANOVA
H3	Not supported	A two-way MANOVA
H4	Supported	Simple regression
H5	Partially supported	Multiple regression
H6	Partially supported	Multiple regression
H7	Partially supported	Multiple regression
H8	Partially supported	Multiple regression
H9	Not supported	Multiple regression

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the results of this research including: the findings of qualitative study, the results of the experimental design in explaining hypotheses and research questions, the contribution and managerial implications of this dissertation, and the limitations and future research opportunities of this study.

Discussion of Results

Findings of Qualitative Study

The objective of the qualitative study was to answer research questions 1 and 2 proposed in Chapter 1. The nonverbal signals mentioned by respondents were also used to create the experimental conditions for the quantitative study. Results of the qualitative study provide the concepts mentioned by customers during interacting with employees. These concepts are categorized into four sets based on the criteria suggested by Hulbert and Capon (1972). The nature of the nonverbal signals of senders can be static or dynamic, and the receiver can receive the signals through auditory, visual, or tactical senses. Respondents were asked to describe the interactions in detail and the role of nonverbal signals in interpersonal communication. The semi-structured interview provides the opportunity for the researcher to ask for explanations and clarifications.

Research Question 1: What are the typical nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees noticed by customers?

Previous literature suggests that nonverbal behaviors can be categorized based on functions, movements of body parts, or the relationship with verbal communication (Ekman and Friesen, 1972; Wiener, Devoe, Rubinow, and Geller, 1972; Bonoma and Felder, 1977). Respondents notice the nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees from the beginning of the interaction, including approaching behaviors and greeting behaviors to the closing process of the interaction. The summary of nonverbal signals mentioned by respondents gives a fundamental list of behaviors for the experimental design. Also, the summary highlights the typical behaviors, pointed out by customers, that positively or negatively influence their perceptions and behaviors.

The nonverbal signals noticed by customers are: (1) Appearance, the physical appearance and dress of an employee are noticed by customers during interactions; (2) Voice tone, the voice characteristics of an employee are used by customers in accessing the change of mode of salesperson; (3) Distance, the change of distance between employee and customer and the approaching behavior of employees are mentioned by customers; (4) Posture, the whole body position and movements like standing straight, off balance and hunched over, are noticed during interactions; (5) Gesture, hand movements are mentioned by customers during interactions with salespeople; (6) Facial expressions, the facial expressions of employees are easily seen by customers. The emotions of employees are conveyed through facial expressions; (7) Smile is a typical facial expression that is mentioned several times as a positive cue during interaction; (8) Eye

contact, customers mentioned employees' behaviors of initiating and keeping eye contact during interactions.

Research Question 2: Do customers consider nonverbal behaviors of frontline employees important?

A large portion of respondents indicated directly that they notice other's nonverbal behaviors during communications and further elaborated how those nonverbal behaviors, like smiling, standing straight and making eye contact, influence their emotions and behaviors. Handshake, a nonverbal behavior that has been widely used in business communication, was not mentioned by any of the respondents. However, the result does not suggest the diminishing role of a handshake in a commercial setting. Respondents might be unable to recall or pick up the handshake since it is a widely accepted and used signal during business interactions. Omitting behaviors like a handshake also provides explanation of the manipulation check failure of the experimental design. Some respondents failed to choose the right picture they saw, but they could still be influenced by the pictures they saw. Gremler and Gwinner (2008) suggest that imitative behaviors, also called mimicry behaviors, are not confirmed in their study using CIT due to the lack of consciousness of mimicry behaviors. This is consistent with the concept of System 1. Individuals may process nonverbal signals through system 1 or system 2 using the concepts provided by Kahneman (2011). During the interactions between employees and customers, customers can process information through System 1, which operates automatically, or System 2 that requires effortful mental process. Nonverbal signals can influence customer's judgments and behaviors through System 1

without consciousness. The judgment could be made instantly after exposure to the nonverbal signals.

Findings of the Experimental Design

The purpose of the experimental design was to test the proposed hypotheses of how nonverbal signals of employees influence customers in commercial settings. The experimental design was used to address the social judgments, affect-based trust and negative emotions derived from different nonverbal signals.

First, as mentioned in the qualitative study sections, an equilibrium point is reached in the nonverbal expression of interpersonal intimacy such that any substantial change in one of the nonverbal behaviors leads to a reciprocal change in one or more of the other nonverbal behaviors. When the distance between two subjects decreases, less eye contact and shorter glance duration will be shown by communicators (Bonoma and Felder, 1977). The nonverbal conditions used in this research are combined with different nonverbal signals such as touch and distance. Both closer distance and touch have been suggested to positively influence customer perceptions (Hornik, 1992; Price et al., 1995; Sundaram and Webster, 2000; Esmark and Noble, 2016), the combination of these two nonverbal signals could lead to negative effects by deviating from the equilibrium point.

Second, as mentioned in the post-hoc analysis, service type plays an important role in influencing customers' social judgments of employees. For some services, nonverbal signals play an important role in initial interaction like financial services. But for services like vision/eye care, nonverbal signals are less important, and some signals

have a totally opposite effect on the outcomes. The interactions, shown in Chapter 4, point out the reversed effect of nonverbal conditions for different service types.

Previous research suggests the importance of nonverbal communication in influencing customers' evaluations, particularly when the service quality is hard to determine, such as health care (Sundaram and Webster, 2000). The eye doctor service type, as one type of health care, reveals insignificant effects of nonverbal signals on immediate responses, such as trust and affect. The potential reason for these results may be the risk perceived by the customers in the eye doctor condition is low and the competence perceptions of an eye doctor is generally high even before the interaction.

The positive effect of expressive similarity on rapport as suggested by Lim et al. (2016) is supported in this research. Respondents did not perceive different levels of expressive similarity among nonverbal conditions; however, there were variations in perceived expressive similarity among respondents. The possible explanation is that respondents have different expressive receptivity levels and the nonverbal conditions all involved a certain level of nonverbal signals. Consumers with low expressive receptivity perceived low similarity with one condition, while consumers with high expressive receptivity perceived high similarity with the same condition.

As mentioned in the manipulation check section, no differences in immediate reaction and customer outcomes were found between respondents who chose the right pictures and those who failed to choose the right pictures. However, by comparing the means of the respondents who chose the right pictures, larger differences are found among nonverbal conditions. More data could be collected to run the analysis separately and find an explanation for the differences.

The positive effect of rapport on customer outcomes is supported in this research, suggesting that a harmonious interaction will enhance relationship building. This result also shows the importance of the initial impression generated by employee and customer interaction. The enjoyable interaction is not only influenced by the nonverbal communication of employees, but also the perceived expressive similarity.

Implications and Contributions

This research developed and tested a conceptual model of how nonverbal signals influence customer outcomes. This research seeks to contribute to marketing theory, methodology and practice. Firstly, by reviewing the relevant literature of nonverbal communications in communication and marketing, this research provides a comprehensive understanding of the current stage of marketing research on nonverbal communication. This research prompts further investigation of the nonverbal communications of employees in various contexts. Theoretical contributions are tied up with the conceptualization of emotional responses of customers during interactions with frontline employees.

This study sheds light on the influence of nonverbal signals on negative affect, which has been less investigated in the marketing literature. Negative affect could arise during a service failure or the service recovery process. The effective usage of nonverbal signals can reduce the negative affect of both customers and employees during service recovery. The other contribution of this research is the usage of System 1 and System 2 in explaining the effects of nonverbal signals. No significant differences were found between respondents who chose the right pictures they saw and those who failed to

choose the right pictures in this study. This study reveals that customers can process nonverbal signals through either System 1 or System 2. System 1 is used when little or no effort is required, and customers are processing the information automatically, while System 2 requires attention and effortful mental process (Kahneman, 2011).

For practice, this research provides managers with insights to improve returns on their employee recruitment, training and rewards, and other investments. This research suggests the influence of nonverbal signals of employees on customers' social judgments, affect-based trust, and negative affect, which are important immediate reactions during initial interactions. Employees play an important role in initiating the customer relationship and maintaining the customer relationship with the firm. Trust built during first-time interaction will contribute to future patronage.

Nonverbal signals of employees are salient to customers from the initial stage of relationship building. Managers need to maintain a consistent image of the firm delivered during each touchpoint across channels. Frontline employees who directly interact with customers are crucial in influencing customer experiences and building customer relationships. The effects of nonverbal signals are more complex than expected.

Managers need to incorporate more training on the appropriate usage of nonverbal behaviors. Maintaining eye contact and forward lean of an employee shows that the employee is listening. Positive nonverbal signals further influence the evaluations of the employee and the firm. Smiling and approaching to initiate the interaction by an employee are perceived positively by customers. Employees should also be able to pick up the nonverbal receptivity of customers. For instance, employees should pay attention to the nonverbal expressiveness of customers through observing customers' usage of

nonverbal behaviors. The similarity of expressiveness between customers and employees positively contributes to customer outcomes. Companies may include training or education about communication styles to help employees understand customers better (Manning, Ahearne, and Reece, 2014). Actively seeking feedback, both positive and negative, from customers can help better understand customers' experiences. Additional measures of personality and communication style can be distributed through online formats, such as emails. Customers can fill out surveys before or after the interaction.

Finally, this research uses a qualitative method, the semi-structured interview, to investigate the influence of nonverbal signals from the receiver's perspective and to understand the importance of nonverbal signals in commercial settings. The interviews were conducted face-to-face, and the researcher asked respondents for clear explanations. The experimental design holds the other factors consistent, including the verbal communication and the service environment, to investigate the effects of nonverbal signals of employees on customer judgments and feelings.

Limitations and Future Research

This dissertation provides an integrated way to study nonverbal signals of employees, but future research opportunities are derived from this study. The first limitation of this research relates to the sample of the qualitative study. The respondents are undergraduate students enrolled in business classes, who may be more knowledgeable and attentive to business communication. Business students may have been exposed to business communication before and have been taught the techniques used by salespeople or employees. They may be more likely to notice the nonverbal signals and talk more

about the importance of nonverbal signals. Future research could use U.S. household individuals as the respondents of the qualitative study and use the critical instance technique or open-ended questions through online surveys.

The other issue related to the qualitative study is that the coding process is subject to the interpretation of the interviewer. The researcher may have bias because of the research demand, and the coding process can be subjective. Future research could include a third party as a coder to increase the objectivity of the information. The interview, the coding process, and the analysis could be done separately.

The third limitation of this research pertains to the selection of service type. This research does not include service type in the factorial design, but it is included in the post hoc analysis. Service type has been mentioned as a potential explanation, but this research does not provide an integrated review of service type and its effect on nonverbal signals. Service type plays a moderating role in the relationship between employees and customers and needs to be investigated more in the study of nonverbal signals. For example, some services may involve more touching behaviors as those provided by physicians, hair stylists, and beauty stylists. Customers may have diverse expectations of nonverbal behaviors in different service contexts. Including service type can positively contribute to the effectiveness of managerial applications of nonverbal communication.

Negative affect has been suggested to be influenced by nonverbal conditions, but the manipulation of nonverbal signals is mainly focusing on positive effects. Future research could include more descriptions of nonverbal signals and have stronger manipulation of negative nonverbal conditions.

The measurement of expressive similarity is based on the subjective evaluations of customers, and the differences of expressiveness among the nonverbal conditions in this study are not salient enough to create variation. Future research could use the match of expressiveness of sender and receptivity of receiver as the measurement of expressiveness similarity (Lim et al. 2016).

Another limitation of this research is the selection of nonverbal signals included. Nonverbal signals in this research are gathered from three categories from Hulbert and Capon (1972), based on the receiver and sender roles. The nonverbal signals are limited to those received through visual and tactile channels; all these nonverbal signals have a dynamic nature, which means these signals can be changed during interpersonal communication (Hulbert and Capon, 1972). Other nonverbal signals that can be converted through auditory channels possess future research opportunities.

In addition, respondents were answering the questionnaire based on the depicted scenarios and cartoons. Some respondents might have had problems putting themselves into the situation. The experimental design used cartoons to display interactions. The employee and the customer were presented using figure pictures. Future research could have pictures and videos of real interactions between employees and customers. Moreover, future research could use field experiments, having real employees interacting with customers, to test the effectiveness of nonverbal communication and its effect on customer outcomes. Using field experiments also creates the combination of nonverbal signals with other factors like servicescape, which are common factors in a service context.

Some research opportunities are possessed in addition to those mentioned within the limitation parts. The first research opportunity is to include other nonverbal signals like appearance and voice quality into the research design. Appearance, as a static nonverbal signal of employees, can be easily manipulated by marketers. There are ample opportunities to study the interaction between appearance and other nonverbal signals. Voice quality can be studied to optimize customer services through phone calls and automatic systems. The characteristics relating to the voice could be investigated with brand personality and service type. As mentioned previously, the equilibrium point should be achieved among nonverbal signals. The next step of this study is to investigate the interaction between nonverbal signals to achieve the equilibrium point.

Other moderators could be included in future research, such as length of relationship with the employee, culture, risk of the service, seriousness of the issue, and involvement. This research was conducted in the context of a first time visit. Future research may include the length of relationship as a moderator. Some nonverbal behaviors like touch are likely to be influenced by culture and personal characteristics of the receiver as suggested by previous literature (Orth et al., 2013). The effects of smiling on social judgments and purchase intention have been suggested to be influenced by the consumption risk (Wang et al., 2017). Other nonverbal cues may be influenced by consumption risk as well and need to be investigated in future research.

Touch, a nonverbal signal, has been suggested to have inconsistent effects on customer outcomes. Orth et al. (2013) propose the moderating effects of need for touch and personal touching behavior on the relationship between touch and trust. Touch does not have the same effect on trust in customers from different cultures. Touch only

positively affects trust when customers have high need for touch or when they are from a culture where interpersonal touch is less common. Webb and Peck (2015, p.62) developed and validated a scale measuring comfort with interpersonal touch, which is defined as “the degree to which an individual is comfortable with intentional interpersonal touch from or to another person.” Previous research has focused on the positive effect of touch from the receiving perspective. Incorporating this scale in touch research can account for differences between individuals’ perceptions of comfort with interpersonal touch.

Previous research has shown the effects of rapport, emotional contagion, and expressive similarity in a service failure context (DeWitt and Brady, 2003; Dallimore et al., 2007; and Lim et al., 2017). These studies also show the influence of communication factors on post-failure evaluations and behaviors. Future research could be conducted in a service failure context to investigate the interaction between service outcome and nonverbal signals. More work could be done on the usage of nonverbal signals in the service recovery process.

Finally, future research could include employee outcomes, such as job satisfaction, as outcomes of nonverbal communication. Nonverbal signals communicated through technology-mediated platforms and advertisements could be investigated in future research. A research stream (Figure 5.1), including the current and future research of this dissertation, is presented below in closing this chapter.

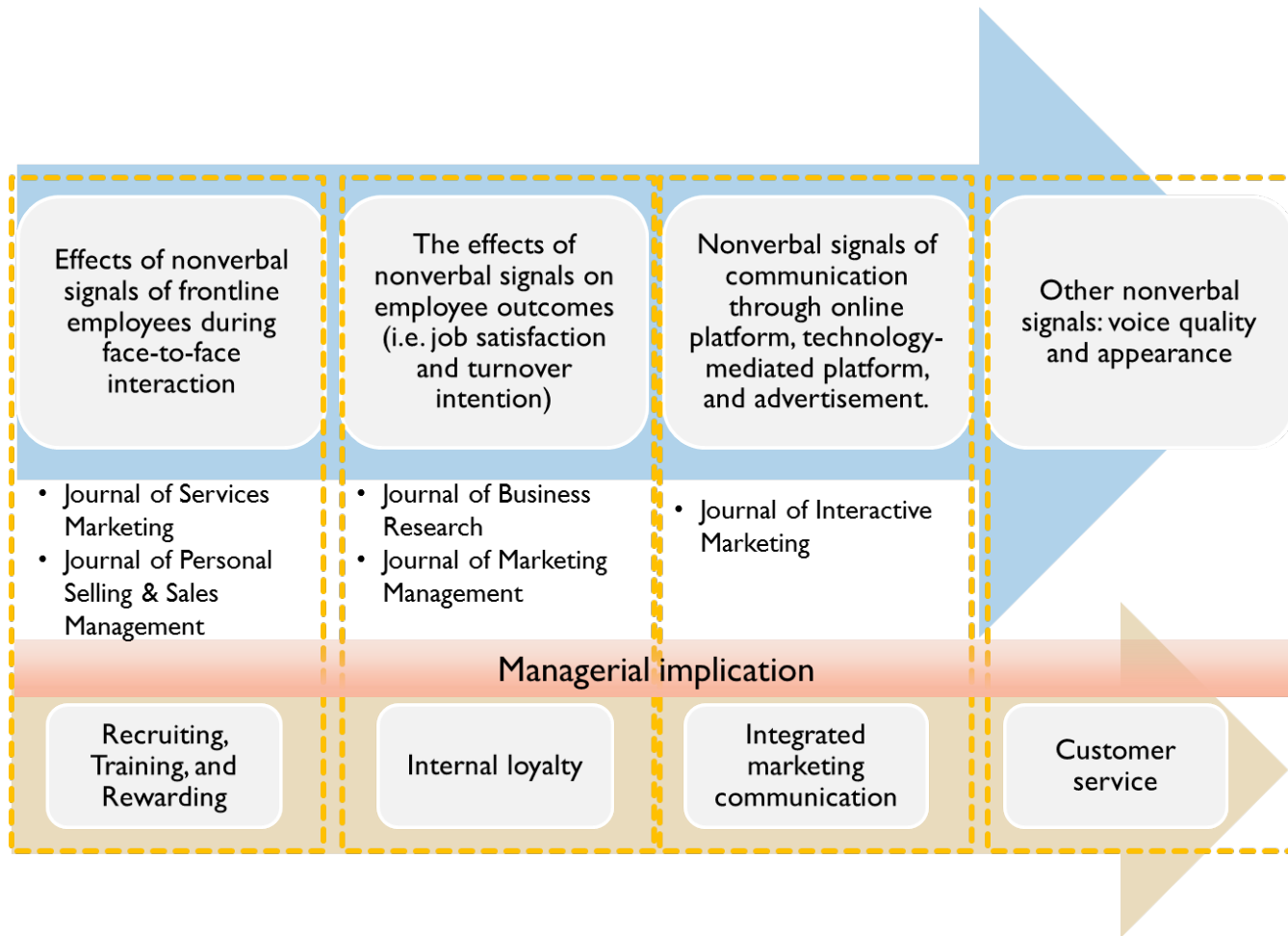


Figure 5.1: A Future Research Stream

APPENDIX A

HUMAN USE APPROVAL FORMS



LOUISIANA TECH
UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

TO: Ms. Shuang Wu and Dr. Bruce Alford *BA*
 FROM: Dr. Richard Kordal, Director of Intellectual Properties
rkordal@latech.edu
 SUBJECT: HUMAN USE COMMITTEE REVIEW
 DATE: August 31, 2017

In order to facilitate your project, an EXPEDITED REVIEW has been done for your proposed study entitled:

“It is more than what you say: Influential Communication Factors of the Frontline Employee on Customer Outcomes”

HUC 18-027

The proposed study’s revised procedures were found to provide reasonable and adequate safeguards against possible risks involving human subjects. The information to be collected may be personal in nature or implication. Therefore, diligent care needs to be taken to protect the privacy of the participants and to assure that the data are kept confidential. Informed consent is a critical part of the research process. The subjects must be informed that their participation is voluntary. It is important that consent materials be presented in a language understandable to every participant. If you have participants in your study whose first language is not English, be sure that informed consent materials are adequately explained or translated. Since your reviewed project appears to do no damage to the participants, the Human Use Committee grants approval of the involvement of human subjects as outlined.

Projects should be renewed annually. *This approval was finalized on August 31, 2017 and this project will need to receive a continuation review by the IRB if the project, including data analysis, continues beyond August 31, 2018.* Any discrepancies in procedure or changes that have been made including approved changes should be noted in the review application. Projects involving NIH funds require annual education training to be documented. For more information regarding this, contact the Office of University Research.

You are requested to maintain written records of your procedures, data collected, and subjects involved. These records will need to be available upon request during the conduct of the study and retained by the university for three years after the conclusion of the study. If changes occur in recruiting of subjects, informed consent process or in your research protocol, or if unanticipated problems should arise it is the Researchers responsibility to notify the Office of Research or IRB in writing. The project should be discontinued until modifications can be reviewed and approved.

Please be aware that you are responsible for reporting any adverse events or unanticipated problems.

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MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF SPONSORED PROJECTS

TO: Ms. Shuang Wu and Dr. Bruce Alford

FROM: Dr. Richard Kordal, Director of Intellectual Property & Commercialization
(OIPC)
rkordal@latech.edu *RSK*

SUBJECT: HUMAN USE COMMITTEE REVIEW

DATE: January 4, 2018

In order to facilitate your project, an EXPEDITED REVIEW has been done for your proposed study entitled:

“Influential Factors of Frontline Employee on Customer Outcomes”

HUC 18-079

The proposed study’s revised procedures were found to provide reasonable and adequate safeguards against possible risks involving human subjects. The information to be collected may be personal in nature or implication. Therefore, diligent care needs to be taken to protect the privacy of the participants and to assure that the data are kept confidential. Informed consent is a critical part of the research process. The subjects must be informed that their participation is voluntary. It is important that consent materials be presented in a language understandable to every participant. If you have participants in your study whose first language is not English, be sure that informed consent materials are adequately explained or translated. Since your reviewed project appears to do no damage to the participants, the Human Use Committee grants approval of the involvement of human subjects as outlined.

Projects should be renewed annually. *This approval was finalized on January 4, 2018 and this project will need to receive a continuation review by the IRB if the project continues beyond January 4, 2019. ANY CHANGES* to your protocol procedures, including minor changes, should be reported immediately to the IRB for approval before implementation. Projects involving NIH funds require annual education training to be documented. For more information regarding this, contact the Office of Sponsored Projects.

You are requested to maintain written records of your procedures, data collected, and subjects involved. These records will need to be available upon request during the conduct of the study and retained by the university for three years after the conclusion of the study. If changes occur in recruiting of subjects, informed consent process or in your research protocol, or if unanticipated problems should arise it is the Researchers responsibility to notify the Office of Research or IRB in writing. The project should be discontinued until modifications can be reviewed and approved.

Please be aware that you are responsible for reporting any adverse events or unanticipated problems.

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APPENDIX B

QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW

Q1: Have you recently interacted with any frontline employee (including salesperson, service provider etc.) or do you have any memorable interaction?

Q2: Could you describe any details you remember about the interaction?

Q3: How do you evaluate (think/feel about) the experience? Positive or negative?

Q4: How do you evaluate (think/feel about) the frontline employee?

Q5: Could you elaborate more on why?

Q6: What made you feel that way? What did she/he do or say?

Q7: How long did you interact with them?

Q8: Did you make any purchase at that time?

Q9: Do you notice other's nonverbal behaviors when communicating?

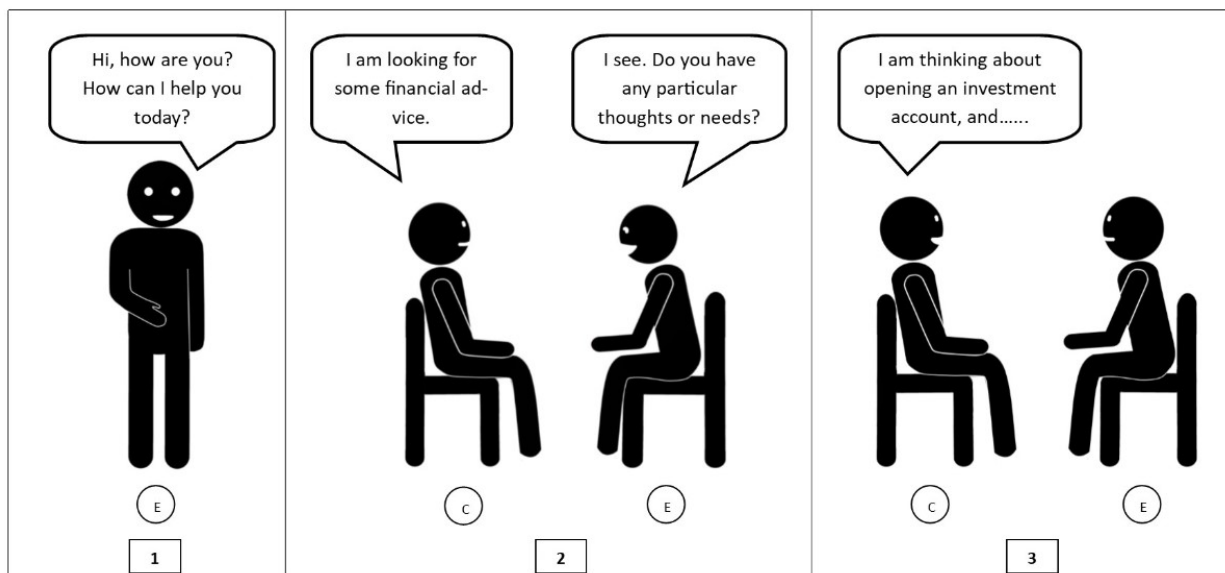
Q10: Do you use nonverbal behaviors when you communicate?

APPENDIX C

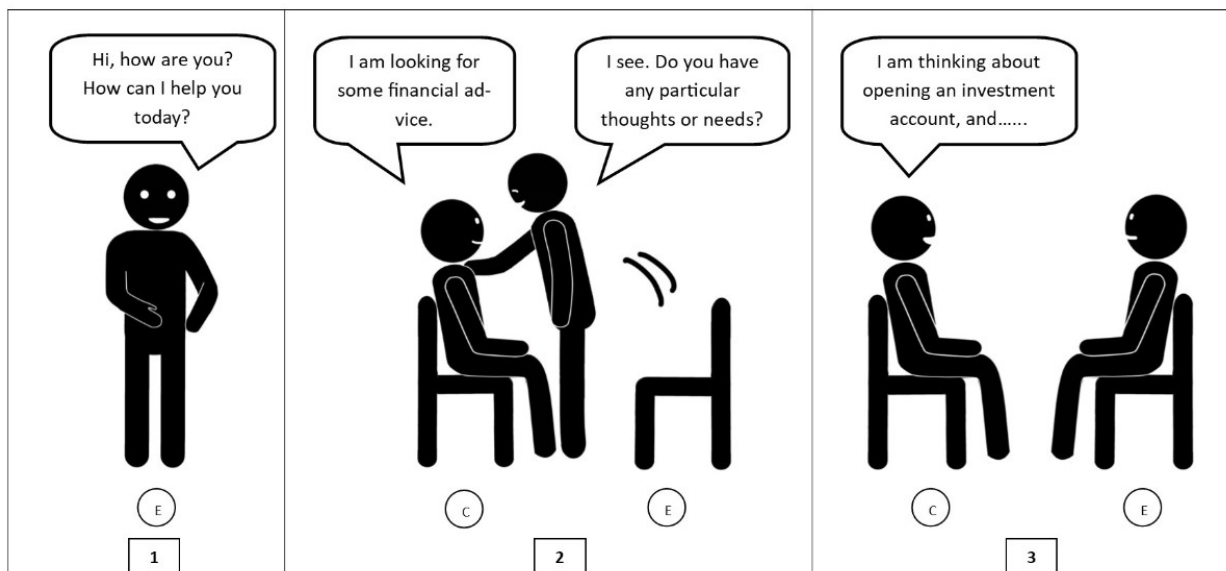
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN MANIPULATIONS

Scenario description: Imagine that you recently moved to a new place. You are interested in investment products and services. You want to open an investment account. You visit a bank to ask for some financial advice. This is your first time visiting this bank. The employee greets you as displayed in Picture 1. Then, the employee leads you to the sitting area, and starts to talk with you. You and the employee are talking as displayed in Picture 2 and Picture 3 (E represents employee; C represents customer, which is you in this case).

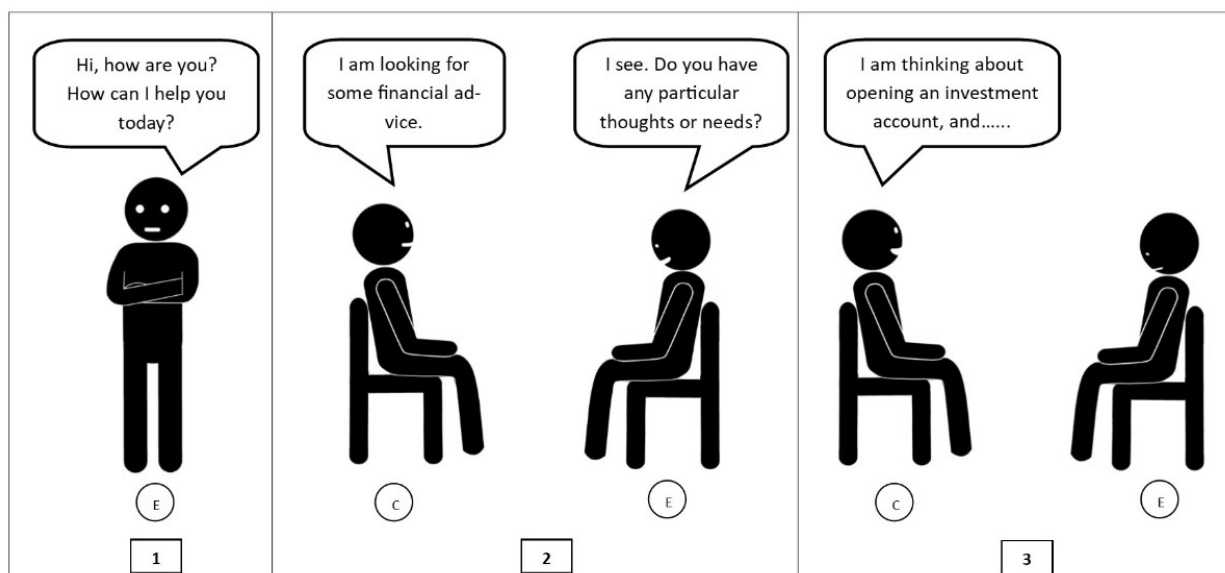
Condition 1



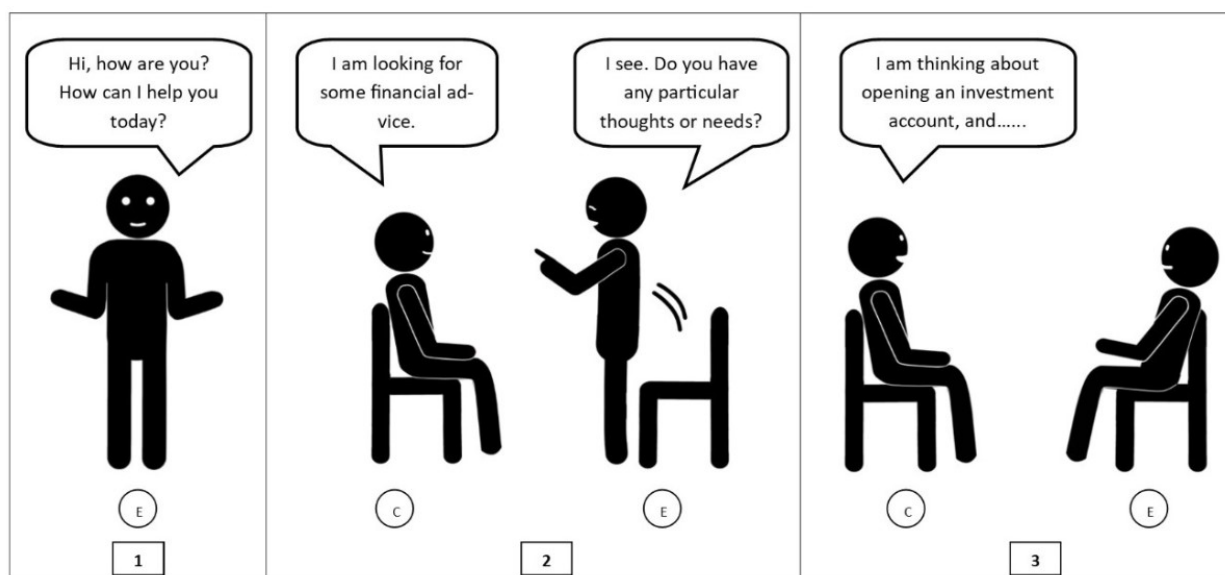
Condition 2



Condition 3



Condition 4



APPENDIX D

MEASUREMENT SCALES

Competence (Wang et al. 2017)

Please rate the extent to which each of the following traits fit this employee (1=not at all, 7=very much so).

1. Competent
2. Intelligent
3. Capable
4. Skillful

Warmth (Wang et al. 2017)

Please rate the extent to which each of the following traits fit this employee (1=not at all, 7=very much so).

1. Warmth
2. Kind
3. Friendly
4. Sincere

Positive Affect (Babin et al. 2005)

Please rate the extent to which the experience makes you feel each emotion below on a scale ranging from "not at all" to "very much so" (1=not at all, 7=very much so).

1. Excited
2. Energetic
3. Happy
4. Satisfied

Negative Affect (Babin et al. 2005)

Please rate the extent to which the experience makes you feel each emotion below on a scale ranging from "not at all" to "very much so" (1=not at all, 7=very much so).

1. Bored
2. Annoyed
3. Sleepy
4. Angry

Rapport (Gremler and Gwinner 2000)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

(1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Enjoyable Interaction

7. In thinking about my relationship with this person, I enjoy interacting with this employee.
8. This employee creates a feeling of “warmth” in our relationship.
9. This employee relates well to me.
10. In thinking about my relationship, I have a harmonious relationship with this person.
11. This employee has a good sense of humor.
12. I am comfortable interacting with this employee.

Affect-based Trust (Johnson and Grayson 2005)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

(1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

4. If I share my problems with this employee, I feel he or she would respond caringly.
5. This employee displays a warm and caring attitude towards me.

6. I can talk freely with this employee about my problems at work and know that he or she will want to listen.

Cognition-based Trust (Johnson and Grayson 2005)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

(1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

5. Given by the description of the frontline employee, I have no reservations about acting on his or her advice.
6. Given by the description of the frontline employee, I have good reason to doubt his or her competence. (reversed)
7. I have to be cautious about acting on the advice of this frontline employee, because his or her opinions are questionable. (reversed)
8. I cannot confidently depend on this frontline employee since he/she may complicate my affairs by careless work. (reversed)

Purchase Intention (Oliver and Swan 1989)

Please rate the likelihood of you doing business with the firm after interacting with the employee.

1. Not at all likely/ very likely
2. Improbable/ probable
3. Impossible/ possible
4. Uncertain/ certain

Satisfaction (Babin et al. 2005)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

(1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

1. I am satisfied with my decision to visit this firm.
2. I feel ____ about getting service from this employee (1 = very bad to 7 = very good).
3. I am ____ (very unsatisfied-very satisfied) with this employee.
4. I am ____% satisfied with the employee (0-100).

Service Quality (Cronin, Brady, and Hult 2000)

Please rate the overall service quality you received from this employee.

4. Poor/excellent
5. Inferior/superior
6. Low standards/high standards

Positive Word of Mouth (Brüggen, Foubert, and Gremler 2011)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

(1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

5. I am likely to say positive things about this employee to other people.
6. I am likely to recommend this employee to a friend or colleague.
7. I am likely to say positive things about this employee in general to other people.
8. I am likely to encourage friends and relatives to visit this _____.

Expressive Similarity (Lim et al. 2017)

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements

(1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

1. This employee is like me in terms of our communication style.
2. This employee is similar to me in terms of how he/she uses body language to express himself/herself.

-
-
3. This employee is like me when it comes to using nonverbal communication.

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