

## The Contributory Factors of Body Language Engagement Among Motivational Speakers in Corporate Training

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### Abstract

This qualitative study focuses in understanding the exposures, contributory factors, audience involvement, audience interpretation and outcomes of body language engagement by motivational speakers and how they can give meaningful training and learning session towards their participants. To gain insights about the core focus of this study, one research question was laid out which is (1) What are the contributory factors to the effective body language approach among speakers? This study was guided with the theory of Communication model by Albert Mehrabian (1971) and together with Birdwhistell's theory of Kinesics (1970). Using the phenomenology approach, interesting discoveries were gathered through in-depth interviews from sixteen informants who are motivational speakers and their audiences located in Klang Valley and Kuala Lumpur. Data analysis were conducted simultaneously with the data that was collected and with the help of computer software NVivo 11.0 for the process of coding. Thematic analysis and constant comparison strategy also were used to analyze the data that was gathered. The result of this study revealed that there are some internal and external contributing factors that influences speakers to use certain type of body language engagement towards their training session and learning strategy.

**Keywords:** *Nonverbal communication, speakers, teachers, body language, teaching and learning.*

### 1.0 Introduction

Nonverbal Communication happens when we convey information through signals [1]. This is where we use our body parts such as like eye movements, facial expressions, tone of voice, postures and gestures to send messages to others with or without realizing it. Nonverbal communication probably is one of the oldest languages came into existence for human to communicate with each other. It is said that nonverbal communication can give extra advantage to someone who try to seek to win in their arguments. Every communication consists of two aspect which is the content and the body language [2]. When the content being spoken by a speaker is not supported with the body language which is the nonverbal communication, it might would not win the confidence of the speaker's audience.

Moreover, there was a study done by a group of researchers consist of teachers from Department of Education in Sabah mentioning teachers poor communication skills not just affected the teaching and learning effectiveness but also caused the satisfaction level very low, psychology pressure and the loss of feeling love of the students towards teachers. The nonverbal communication happens when a

teacher engages with their students through eye contact, body movement, face management, dressing and appearance, humour and the teacher's natural personality [3].

Hence forth, the poor mastering of communication skills either verbal or nonverbal communication of teachers towards students such as like speaking abusively, cursing, slapping, giving long lectures and blabbering is said to influence student behaviour too (Abdullah, Johari, Chuchu and Laji, 2014). Here once again, researcher believe the aspect of nonverbal communication builds the perception and character building of a students, towards liking of a his or her teacher or any speaker that giving input towards them. [4] Stated that nonverbal communication is used as a channel to express our thoughts, feelings and emotions, establishing and maintaining relationships and to influence other people. It is very important to have nonverbal communication to establish and maintain relationship between provider and client.

In this study, researcher looked into how the corporate motivational speakers in Malaysia implemented or projected their nonverbal communication. More precisely, are they aware and understand the impact of their nonverbal cues towards the training session for their adult participants. One must understand that there are big differences between verbal and nonverbal aspects when motivational speakers uses them. In the end, a professional speaker must use their communication skills to persuade, to resolve issues and motivate their adult learners to take action [6].

Therefore, this study attempts to prove that by mastering or delivering effective nonverbal communication as a professional motivational speaker can help adult learners better and effectively in their corporate training. This study also seeks to find out what part of nonverbal communication that speakers should do or carried out so that the communication process between a speaker and learners has a great impact. Among the aspect that this study focused were the facial expression, hand gestures, body movement and voice intonation so that the researcher can find out what are the contributory factors of body language engagement among motivational speakers in corporate training.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Construct of Body Language Engagement

[7] Found that there are three components of communication that give impact in delivering messages. The break up consists of seven per cent of verbal (words only), 38% vocal (voice intonation, pitch, tonality and other sounds) and 55% the nonverbal. Therefore, it can be concluded that the construct of body language engagement comprises of 93% that involves nonverbal aspects.

Furthermore, [7] described engagement as the time off during which students acquire information and engage in an experience that gives the basis for, or content of, their ensuing learning. There are five phases to design impactful instruction for powerful group learnings or engagement of learnings. These five stage in the Collaborative Learning Model as described by Reid et al. (1989) consist of (i) *Engagement*, (ii) *Exploration*, (iii) *Transformation*, (iv) *Presentation* and (v) *Reflection*.

Even though for this study the engagement becomes the priority of the researcher to focus on and since engagement is the first stage that becomes crucial for learning to happen in this model. In the context of body language engagement, every stage is crucial and the nonverbal aspect of learners and speakers always communicating in every stage of this collaborative learning model. More than that, according to [8], they viewed adult learning as a problem solving and collaborative learning based because adults are preferably more engaged in learning when they are given choices, control over their learning and the curriculum is individualized. This view also supported by McDonough (2014) in a

study of deep learning through active engagement of adult learners. Therefore, all the five stage of collaborative learning model involves body language engagement.

## 2.2 Facial Expressions as Visual Cues

The study on facial expressions was pioneered by [9] of the University of California. In his study, he conducted a series of facial expressions experiment in a remote part of New Guinea. This community was selected for the experiment as there was a tribe that was disconnected from the Western world. The tribe has never seen a movie and has no connection with the technology of the day. Therefore, they were a good subject to test out their facial expressions. Ekman showed photos of American people expressing different types of emotions which the tribe was able to pick the accurate photos according to the corresponding questions imposed on them by the researcher. After repeating several experiments there and with participants all around the world, he laid out that there are seven facial micro expressions that are universal (Ekman and Friesen, 1969)

Ekman [10] postulated that our face was capable of showing six basic emotions. All these facial expressions can be grouped in these six primary emotional categories which are (i) Surprise that makes our eyes become wide open, eyebrow raised and wrinkled, and mouth opened (ii) Fear that makes us mouth opened, under the eyes skin's get tensed and at the center of the forehead will appear wrinkles (iii) Disgust that makes our upper lip raised or curled, nose wrinkled, cheeks raised, upper eyelid lowered and wrinkled (iv) Anger that makes our lower eyelid tensed, mouth opened, eyebrows lowered and wrinkled and have a staring eye (v) Happiness that makes us smile, mouth may be open or closed, cheeks raised and lower eyelids wrinkles and (vi) Sadness that may make our lip tremble, lips corners may turn the downward and upper eyelid may be raised.

All these six emotions or facial expressions that were studied by Ekman and Friesen (1969), are said to be generally accepted across all culture. This means, nonverbal communication goes beyond one culture and boundaries. It is a language that human from west and east understands.

## 2.3 Kinesics as The Study of Body Movement

The initial study of body movement or also known as the *kinesics* which was pioneered by Birdwhistell made a massive impact in the field of nonverbal communication [11]. He estimated the amount of nonverbal communication that takes place in human conversation. In an average person's conversation, we can speak words for about ten to eleven minutes a day and that average sentence takes only about 2.5 seconds.

According to Birdwhistell (1955), kinesics consists of facial expressions, gestures, posture and gait, and visible arm and body movements. All this nonverbal behavior is put forth to express and emphasize our feelings, thoughts, intentions, moods and attitudes. In a society we must have a shared communication value so that our bodily activity can be understood by others and conventionalized. This is the reason why the study of body movement has been consistently growing since the 1950s.

The method and concept [12] used in his study were the American descriptive linguistics of the late 1940s [13]. He stated that because of the information conveyed by our gestures and movement is coded differently in various cultures therefore he considered kinesics as a systematic and socially verbal language that can be learned by others. Kinesics can be breakdown into three categories (i) *Kines*, (ii) *Kinemes* and (iii) *Kinemorphs*. Kine is the smallest identifiable unit from our body movement, and Kineme is the group of movements that is not identical but may be used interchangeably without affecting social meaning and lastly Kinemorphs is the assemblage of kine that functions like a word or a group of kines that function like a word.

However, Ekman and Friesen (1969) put these nonverbal behaviors into five categories which are (i) *Affect Displays*, (ii) *Regulators*, (iii) *Adaptors*, (iv) *Illustrators* and (v) *Emblems*.

## 2.4 Gestures as The Art of Persuasive Talk

The discussion on gestures was popularized by Cicero and Quintilian during the Roman Empire through some practical details about their oratorical techniques where their delivery was characterized by certain strain and tension through the whole-body movements [14]. However, what is frustrating is that only little evidence has been captured of how Cicero practiced his oratorical delivery with hand gestures. Gladly, Quintilian managed to capture and illustrate how Roman speakers during their time used gestures involving arms, hands and fingers to give meaning and impactful force in their words [15].

In our daily life, we use our hand to communicate many times to portray something when we are in conversation with others. This act is considered as gestures. A person may point, wave or beckon when making an argument or speaking expressively. However, one need to be very careful because some gestures may be suitable in one country and might not be suitable in other place. For example, the *OK* sign that we use to indicate with our hand shows a positive message in English oriented countries. However, it may be offensive in other countries like Brazil, Germany and Russia [16].

In the study of bodily movement and gestures, [18] mentioned that human has long recognized the movement and gestures of others provided he or she speaks to another person. It also comes along with a useful and valuable information. A research has identified four stages of *Quasi-Courtship Behavior* [18]. First of all, *Courtship* can be defined as a process of representing good intention, signaling, calming fears, attraction, supplication, stimulation, exhilaration, fascination but most of all courtship is a persuasion shown through nonverbal methods [19].

All these courtships were found in Schefflen studies and he noticed there was a consistent pattern always showing up in his mixed-sex therapy sessions when there is a good rapport between the therapist and the client. After his research was published, many social psychologists started to dive into this nonverbal behavior and came to be realized that these same patterns not only happened between the therapist and clients, but also between co-workers, speakers and participants and also in the context of business transactions. Usually, these behaviors and gestures happened unconsciously and automatically.

## 2.5 Eye Contact as The Bridge of Trust and Rapport

The discussion of eye contact by [20] mentioned that people in the West like to look into their partner's eye at least 70 percent of the time. This is indeed true, because in another finding by [21] they proved that having a good eye contact makes the bonding process between therapists and patients in a better way. However, in Asian culture the engagement of eye contact happens less frequently compared to the West. This is because staring for a longer time directly to someone's eye is considered rude, disrespectful and not appropriate. In West a reasonable amount of eye contact is considered as positive and confident. For example in the context of business dealing, one should look into the eye of the other person when doing sales or negotiating any deals. This is to make sure the amount of trust and confidence could be generated.

Furthermore, [22] put forth that eye contact will make us confident and be in a dominating position during a conversation. However it is suggested that the amount of eye contact should be coordinated well so that it would not negatively affect both sides of the communicators. Having strong

and unbroken eye contact with someone may show us as a confident person but the likeability might be different across cultures and situations. Another point to consider is that by looking away from someone will make us appear to be shy or submissive. However being shy has its charisma. For example, Princess Diana and Prince William manage to keep themselves attractive even with shyness. This means that even by looking away from someone, they were able to display the confidence and likeability side of them to the public.

## 2.6 Haptic as The Study of Touch in Human Communication

How does touch becomes applicable in training? This part of nonverbal communication can be used in the first engagement between speakers and their students. For example, to show enthusiasm and energy. [23] suggest that give a firm handshake. The flesh between our forefinger and thumb touches the other person's flesh and this will indicate how excited we are to connect with others. By doing the handshake, we just need to do one pump and supported by eye contact. To be more enthusiastic we can do two-pump, eye contact and a smile. This great body language gives a strong indication that we are happy and energetic. However Zhou and Zhang imply that one should not squeeze their hand too much and do more than two-pump when doing the handshake as this will make others uncomfortable.

Furthermore, according to [24] human need encouragement through physical touching and this is also a means of communication nonverbally. Just by saying "I love you" verbally sometimes is not enough. One should say the word and at the same time give a hug which involves touching. Another interesting perspective to share here from Mohd and Hassan's writings is that in a presentation when a presenter showing an overview of what is going to be delivered, he or she can touch the material or screen as a means to show that the topic will be covered in their presentation. Therefore, touching may not only be seen to be used on people but also on things to give an impactful body language in one's presentation. This method surely can be applied by motivators in the speaking industry.

## 2.7 Proxemics as The Study of Space in Communication

Space or *Proxemics* is the study of how space and distance influence our communication. The scholar who pioneered this study is Edward T. Hall who was the cultural anthropologist and he focused on the interrelated observations and theories of human's use of space as a specialized elaboration of culture. [25] defined Proxemics as the use of space, seating arrangement and closeness of a human and also the way how they deduce it.

However, different cultures may have a different views of how they use their space during communication. For example, when communicating with strangers, Italians comfortable communicating at a distance of 25 centimetres meanwhile Australians at 46 centimetres [26]. In this context the Italians might be unaware of how the Australians feel uneasy when having a conversation at a very close space with them due to the invasion of their personal space.

Therefore, by knowing the cultural differences from the aspect of proxemics helps us to communicate better across regions. Another example of cultural difference is that the people in United Kingdom, United States of America and most of Europe they are mostly comfortable in communicating by keeping the distance between one to two metres between friends and families meanwhile with strangers and business associates it can go up to three metres. However, in the Middle East, China and Asia people are more comfortable to speak in a close range and personal zone [27].

## 2.8 Vocalic as The Influence of Vocalic in Nonverbal

According to [28] vocalic is the study of paralanguage which consists of pitch, volume, rate, vocal quality and the verbal fillers. Our voice can make people comfortable or make them feel challenged with us. Tone of voice greatly matters to be perceived as kind, sweet, loving and knowledgeable [29]. On the same argument [30] did the same study on the relationship of a speaker's credibility and persuasiveness in public speaking from the angle of vocalic. They coded seven vocalic sub-categories.

There are voice quality, pitch variety, tempo variety, loudness, tempo, pitch and response latencies. From their study, it was revealed that fluency of speeches is seen as more credible than no affluent speech. However, it did not affect the character judgement. The study on pitch variation shown competence, character and sociability [31]. Another interesting finding was that, when a speaker delivers his or her speech in a conversational style and less varied. The speaker was seen as more trustworthy, friendly and no dynamic compared to dynamic style [32].

Furthermore, speaking rapidly is perceived as more dominant, dynamic and enhances the assessment on intelligence, knowledge ability and objectivity [33]. However, what they missed out is the question did the faster tempo was beneficial or harmful to the sociability and character judgement of the speaker. Overall, what they concluded was that the credibility of a speaker can be increased with the vocal cues and vocal pleasantness. Vocal pleasantness happens when there is a greater fluency, pitch variation and clearer voice quality.

All these contributed to the attribution of the speaker in competence, character, sociability and composure [34]. Getting back to Andersen (1999), he mentioned that pitch helps us to convey meaning, regulate the conversational flow and intensify the communication of a message. For example, when parents communicate with their babies. They could recognize the sentence with a higher pitched ending as a question sentence. Another example how we use pitch in our voice is when we say "Hi" to others with rising emphasis and saying "bye-bye" with falling emphasis [35].

## 2.9 Appearance: The Effect of First Impression

How do colours really influence people scientifically? The answer for that can be traced back in [36] study when he founded that there were two wavebands of radiant energy at the opposite ends of the visible spectrum. For example, the blue and red colour exerts a differential biological influence on the organism when measured by general activation in our central and autonomic nervous system. Specifically, through EEG, blood pressure, respiration, palmar conductance level and heart rate.

This study also supported by [37] later on when he projected the blue and red colours directly on the eyes of ten normal subjects for six minutes and the EEG was used to record and clarify this study. The result of this study was, it showed greater cortical arousal for the red light and lower cortical arousal for the blue light. This is the reason why red colour is considered as warm and blue colour as cool. Thus, in the aspect of nonverbal communication. Speakers should consider about what colours to wear to influence their audience according to their theme and settings so that they can reap higher benefit and impact that they want from their audience or event.

## 2.10 Chronemics: How People Use Time in Communication

The study of how time affects in communication are named as Chronemics. What is interesting is that, within the time, there are many categories has been classified such as like biological, physical, personal and cultural time (Andersen, 1999). [38] argued that Chronemics is the communicative value

of time that an individual modifies and manage their time. For example, some people are preoccupied with their time meanwhile some others may waste their valuable time regularly. This later on will be reflected on the public level when the time-wasting habit becomes a feature of a certain society. Therefore, chronemics shows how people use their time in communicating with people around them.

More than that, it is also about perceptions of the past, present and future and furthermore the passing of time during communication [39]. Even in doing voiceover, chronemics is applied to represent the time in their story. For example, voiceover actors use their pauses during the recording of their speech or by taking deep breath as a representation of time in communication.

### 2.11 Mehrabian's Communication Model and Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics

This research is informed by Mehrabian Communication Model and Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics, which considers as the guiding principles for the researcher to investigate the body language engagement among motivational speakers in corporate training. The Mehrabian's communication model comprises of words, voice intonation and body language. It was revealed that seven per cent of the message related to feelings and attitudes was in the words that are spoken. This is also including on how we use our voice intonation, tone, pitch and volume. Thirty-eight per cent of the message related to feelings and attitudes is in the paralinguistic. It is the way that the words are said. Fifty-five per cent of the message related to feelings and attitudes was in the facial expression which is part of body language (Kuhnke, 2012).

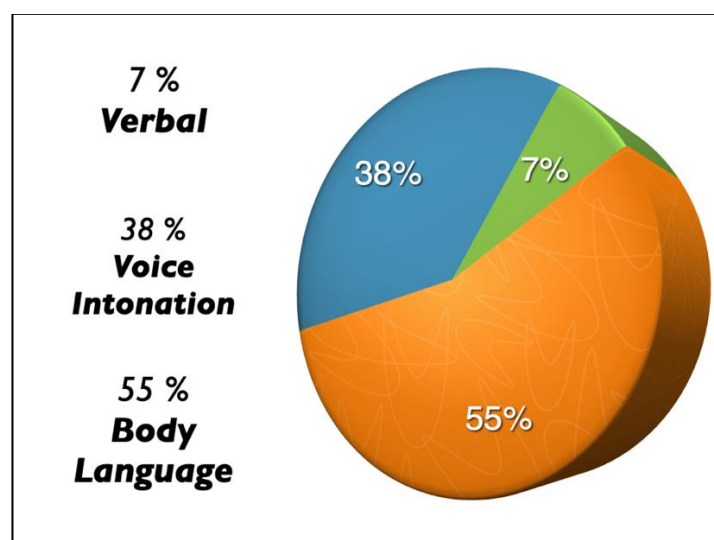
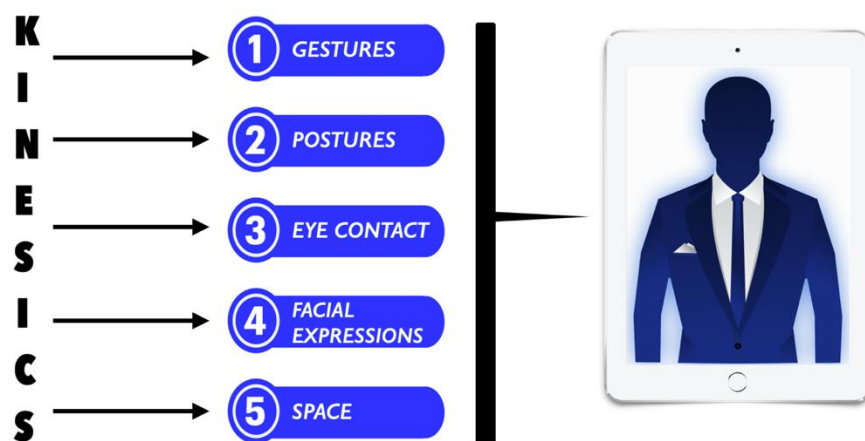


Figure 1. Mehrabian's Communication Model

Adapted from "Mehrabian, A. (1971). *Silent messages* (Vol. 8, No. 152, p. 30). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, pp. 43-44.

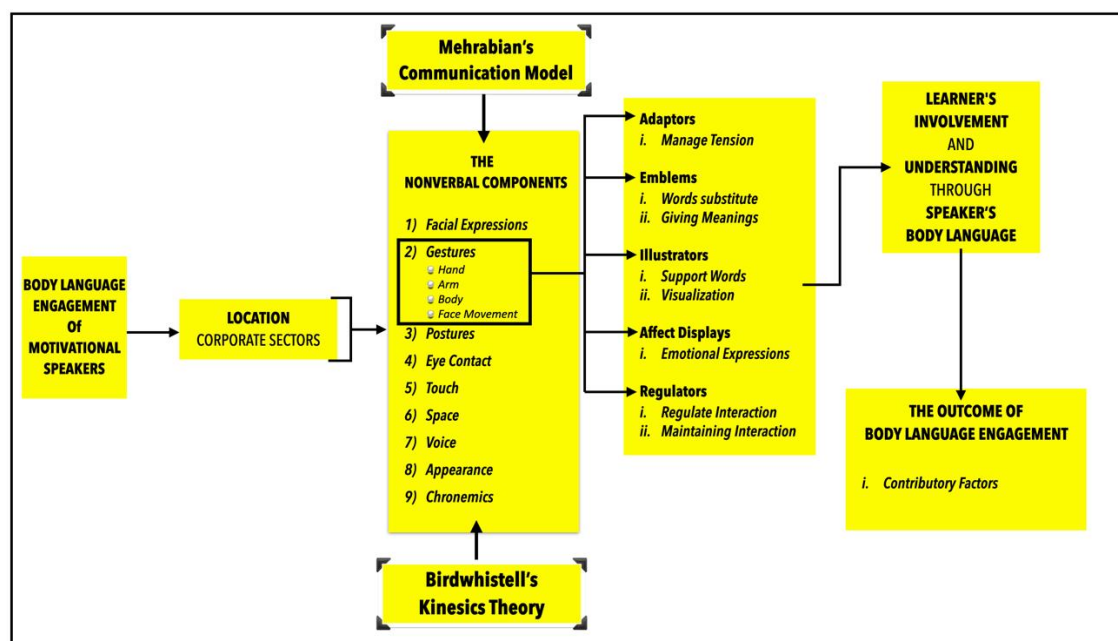
Meanwhile for the Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics, it studies about how people communicate through their gesture, posture, stance and movement (Birdwhistell, 1970). As shown below in the figure 2, the study of Kinesics covers five main aspects of body language which are (i) gestures, (ii) postures, (iii) eye contact, (iv) facial expressions and (v) space which is known as proxemics. Pease and Pease (2006) also agree that body language which refers to kinesics includes the movements of head to toes. Both of them mentioned kinesics covers eye contact, eye movements, facial expressions, smile, shoulders, head, arms, hands, legs, feet and all of the gestures as a whole.



**Figure 2.** Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics

Adapted from "Birdwhistell, R. (1970). *Kinesics in Context*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Due to the evolution in terms of people's interaction nowadays and with the emergence of technologies, researcher have continuously expanded the theories of both scholars to reflect the development of body language engagement in research and society. Simply put, the theory below takes into account a two-way communication and the view from audience and speaker's perspectives. Figure 3 below is the conceptual framework blended from Mehrabian's Communication Model and Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics.



**Figure 3.** The Conceptual Framework of The Understanding of Body Language Engagement Among Motivational Speakers in Training modified from Mehrabian's Communication Model and Birdwhistell's Theory of Kinesics



### **3. Methodology**

The subject being studied of participated informants on in-depth interview involved local Malaysians of professional motivators male and female aged between 30 to 48 years old for the speaker's category. Meanwhile, for the audiences' category the informants involved male and female training participants aged 22 to 37 years old. They were all selected from purposive method and criterion-based sampling. Altogether, there were 18 informants that consisted of nine informants from the speaker's category and nine informants from the audiences' category.

The researcher had to divulge the views of the situation on the informant as much as possible in order to materialize the intellectual enigma of research questions as well as to justify the chosen methodology. Therefore, a qualitative approach was used to gather data and the fieldwork was conducted at several sites in Klang Valley and Kuala Lumpur between 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021 to 30<sup>th</sup> Mac 2021 and a steady relationship has been maintained with the different informants. The main data collection techniques used in this research study was semi-structured interviews. Finally, in this chapter the researcher covers the research analysis and a brief summary of the expectations from the theoretical framework adopted and the interpretation is shaped by the researcher's background as it is their role as an instrument to validate how well forth the elucidation based on the personal experiences.

The researcher adopted exploratory research design as this had facilitated and helped the researcher to explore new variables and at the same time to consent the existing evidence on the research study more precisely. As this study tries to investigate the understanding of body language engagement among motivational speakers in training. It requires a purposeful describing, explaining and interpreting of data that was collected. Therefore, the researcher chose qualitative approach as it offers in-depth interview methods for collecting data and gives deeper understanding from the perspectives of informant about the body language engagement between motivational speakers and audience. This approach also gives the researcher opportunity to interpret the perspectives being given by informants through qualitative data. Researcher used phenomenological research methods as it suits well to study live experiences of adult audience in training with their trainers or speakers. The researcher carried out inquiry process through two methods. First was through observation and second was the field research. This method was done in order to gather reliable data to address the research objectives of this study. The data that were collected are then analyzed and discussed for future findings and discussion. The researcher also employed the member checking approach and the thematic analysis and constant comparative analysis method in order to focus on the informants' various perspectives.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

The overall findings and discussion illustrate the understanding of body language engagement among motivational speakers in corporate training. The research question is (i) What are the contributory factors to the effective body language approach among speakers?

In this study, for the first research question some of the informants shared common experience going through the process of training and learning in their courses. All of them believed that the five nonverbal communication components are very important in helping them succeeding in their school life. This findings also supported by the study of [40] which indicated that teachers did not succeed in delivering their inner meaning of the content through nonverbal communication which includes the facial expression and physical gestures parts of the teachers. Table 1 below lays out the categories and themes derived from the findings of the data gathered by this study.

**Table 1:** Categories and subcategories derived from In-Depth Interview with Individual informants reflecting on the understanding of body language engagement among motivational speakers in corporate training.

Categories	Sub Categories
Contributory Factors to the Effective Body Language Approach Among Speakers From the Audience Perspective	Academic and Experience The Number of Audience Capture Audience Attention The V.A.K System
Contributory Factors to the Effective Body Language Approach Among Speakers From the Speaker's Perspective	Academic Qualifications Experience and Professional Learning The Number of Audience To Deliver with Emotions and Feelings

As claimed by [41], they found out that the expressiveness of nonverbal and verbal instructions was also seemed to be problematic among speakers. This means, the understanding of body language engagement among motivational speakers in corporate training not only gives impact at the level of local academic institution only but also at the level of international. In the first research objective, the researcher attempts to find answers to the question “What are the contributory factors to the effective body language approach among speakers?”. In this study, the factors that contributes to the effective body language approach among speakers from the audience perspective are gathered in four themes: (i) academic and experience, (ii) the number of audience, (iii) to capture audience attention, (iv) the V.A.K system. These themes were derived from the informant's responses towards their trainer's body language skills during training. All the nine informants agreed that they believed their trainers academic and professionalism contributed to the effective approach of their body language engagement in training.

### ***Contributory Factors to the Effective Body Language Approach Among Speakers from The Audience Perspective***

#### ***a. Academic and Experience***

The importance of soft skills collected through experience in trainers are very important as it complements the hard skills which they earned from technical requirements during academic years. [42] mentioned that embedding soft skills into hard skills is very efficient and effective strategy as it can be an attractive way of teaching or delivering training of a particular subject matter. The experience that gained by trainers play an important role in molding and shaping them to have an effective body language engagement in corporate training. On top of that, [43] also support that teachers are the one that is responsible for the development of students' personality. They determine the people, the quality of the communication and of how far their teaching gives impactful effect on the development of their learners. In the interview with informants from the audience group, they stated that:

*“In my view, his academic background is so helping. Aaa... academic background and experience must be sync. What I mean is if the speaker only has the experience, so it is not necessarily the speaker can deliver the content in a good way. Same goes to if the speaker has a good academic background, but he lacks experience in*

*training field... it does not mean that he can deliver as well. So that is what I mean academic background and experience must be linked together.” (Informant 1)*

It is interesting to hear that this informant prefers his trainer to not only have good academic background but also prefer if the trainer has the experience in the content or subject matter being delivered to him. In addition, the other two Informants also have the same thought and preferences when they were asked if they believe academic background and experience helped the trainer to design and deliver good learning engagement. They stated that:

*“my answer is yes, experience is important because why... because, when it is true that what he does is right, like what I mean... when he urges us to get an A for our exam, he also got an A for his exam. So, then we will believe what he delivers to us. So... um... aa... I think academic background is also important, I mean, his expertise in that field makes him deserves to talk. So, when we hear his talk, it doesn't feel like he's just talking, he is being true...” (Informant 2)*

*“yes. aa... it depends on his talk or topic, for example Sir Hanis, he is more into IT, so when he gives talk about IT, he should possess strong academic background of IT so that audiences can trust him. Um... Oh okay. He should. Aa... why? Because of trust, gaining audiences trust” - (Informant 3)*

Based on the three informants above, all agrees that the academic and experience of a speaker contributes to body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training. Nonverbal communication is important in making audience to learn actively without being bored or sleepy and to be interactive with them. Moreover, it has been revealed that body language engagement serves as a persuasive means and influence the performance of others [44]. Based on the three statements above and agreed by all eight informants out of nine, it can be concluded that the academic and experience of a speaker contributes to body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training.

### ***b. The Number of Audience***

Gestures act as a visual support when we communicate especially to a large number of people. Applying body language strategies to a small number of audiences will be different compared to larger number of audiences. [45] wrote in her article that body language gives big difference to certain amount of audience. For example, making eye contact will easier for smaller audience compared to larger crowd. Eye contact builds connection and trust between the audience and the speaker. It has been proved that through eye contact our Oxytocin hormone released and this contributes to reduce of fear and increase in trust [46]. Below are the opinions by some the Informants when they were asked “Do you think the size of the audience affected the speaker’s strategy in delivering his content?”

*“...I really think the size of the audience has an influence on the speaker’s strategy. For instance, if the size of the audience is about 30 people, the speaker would not use a high pitched-voice when delivering the contents...” - (Informant 4)*

*“Yes, because the speaker will prepare the content, according to the size of the audience. When the audience is very huge, then the content of the speaker would be very different. More open....” (Informant 5)*

*“Yes, it is affecting. Less amount of audience will need less body language in order for the speaker to attract the audience. Larger audience mean that the speaker needs more body language in delivering).” (Informant 7)*

Informant 4 mentioned that for a crowd of 30 people, the speaker would have to use low pitched voice compared to a larger group of audience. Informant 5 on the other hand mentioned that the number of audiences will determine how the speaker prepare his content and informant 7 mentioned that the lesser number of audiences require less nonverbal communication for the speaker to gain attention from the audience. Based on these three informants it can be concluded that the number of audiences helps in influencing the body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training.

### **c. Capture Audience Attention**

Our facial expression has the capability to capture audience attention. In [47] study, it was found out that negative facial expression particularly effective in capturing attention. This is because our face emotionally expressive and that makes easier for audience to follow along and capture their attention. The communication model proposed by Mehrabian (1971) stated that our face is the most significant source of emotional communication and it represents as much as half of our nonverbal communication aspects. Moreover, these Informants also stated that:

*“...There are two, first, in my opinion, to attract the audience attention, and the second thing is to make the audience more understand the information that the speaker gives....” (Informant 2)*

*“Because... like I said before, both body language (referring to hands and arm and eye contact) is very important. I think both are equally important aa... so he can use these two parts of body language to get the audience’s attention. It is to catch the audiences’ understanding about topics that he will be explaining. (Informant 3)*

*“...Firstly, it is to get our attention so that we learn from what he does and maybe apply in our setting. It attracts our attention and it’s effective in conveying what you want to say so maybe we can use it in our place to convey what we want to share...” (Informant 5)*

Informant 2, 3 and 8 statements, stand similarly with Thompson (2017) writing where she mentioned that eye contact is the easiest way to receive feedback and capture audience attention and together with hand gestures it amplifies the stories and message that we want to get across to audience. In addition, [48] found out that facial expressions does not only important for the teachers but also for the students. This is because it significantly correlated to their emotions which helped to recognize their comprehension towards the teaching and learning. Therefore, it can be concluded that speaker’s intention to capture audience attention was one of the contributing factors for body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training.

### **d. The V.A.K System**

Visual gestures help to retain more information permanently, inspire students visually, grow accurate image when they saw and hear properly, helped in increasing the vocabulary of the students and most importantly it gave direct experience to them [49]. V.A.K System or also known as learning style refers to the ability of participants to process information based on their preferred sensory perception to receive information [50]. Below these two Informants stated:

*“Yes, he will still use his hands and arms to point (visually). He will still use his body language (kinesthetically) to explain further (auditorily)....” (Informant 3)*

*“From my personal experience in my class, I notice that if the speaker uses hands and arms (visually) and eye contact when explaining (auditory) the second time to students, it helps them more. This is because I myself personally go (kinesthetically) to the students who need more assistance in understanding what I explained...” (Informant 4)*

*“As a trainer, body language skill is compulsory to have. Body language covers a lot for delivery itself and also to build engagement. This is to ensure that audiences understand what they (trainers) are trying to deliver. Body language also helps us when trainers delivering presentation involving multiracial people. Even though they have slides, but the knowledge doesn’t come from the slides, but it comes from their delivery. The main motive is to ease audiences’ comprehension on the contents I deliver. Body language is also important for the audiences at the back as it will reach them as well. Compared to words (auditory), it is easier for them to see (visually) trainers and how trainer present (kinesthetically) themselves.” (Informant 9)*

This finding suggested that every trainer or speaker need to use visually and kinesthetically their body language in helping their learners or audience to learn, understand better and faster. This is similarly found in the study done by [51] where it was reported that 54 per cent students are visual, 26.9 per cent students are auditory and 19.1 per cent students prefer kinesthetic learning approach. These findings are similar to one of the studies carried out by [52], which indicated that teachers used purposefully their gestures to help enable their students to visualize and experience the intangible pronunciation. Even their students also acted out their teachers gestures through creative imitation and made them as one of the learning tools in the process of mastering the pronunciation Therefore, to fulfill the learning style approach of participants and learners in training. Speakers uses the visual, auditory and kinesthetic communication style or in short, the V.A.K system and this is one of the contributing factors for body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training

### ***Contributory Factors to the Effective Body Language Approach Among Speakers from The Speakers Perspective***

In this study, the factors that contributes to the effective body language approach among speakers from the speaker’s perspective are gathered in four themes: (i) academic qualifications, (ii) experience and professional learning, (iii) the number of audience, (iv) to deliver with emotions and feelings. These themes were derived from the informant’s responses in delivering their training and how their audience respond to them. All the nine informants who are categorized as professional trainers agreed that they believed their academic and professionalism and bringing emotions live in their training session contributed to the effective approach of their body language engagement in training.

#### ***a. Academic Qualifications***

One of the key factors that transform a speaker to be a good trainer is the intrinsic motivation to continue their professional development [53]. A good trainer must always be responsible to reflect their professional development and career progress through identifying and seeking the needs to upgrade their education background [54]. From the interview that was conducted to speakers, seven out of nine

of all the informants agreed that the contributing factors for body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training was because of their academic qualifications. Below are some of their statement stating that:

*“Yes, it is really important because our academic background show us... it is more to facts. If you're in the government, the higher your grades, they need more facts and not just experiences. They need details, where are the source? So, an academic background is important because, if you have never been to a university then how are you supposed to share experiences in regard to that? That's how it is” (Informant 1)*

*“Yes. I really believe in this matter because aa... it happened to myself. Two years ago, I conducted a program... with only my degree. Aa...but I have the experience of conducting the programmes with my coaches. But now, I am more confident with the way I conduct the programmes. Because right now, I'm doing my master's, I'm doing my master in UPSI in the course of Educational Psychology. Because I take the programmes based on the psychology... technically I can identify, how is the attitude of the students, we can know the attitude of the students, and then we can detect from the student's emotions problems...” (Informant 2)*

Informant 1 and 2 straight away mentioned without hesitation that academic background really contributes to the body language engagement by speakers in training. However, informants 4 and 8 have a little bit different view with the other informants as they mentioned that academic and experience together contributes for better body language engagement in training.

*“Yes, it is really helpful because academic backgrounds help me to be more engaged with my audiences. My contents will be more relatable with the audiences. However, my experiences help me to control my nervousness when I am about to deliver or handle a training session with a lot of people.” (Informant 4)*

*“I can say both, because... my background is engineering. So, I have been taught to make it very systematic, until today. At the same time, experience is what you go through. So, it is like an observation.” (Informant 8)*

The statement or views above, supports the finding of Kirpal and Wittig (2009) where they showed that 67.5 per cent of knowledge acquired by learning academically and 32.5 per cent trainers learned through experience and practical contributed for their competence at work. Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the reasons contributing factors for body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training is the academic background or qualifications.

### ***b. Experience and Professional Learning***

According to [55] for a trainer to be good in handling training surely experience is a great thing. This is because to give impact towards the training programs the social proves called as experience and professional learning is needed to show to the audience and clients. Furthermore, [56] added that people gain experience and polish their ability and skills through day-to-day work. Therefore, it is the experience and professional learning that drives the effectiveness of handling a training programs. Below are some of the Informants statement:

*“For my personal opinion lah... I think it is more to experience and professional learning. It is because of during our lesson at the back time, we never learn all these things. But when I*

*went to the seminar about training, we were taught and exposed about what should we learn, watch and how do it.” (Informant 5)*

*“Okay... for me, I will say that experience is the factor that give the biggest impact in deliver. It is because of academic background sounds very static and we cannot easily add on the value of it if we do not experience and explore something new. But for experience, we can keep on improve and new learning. However, for me... academic itself is still a core for someone. It signs someone’s credibility and trustworthy.” (Informant 7)*

Informant 5 who is also an experienced trainer and who always appear at TV Al-Hijrah for Quran Hour Programs in Malaysia mentioned that it is the experience and professional learning that drove him to have a good body language engagement with his audience. This is because during his academic life in university he did not learn all that. The same opinion informant 7 mentioned by stating that experience helped him rather than academic background only. Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the factors that are contributing to body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training is the experience and professional learning.

### ***c. The Number of Audience***

[57] concluded that classroom environment together with the students or participants who are in it was a strong indicator in helping them to achieve the learning objectives. When asked was the number of audiences was one of the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training, below are some of the Informant’s response:

*“...It contributes a lot because, if the number of audiences are as far as the eye can see, the way we raise up our hands would be higher and involves bigger movements ...” (Informant 1)*

*“...It really gives impact to... the result in the program actually. The size. The size of the audience. Because if we involve ourselves with the small audience, for an example, in the classroom. So, our body movement will not be that obvious. So, if we want to show that we are excited, we will not show that we are over excited. But if we are in the big scale of the audience, of course when we wave to them, we will dynamically wave to them. So, our body movement really gives the impact itself. Aa... so it really impacts the result actually....” (Informant 3)*

*“...Yes. The bigger the amount of audience, more expressive I will be ....” (Informant 8)*

Various statements by all the informants above agreed that the number of audience significantly influenced them to practice a good body language engagement in their training. This is because the bigger the number of audience, they have to be more exaggerated so that all the audience from front row to behind can see them clearly and feel their presence.

### ***d. To Deliver with Emotions and Feelings***

It was found out in the study of [58] that a cheerful teacher and the one that has sense of humour is more welcomed and respected by students. The same goes with trainers in the corporate training world. As emotions and feelings are the components in social interaction, they portray what or how we are feeling and affect the social outcome through body language [59]. Below are some of the Informants’ statement about their view on why emotion and feelings contributed to their body language engagement in training:

*“Yes. To show that in each topic, there are emotions that we want to convey and also to let them know our feelings and receive the contents with clarity” (Informant 1)*

*“Yes. For example, aa... the situation forces us to show our serious side. Because we do the slot... with chill or relax face, so that trainer would not be serious. But then, whenever the time or the situations force us to be serious, so, here is where we will use serious facial expression to show our emotions.” (Informant 2)*

When asked why would you use your hand gestures even with the help of technologies in training?. Informant 5 dan 8 stated that:

*“Body language will help the audiences’ understanding and confidence towards the things I deliver or explain. This is because technologies do not really illustrate what we do, say, explain and more. Technologies have no emotions, so it is a bit hard for the audiences to be present in the session.” (Informant 5)*

*“It is because of the human touch...” (Informant 8)*

By comprehending all the informants views above, it clearly shows that through body language speakers can convey the hidden dimension that cannot be seen visually but can be felt by audiences through heart which are the emotions and feelings. Therefore, it can be concluded that one of the factors that are contributing to body language engagement approach among motivational speakers in corporate training is to deliver with emotions and feelings to their audiences.

## 5. Conclusion

This study has managed to alleviate the gap of research findings that is related to the existing research which is to investigate the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training. The researcher found interesting points to be related to the research objectives. The objectives is (i) to understand the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training.

The key findings in this chapter are consistent and meet the research questions and objectives on identifying the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training. The finding encapsulated that the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training from the audience perspectives are (i) academic and experience (ii) the number of audience (iii) capture audience attention and (iv) the V.A.K system. From the interview that was carried out, the informants also mentioned many other variants but however, the researcher put forth only these four findings because it carries the most significant weight to this study.

The second findings for the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training from the speaker’s perspectives are (i) academic qualifications (ii) experience and professional learning (iii) the number of audience and (iv) to deliver with emotions and feelings. With regard to the previous study that were conducted by other researchers, both past study and this current study results show that the contributing factors are the main reason why speakers use body language engagement in corporate training.

Overall, this study had investigated the contributing factors for nonverbal communication skills or the body language engagement in training specifically in the context of corporate world or the adult learning setting. The findings were evidently showed the attainment of the research question and the research objective of the present study. An overview of the research findings has been illustrated in Table 1 to present the contributing factors for body language engagement in corporate training from the



audience and speaker's perspectives. Thus, the findings of this research are based on from the emerging themes which have significantly led to insight of audience experience towards the usage of their speaker's body language engagement skills in training and also the experience of the speaker themselves in handling their crowd.

As for the limitation of this study, the researchers had to adjust data gathering time according to the availability of trainers and audience. It would have been more delightful and great if the researchers could have interviewed the clients as well to know what their views are and why they keep inviting the same trainers for their training programs. Last but not least, the researcher recommend for future study a more similar study could be conducted and focused on the body movement in gamification activities in corporate training. In addition, besides qualitative approach. The future study could be conducted in quantitative approach so that academically we may gain the view of how large sample size respondents view their speakers from the aspect of body language engagement on skills in training and learning setting.

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