

Assessing the influence of Non-Verbal Communication Skills Training on hiring decision and Workplace Success for Engineering Students

Ankit Kumar Sharma ¹, Dr. Pankhuri Agarwal ²

¹Research Scholar Management Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad (U.P.) India

Email ID : mechboy@live.in

²Associate Professor Management Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad, (U.P.) India

Email ID : pankhuri.management@tmu.ac.in

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on analyzing Non-Verbal Communication (NVC) skills that influence employment decision-making and productivity in the workplace of engineers. The objectives encompass the examination of the impact of NVC on job interviews, workplace performance, and employer perceptions. In a mixed-method research design, data were collected from 200 engineering students in Delhi NCR through a focused questionnaire, which provides for gathering details concerning the communication skills of the students and perceived effects on numerous career achievements and processes using statistical methods such as regression and correlation. The results show that body language, facial expressions, as well as eye contact, play an important role in the hiring process and the effectiveness of the workplace. This investigation highlights the necessity of incorporating NVC education into the syllabi of engineering programs in order to help students gain more success in the employment market and progress in their careers.

Keywords: Non-verbal communication, workplace success, engineering students

1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern fast-paced job market, good communication skills are viewed as a key factor in employability and career advancement. While written and spoken communication has been the focus of professional growth, non-verbal communication (NVC) is an under-emphasized element despite its influence on interpersonal relationships (Grieve, 2013). The impact of training in non-verbal communication skills on employment choices and job success among engineering students was investigated in earlier studies, a group that generally receives little formal communication training despite its increasing relevance in the workplace (Gokuladas, 2010).

Engineering students learn technical skills, problem-solving and analytical skills foremost (Islam 2020), but communication skills to share ideas, professionally interact, and make a significant impression in interview situations and also in the corporate environment are crucial for career progress as well (Lopes, et al., 2015). Non-verbal communication like body language, eye contact, facial expressions, hand gestures, tone of voice, and posture are very important in leaving a long-lasting impression with future employers (Chatterji, et al., 2023). The recruiters tend to make rapid decisions based on such non-verbal cues, affecting their beliefs regarding a candidate's confidence level, professionalism, adaptability, and general fit for a position (Yusoff, 2010). Notwithstanding this, engineering curricula mostly emphasize technical competencies, commonly overlooking systematic training in non-verbal communication (Bonaccio, et al., 2016).

The recruitment process, especially at job interviews and networking sessions, is entirely dependent on first impressions, people skills, and projecting confidence and credibility (Febriantini et al 2020). Engineering graduates with excellent technical acumen but insufficient NVC skills may fail to make a favorable impression on recruiters, resulting in lost employment opportunities (Acero, et al., 2022). Moreover, non-verbal communication has a pivotal position in workplace interaction, teamwork, leadership efficiency, and professional development, determining how professionals form relationships, negotiate, and represent themselves in corporate settings (RAHMANI, 2024). But little empirical evidence exists for the efficacy of formal non-verbal communication training programs to increase job preparedness and work success in engineering students (Dorai & Webster, 2015).

In addition, the study seeks to yield useful insights into how NVC training can be systematically incorporated into engineering education to ensure that engineering students are provided with technical know-how as well as necessary professional competencies. Through the analysis of the effect of non-verbal communication training on recruitment success, workplace accommodation, and career advancement, the results will yield useful recommendations to academic institutions, career development initiatives, and corporate recruiters. Finally, the study will support more comprehensive engineering education so that, in addition to being technically able, graduates become proficient at effectively dealing with professional life through a better sense of communication.

The study is organized into six sections. The introduction identifies the significance of non-verbal communication (NVC) for the employability of engineering students and their success in the workplace. The literature review discusses previous studies on NVC and communication skills, and how there are gaps in knowledge. The research gap section addresses the absence of NVC training in engineering education. The methodology describes the method to gauge the effect of NVC training on students using surveys and interviews. Results and discussion provide results of how NVC training affects employment readiness and employer attitudes. The conclusion outlines key findings, considers limitations, provides recommendations for integrating into the curriculum, and identifies directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Noor, S. N. F. M., et al., (2017) found that graduates with certain language competences did better on the exam, and that some students really needed to work on their interview skills so they could get a job. Overall, it was safe to say that being able to articulate one's thoughts clearly and present one's facts in a favorable light were more important than just being able to speak English fluently when applying for jobs. Another author, Mag-atas, J., & Sobrepeña, J. C. (2024) showed that participants' verbal, written, and nonverbal communication abilities had improved significantly. The study focused on boosting participants' confidence while speaking in front of an audience, which proved useful in marketing. There had been a clear correlation between the students' enhanced professional demeanor and their capacity to interact with the corporate world and their improved employment prospects. Similarly, LHALLOUBI, J., et al., (2024) investigated the effect of hands-on experience on engineering seniors' views of their own employability as they approached graduation, with an emphasis on the significance of soft skills. Experiential learning significantly enhanced responders' problem-solving, leadership, and communication skills, based on the findings. Students enhanced their perceived employability and stood out in the employment market with these skills.

Pereira, M., et al. (2021) used a correlation-based feature selection technique to select performance-related signals. The selected characteristics were tested against a set of different machine learning classification models. In terms of media interviews, the findings indicated that a combination of body language, hand movements, and facial expressions was the most effective way of communicating. Likewise, Wu, Y., et al., (2023) investigated how verbal and nonverbal communication skills influenced the employability of engineering students using the four pillars of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) philosophy. Based on the findings, the employability of engineering students was heavily influenced by verbal and non-verbal communication skills in this new age of the digital world. Meanwhile, the employer's assessment significantly benefited pupils in sharpening their communication skills. In comparison to this, Chitac, I. M., et al., (2024) created a means of analyzing systematically symbols from nonverbal communications through face-to-face interviews. By

illuminating the cultural and contextual meanings encoded nonverbally, those conclusions increased our understanding of organizational management and research strategies. This particularly applied to the neglected entrepreneurial minority of Romanian companies in London (Vogel et al 2018).

Nalliveetil, G. M., & Gadallah, M. S. M. (2024) considered engineering from a global perspective, highlighted the need for soft skills, particularly for ESL (English as a Second Language) engineers. Methods for improving ESL engineers' language competence in engineering education and career advancement were suggested in this study, which drew on a variety of theories of language acquisition, including the Behaviourist, Cognitive, Innatist, Interactionist, and Input Hypothesis. Furthermore, a thorough framework for aligning language learning with the technical needs of the engineering profession was achieved via the integration of engineering education concepts, such as Problem Based Learning, Active Learning Strategies, Multimodal Learning, and Project-Based Learning. Additionally, Cannata, D., et al., (2024) examined the nonverbal cues displayed by 379 British and 313 Asian job applicants for graduate jobs at a bank after they had completed personality tests and participated in video interviews. Cultural differences in the expression of personality were also shown by the fact that the associations between personality features and nonverbal actions differed from one culture to another. Further, three British/Irish assessors situated in London (UK) or Loughrea (Ireland) and three Chinese assessors situated in Shanghai (China) evaluated the 304 applicants' muted videos based on work fit, attractiveness, and personality

Yadav, A., & Tiwari, A. (2024) revealed that engineering students rated their own communication abilities and proficiency in all four areas worse than they really were. They also seemed to think they were better at listening and writing than reading and speaking. This suggested that although students' communication skills had improved in certain areas, they were still largely unprepared for the professional workplace. Another author, Rao, R., & Patil, S. (2024) emphasized the need for strong communication abilities for thriving in STEM fields. Students benefited from developing their communication abilities when they embarked on this course and throughout their careers. Yadav (2022) aimed to do the following: a) determined how valuable LSRW abilities were to future engineers. b) Determined if engineering programs placed sufficient emphasis on students' ability to communicate effectively. According to the results, students did well in the first year and gained enough experience with communication skills, but in later semesters, these abilities were either neglected or students lost interest in them. In contrast to this, Verma, D., & Pande, N. (2016) recognized the importance of non-verbal cues in any effort to bring about change. The onus was on business schools to produce graduates with strong managerial skills who could effectively communicate change strategies in an era where everyone was aware of the importance of non-verbal cues. This study evaluated recent business school grads' non-verbal communication abilities in light of corporate standards.

Vigneshwari, J., & Pavai, P. S. (2024) focused on making undergraduates (UGs) more marketable to potential employers by helping them hone crucial soft skills like communication, collaboration, and time management. Through the development of these qualities, undergraduates made valuable contributions to their chosen disciplines and succeeded in the dynamic professional world. The significance of communication skills and their effect on the success and progression of careers among undergraduate graduates was the focus of this study. Another author, Hanif, A., & Asgher, T. (2024) examined the impact of YouTube videos on the non-verbal components of OPSs among ESL learners in Pakistan using a quasi-experimental technique. The study's findings revealed that YouTube was an effective teaching medium for English as a Second Language (ESL) student in Pakistan, helping them improve their non-verbal OPSs. Expressions, movements, eye contact, posture, and movement as a whole demonstrated improvement. As it is proven by Gunhan, S., et al., (2012) investigated that there was a significant association between the ability to communicate effectively and their capacity to resolve conflicts, hence there was a continuing need to enhance communication skills within the construction sector. Courses like Construction Communication, which sought to provide students with strong verbal and written communication skills, were required of students majoring in construction management (CM).

Holik, I., & Sanda, I. D. (2020) brought up the fact that recent grades faced a number of demands from employers. Skills such as effective communication, problem-solving, creativity, independence, organization, leadership, dynamism, tolerance for stress, analysis, accuracy, openness, adaptability, motivation, digital competence, etc. were vital in addition to professional knowledge. Findings highlighted the potential and significance of communication skill development in higher education. Another author, Dzia-Uddin, D. N., et al., (2024) drew upon secondary sources of information gathered from studies conducted by other researchers between 2019 and 2023, including scholarly publications, papers, and websites. Consequently, being able to communicate effectively was crucial for many tasks, including but not limited to finding a job, working with others, providing excellent customer service, resolving conflicts, taking on leadership roles, advancing in one's career, and learning new things. Similarly, Thite, S., et al., (2024) found that the validity and reliability of the rubric were supported by exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses conducted on the first implementation data, as well as by McDonald's Omega. Munir et al (2015) the rubric's simplicity and efficacy were highlighted by comparing student assessments of each other with those of Teaching Assistants (TAs). This comparison confirmed that students were capable of evaluating each other to the same level as TAs. In contrast to this, Maksum, H., et al., (2024) discovered that the syntaxes included the following: (1) issue troubleshooting; (2) order organization; (3) collaborative problem solution; (4) order execution; (5) quality control; (6) analysis and presentation; and (7) evaluation. Teachers and students alike benefited from the scenario-driven lessons designed to instill in them the

problem-solving, communication, and teamwork abilities necessary for success in the automotive industry of the twenty-first century (Little et al 2015).

Despite the growing significance of communication skills to employability, the role of non-verbal communication (NVC) in engineering training and recruitment is unexplored. Most research investigates verbal and written communication with limited focus on the impact of non-verbal cues on employer attitude, work readiness, and in-work relationships. Although some training programs have improved overall communication skills, there is limited empirical research on the effects of formal NVC training among engineering students. Additionally, the lack of a common assessment tool to measure NVC in the workplace makes it difficult to accurately measure its effects. Cultural difference also influences non-verbal communication interpretation, but few studies have been conducted on how such differences translate in affecting recruitment decisions globally. Another critical gap is the lack of systematic NVC training integration into engineering programs, since current programs focus on soft skills without explicit reference to non-verbal ones. In addition, while employer assessments impact students' communication skills, recruiters' own perceptions of NVC remain largely unexplored, calling for more industry-oriented results. Besides, recent research also discovers students' self-assessed communication deficits, but longitudinal studies tracking the long-term impacts of NVC training on professional growth are not common.

3. OBJECTIVES

To investigate the importance of non-verbal communication skills in shaping employment decisions during engineering students' job interviews.

To analyze the significance of non-verbal communication skills in determining workplace success in job interviews among engineering students.

To measure the correlation between non-verbal communication skills and students' performance in job interviews during engineering student job interviews.

Hypothesis

H1: Non-verbal communication skills have a significant influence on hiring decisions during job interviews for engineering students.

H2: Non-verbal communication skills significantly impact workplace success for engineering students.

H3: There is a significant relationship between non-verbal communication skills and students' interview performance during job interviews for engineering students.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is mixed-methods with qualitative and quantitative studies combined to study the effect of non-verbal communication skills on professional achievement, career choices, and interview skills among students. The study has been conducted among Delhi NCR engineering students with a sample population of 200 respondents based on the stratified random sampling method. This approach would ensure that the sample would be capable

of representing the various subgroups of people within the population in order that the correct and trustworthy results can be achieved. The study design is descriptive and exploratory because it seeks to present extensive information regarding students' professional accomplishment through non-verbal communication. The key tool utilized is a focused questionnaire, which provides for gathering details concerning the communication skills of the students and perceived effects on numerous career achievements. Primary and secondary sources are applied in the process of data gathering. Primary data are directly gathered from the students pursuing engineering courses, and secondary data are obtained from research papers, business magazines, and existing studies. The data is then analyzed with statistical packages like MS Excel and SPSS, and statistical techniques like mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression to test hypotheses between non-verbal communication skills and the dependent variables: hiring results, workplace success, and interview performance by students. The research outcomes are likely to provide a valuable contribution to the role of non-verbal communication in the creation of professional outcomes and also provide insights to the students regarding how they can develop their communications for career advancement.

Result and Interpretation

This section offers a brief summary of the data's results and analysis. The outcomes have been categorized using demographic characteristics, objectives, and hypotheses. A table illustrating the findings and an explanation of those findings has been integrated into the objectives and hypotheses.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Sr. No .	Demographic Variables	Characteristics	N	%
1	Age	21 Years – 22 Years	25	12.5
		23 Years – 24 Years	72	36.0
		25 Years and above	54	27.0
		Under 20 Years	49	24.5
2	Gender	Female	85	42.5
		Male	115	57.5
3	Year of Study	1st Year	68	34.0
		2nd Year	36	18.0

		3rd Year	42	21.0
		4th Year	54	27.0
4	Stream of Engineering	Civil Engineering	44	22.0
		Computer Science Engineering	52	26.0
		Electrical Engineering	44	22.0
		Mechanical Engineering	60	30.0
5	Non-Verbal Communication Training	No	114	57
		Yes	86	43
6	Mode of Education	Full-time	82	41
		Online	55	27.5
		Part-time	63	31.5

Demographic data is a representation of sample characteristics, which include a variety of age groups. The largest cohort (36%) is aged 23-24, and 25 and up (27%) are the second largest segment while 24.5% are 20 or under. In terms of the gender distribution, the number of males (57.5%) is roughly equal to the proportion of females (42.5%). The numbers are even more widespread when it comes to the year of study; 1st-year students are at 34%, while 2nd-year students conform at 18%, 3rd-year students at 21%, and 4th-year students at 27%. The data also indicates that there is a broad representation of engineering disciplines, where Mechanical Engineering (30%) and Computer Science Engineering (26%) are the major divisions. Interpersonal communication training is not that widespread, with 57% of the respondents saying that they have not been trained. Concerning education types, full-time students are 41%, part-time students are 31.5%, and 27.5% are of online category. This is a report of the student body that is made up of students with different characteristics in terms of demographics and areas.

Objective 1: To investigate the importance of non-verbal communication skills in shaping employment decisions during engineering students' job interviews.

H1: Non-verbal communication skills have a significant influence on hiring decisions during job interviews for engineering students.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis Result
H1	Non-verbal Communication Skills > hiring decision	.790	.624	328.564	18.126	0.000	Supported

The results for Hypothesis H1, which claim that non-verbal communication skills influence the hiring decision in a positive way, present a compelling case for the hypothesis. The regression weight of 0.790 is a clear indication of the existence of a very strong linear association that actually exists between non-verbal communication skills and hiring decisions. The Beta coefficient of 0.624 also adds to the evidence in the same direction that there is a significant positive effect. The R² value of 328.564 is obtained, which implies the fact that there is a good fit of the model, in other words, a large proportion of the variation in hiring decisions can be explained by non-verbal communication skills. The t-value is reported as 18.126, which is far beyond the normal critical value (around 1.96) and therefore the finding confirms the statistical significance. In fact, turning to the p-value, it is found to be 0.000 and the difference with the 0.05 limit proves to be a highly significant one. Consequently, the hypothesis is confirmed, and this suggests that non-verbal communication skills are a very strong tool that has a substantial positive effect on hiring decisions.

Objective 2: To analyze the significance of non-verbal communication skills in determining workplace success in job interviews among engineering students.

H2: Non-verbal communication skills significantly impact workplace success for engineering students.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Hypothesis	Regression Weights	Beta Coefficient	R ²	F	t-value	p-value	Hypothesis Result
H2	Non-verbal Communication Skills > workplace success	.576	.331	98.054	9.902	0.000	Supported

The results for Hypothesis H2, which declares that non-verbal communication skills have a positive effect on workplace success, also support the hypothesis strongly. The regression weight of 0.576 means that non-verbal communication skills have had a positive effect on workplace success. The Beta coefficient of 0.331 has a similar idea and strengthens the message in that non-verbal communication skills development would lead to

more workplace success, although not as effectively as it does in Hypothesis H1. The R² value of 98.054 shows that the model accounts for most of the variation in workplace success. On the t-value of 9.902, it is well over the critical value, therefore proving the statistical significance as significant. The p-value of 0.000, very much lower than the ≥ 0.05 threshold, implies a highly significant result. Consequently, Hypothesis H2 is valid, which means the effectiveness of non-verbal communication skills in various work scenarios is as high as for workplace success.

Objective 3: To measure the correlation between non-verbal communication skills and students' performance in job interviews during engineering student job interviews.

H3: There is a significant relationship between non-verbal communication skills and students' interview performance during job interviews for engineering students.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	Factor			Correlation		Hypothesis Result
		Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation (r)	Significance value	
H3	Non-verbal Communication Skills	15.4950	4.33288	1.000**	0.000	Supported
	Interview Performance	15.4950	4.33288			
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

In Hypothesis H3, the results that examine the relationship between non-verbal communication skills and interview performance show a perfect correlation ($r = 1.000$), indicating a very strong and direct relationship between the two variables. The average scores for both non-verbal communication skills and interview performance are 15.4950, with a standard deviation of 4.33288, which means the results are consistent enough among the participants. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 1.000 is highly significant, with a p-value of 0.000, which is well below the 0.01 significance level. This confirms that non-verbal communication skills have a significant and positive impact on interview performance. Thus, Hypothesis H3 is confirmed, and thus nonverbal communication skills are closely connected with the improved interview performance.

5. DISCUSSION

In our study, it shows that non-verbal communication skills are critically affecting or helping in hiring decisions, working environment success, and interview performance in the case of engineering students. The original Hypothesis H1, which claimed non-verbal communication skills as a significant determinant of hiring decisions, was drastically proven, with the analysis

showing a high regression weight, Beta coefficient, and R^2 value, which means that non-verbal cues is an important determinant in the hiring process. Correspondingly, Hypothesis H2 was much less strong. The fittings of non-verbal communication skills caused workplace success. This notion, however, was proved true, even though their effect was not as strong as in the first hypothesis. Therefore, it supports the argument that the employers may give emphasis on these skills during the interview phase, they also play a major role in the workplace, regulating communication between peers and enhancing the staff's performance in their duties. The results also coincide with previous studies by Noor et al. (2017) and Wu et al. (2023), which resonance with the belief that communication includes non-verbal elements, is a critical element that boosts employability and professional success. In addition, the analysis of Hypothesis H3 was done which correlated the relationship between non-verbal communication skills and success in interviews. Ismail et al (2024) and Tabalan (2016) found to be the perfect correlation of the two, making it clear that good communication is associated with good job interview outcomes. This finding further emphasizes the importance of teaching technical and communication skills to engineering students. To illustrate, some studies by Pereira et al. (2021) and Chitac et al. (2024) exhibit that body language, facial expressions, and other non-verbal signs are essential to thrive in professional interaction. Based on these data, it is certain that non-verbal communication skills are not additional factors, but they are the core of the job market and within the workplace for engineering students. Consequently Lee (2020) help students to better understand and are prepared for the future challenges of engineering as well as the competencies necessary for them in their future workplace. Bambaereroo and Shokrpour (2017) demonstrated a significant correlation between the quality, quantity, and method of non-verbal communication employed by teachers during instruction. The reviewed studies indicate that increased use of verbal and non-verbal communication by teachers correlates with enhanced educational efficacy and improved

academic progress among students. Conversely, Verma and Pande (2016) determined that non-verbal communication is equally important as verbal communication in any change initiative. Ahmed (2020) recognizing the importance of non-verbal communication, business schools bear the additional obligation of cultivating adept management graduates prepared to assume the role of strategic communicators of change. Liu et al. (2016) and Puertas et al (2018) demonstrated that students' awareness of non-verbal communication was augmented by feedback information supplied by both standardized patients and machines.

6. CONCLUSION

The research concludes that knowledge of interpersonal skills is of high importance in the hiring process and on the job for engineering students, a field where the use of NVC is strongly connected to student's performance during interviews and adaptability as professionals. The results of the study show that the courses of structured nonverbal communication in engineering become imperative for skill improvement for future engineering graduates and professional development in their future workplace. The findings of the study imply that universities and colleges must include communication in their career readiness workshops and employers should add NVC to the list of preferences in the recruitment process. However, restrictions arise from the fact that the study was divided by the area of Delhi NCR, the use of personal questionnaires, and the successive lack of material for the temporal part. Future ideas cover extending research into various geographic areas, generating standardized NVC assessment tools, and tracking the prolonged influence of NVC studies on career progression. By means of NVC techniques, the growth of the employee's knowledge and skills in technological communication and soft skill development are the areas that offer the biggest benefit to organizations in their ability to create a more competitive and flexible workforce

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How to cite : Ankit Kumar Sharma , Dr. Pankhuri Agarwal , Assessing the influence of Non-Verbal Communication Skills Training on hiring decision and Workplace Success for Engineering Students *Advances in Consumer Research*. 2026;3(1): 861-868

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