THE IMPORTANCE OF AWARENESS OF NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN LEADERSHIP SUCCESS

Focus on American culture

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International Business
Bachelor's Thesis
Supervisor: Kate Black
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Objectives
This study aims to explore relevant leadership models that factor in the impact of nonverbal cues on perception of good leadership, to find which leadership qualities are perceived from which nonverbal behaviors, to and to propose what changes should be done to make recommendations for leadership development practice.

Summary
This empirical study was conducted with qualitative interview. The interview was administered to five participants who are U.S employees working in different industries, and who answered all of fifteen questions, which are mostly open ended questions. All fifteen questions are developed based on theories in literature review, and formulated with the structure of the theoretical framework in mind.

Conclusions
Nonverbal behaviors influence the way employees judge their leaders' leadership qualities. Specifically, employees actively look for top qualities, which can be shown through several specific nonverbal cues. Overall, leaders' ability to decode nonverbal signals is to some extent important for both their performance and ratings from employees, and it is suggested that there seems to be a connection between that ability and leaders' chance of being promoted. Regarding current situation of firms in the interview, there seem to be a lack of training in nonverbal communication for leaders

Key words: Nonverbal communication, Body language, Emotional intelligence, Decode emotions, Nonverbal communication training, Leadership success

Language: English

Grade: 5

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1. INTRODUCTION

This is a thesis for bachelor degree at Aalto University School of Business. The goal of the research is exploring how important nonverbal awareness is to leadership success by conducting an empirical study among five American employees working in different industries. This introduction section will provide readers with overview of the topic, and then present research problem, question and finally, objective consequentially.

1.1. Background

"*The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said*" (Drucker & Maciariello, 2009, page 53). This quote demonstrates the importance of nonverbal communication in the workplace. It is often said that our body language and facial expressions can genuinely reveal what we think and feel, regardless of what we say.

On the other hand, leadership qualities are often commonly discussed and written about on various media outlets, and different sources mention different different essential qualities/traits that makes an effective leader. It is assumed that a layperson can learn to build these qualities overtime to become a strong leader.

This study takes into account the connection between nonverbal communication and leadership qualities.

1.2. Research Problem

It is scientifically proven emotional intelligence, which is the ability to recognize, understand and manage our own emotions and others' emotions, is important to the chance of success of leaders and leaders (Goleman, 1998). This type of intelligence, in turn, depends on a large part on the ability to decode meaning and display suitable nonverbal behaviors. Awareness of nonverbal communication therefore is important for   leaders'   long-term   success.

Although this is by no means a new topic or a new phenomenon, a major part of field

research has been conducted back to 1980s and 1990s and thus the field is in dire need of more recent, up-to-date empirical research. In fact, there has been a steady stream of interest on the subject, but most refers back to a few major classical studies, which puts a cap on research scope and application.

Among those studies, relatively few are conducted in business setting; the majority focuses on medical fields (therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist). This trend might stem from the practical need of ability to read patients' emotional state and psychological needs in practicing healthcare professionals. A common thread among these studies is that health care professionals who are more discerning of nonverbal signals from patients get better ratings from their seniors (Rosenthal, 1979), from their patients (Campbell, Kagan, 1971) and seen as more interpersonally sensitive to patients' needs (DiMatteo, 1979).

In short, even though academic world and organizations have acknowledged that nonverbal awareness is important for leadership development, the need for empirical research is clear as leaders face a more dynamic work environment. As social interaction with employees gets more complicated due to varying background (culture, first language, lifestyle), the challenge to understand nonverbal signs is becoming a bigger concern.

1.3. Research question

As stated above, the connection between non-verbal decoding ability and leadership success requires further examination, specifically in two dimensions below:

Which leadership qualities are often <u>perceived</u> and rated by employees from leaders' nonverbal behaviors?

How does a leader's competence in nonverbal communication improve his <u>real</u> work performance, which can be assessed by efficiency and effectiveness?

1.4. Research objective

This research aims at probing the importance of nonverbal awareness to leadership success. Following from research question above, research objective can be outlined as below:

- To find which leadership qualities are perceived from which nonverbal behaviors, from employees' perspective
- To propose what changes should be done to make recommendations for leadership development practice. This final objective provides a pragmatic application of this study in real workplace environment.

1.5. Outline

The thesis starts with the literature review, which reviews common themes, concepts, models necessary to the understanding the subject matter. Next is methodology, in which the choice of research (collection and analysis) is rationalized. The Findings section summarizes data from this study, and Discussion and Analysis section provides a discourse based on the literature and the findings. The Conclusion section highlights findings, implications and limitations of this study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The review starts with examining nonverbal communication in terms of how important they are in business setting, then points to nonverbal cues most commonly used, summarizes leadership qualities most commonly perceived from combination of those cues and next analyzes why nonverbal training is needed given challenges leaders have to deal with. At the end of the review is the conceptual framework, which encapsulates the literature review in a strategic way as a foundation for further research.

The review is based on specific criteria in evaluating resources, which are the convergence or divergence with other research, the sample size and demographics, the knowledge and affiliation of authors, and the applicability in business contexts.

2.1. Importance of nonverbal communication

Nonverbal communication is a channel of communication that is based on unspoken signals, which are influenced by several filters such as culture, environment, personality, etc. There are several channels to convey, such as facial expression, body language, posture and gesture, voice tones and other nonverbal cues.

Nonverbal communication, contrary to most people think, carries most of the information exchanged through communication activities. According to Merabia's study (1971), which is a famous study cited many times among academic paper, verbal content makes up only seven percent, while nonverbal content takes up a sizeable amount of ninety-three percent of our communication activity. Price (2003) found that nonverbal content is at least sixty-five percent more powerful than verbal content (whether it is spoken or written).

Moreover, people often trust what they see from behavioral cues more than what they hear from conversations. Merabia (1971) stated that if verbal and nonverbal cues are in conflict, then nonverbal cues carry as many as 13 times the weight verbal content does. In fact, science advancements have shown that human beings are

subconsciously influenced by nonverbal signals. The sympathetic nervous part of the brain reacts to other people' behaviors, which was mentioned by Perin (2003) as a fight-or-flight mechanism dated back to mammalian ancestors.

2.2. Perception from nonverbal behaviors

2.3.1. Facial expressions

From various research on physiology and human body's anatomy, facial expressions are found to be involuntary and spontaneous, thus they can show genuine emotions. Price (2003) indicated that "*holding a slight smile, nodding occasionally, raising eyebrows to show interest and maintaining good eye contact*" makes leaders appear more emotionally stable. Her claim involves various nonverbal cues that will be researched further in this paper, thus provides a background to test the connection between these signs toward various aspects of leadership qualities, not simply emotional stability. Apart from being quite sweeping a claim, it should be noted that Price is also a communication trainer and her claim may not be well substantiated by primary research.

2.3.2. Eye contact

In a study by Parsons and Liden (1984), eye contact affected how applicants' competencies are judged by interviewers. Five years later, Burgoon & Buller (1989) indicated that there is a correlation between the tendency to have direct eye contact and being seen as competent and reliable. As famous as they are as two scholars in nonverbal communication, they did not imply a direct causal relationship and their finding is reasonably supported by primary research. Although these two findings are comparatively by no means contemporary any more, they are in line with various research in terms of the influence of eye contact. It may be reasoned that if people diverted their eyes away, they may not be confident in what to say and need more time to think about the answer, or they want to hide something because they will lie to us later, thus we tend to assume that they are not competent or truthful enough. This line of reasoning however, needs to be tested for more concrete conclusion.

2.3.3. Handshake

Handshake is an important part in creating first impression when business partners meet each other, and it is often included in etiquette training and communication programs for leaders. Handshake is found to convey confidence (Goleman, 2008; Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989). Leathers (2001) maintained that a handshake helps build rapport instantly. Gootnick (2000) indicated that whether a handshake is firm or limp can show if leaders are professional enough. A review at other research show that there is no consensus over which quality or qualities. It can be assumed that they are not necessarily contradict to one another, as each study differs from others in terms of sample size, sample demographics and research objectives. Goleman's research is based heavily on qualitative interviews from business leaders in more than 500 organizations and thus it has both strength and weakness of a typical qualitative study, which needs more hard data to strengthen the finding. Moreover, although Gootnick conducted a primary study, the small sample size limits the applicability and generalizability of his finding; another limitation is that his book focuses on practical advices for time-pressed leaders, not academic endeavour. Thus the importance of handshake in terms of which qualities it conveys needs to be researched more.

2.3.4. Posture

Posture, or the manner people carry themselves in various situations is a common nonverbal sign that is researched through academic literature. Knapp (2002) suggested that signifies not only confidence and credibility, but also approachability and self-control. He also suggested that posture in some cases can signify submission or domination, which is in disagreement with what Aguinis, Simonsen and Pierce (1998) found that "*Body posture had no effect on the perception of power*". Knapp's work is essentially a compendium from various fields, such as psychology, communication, anthropology and is secondary research in nature, thus his findings needs to be examined with a more empirical approach. The 1998 research was based on perception of U.S students in school setting, and its lack of relevance towards business setting and employees' perception are some important

factors when one interprets its findings. Therefore, there is a need for more research on the impact of posture to drive towards a more conclusive result.

2.3.5. Voice

Speech behaviors and vocal quality are not easy to change dramatically and consistently. Unlike other nonverbal cues, research on perception of voice seems to converge in one finding that voice can signify competence and extroversion. Given the stretch of time duration over which these studies were conducted (1970s to 2000s), with each study having its own approach, methodology and analysis, this convergence can be assumed as significant. Moreover, this convergence is a critical in terms of building questions in this study's interview and discussing results.

- In terms of tempo, fast speakers are considered to be more competent, mentally perceptive and cognitively logical (Knapp, 2002), or seen as more extroverted (Buller et al., 1992). Slow talkers can be seen as less competent or judged as more thoughtful, altruistic and composed (Knapp, 2002)
- In terms of pitch, varying pitch widely makes speaker appear more extravert (Greene & Mathieson, 1989)
- In terms of intensity, according to Scherer (1978), being loud helps convey an aura of authority and extroversion.

These research and this study's findings related to vocal qualities have implication in business setting, especially if clients have first impression of leaders or employees they talk with through phone, in which there are no other signs other than the voice they hear from the other end.

2.3.6. Space/Territory

Various studies link the personal space, or arrangement of territory and environment to how leaders' communication can effectively influence others toward their goals. For example, Knapp (2002) posited that leaders who leave their office door open implicitly

encourage subordinates to communicate to them directly. Hickson and Stacks (1989) found that communication with employees will be less effective if leaders simply stay behind the desk or the meeting is held around a rectangular table. It can be assumed that in Knapp's research, when subordinates can get access to top level leaders in person, face to face they feel more satisfied because they are heard, and thus rate leaders as more approachable. In Hickson and Stacks' research, it can be assumed that the opposite effect is in place where employees face barriers and perceive inequality, thus rate leaders as less approachable. However, these are mere assumption by the author of this study, and these two studies simply focus on the effect of space and territory setting in communication success, and not not in perception of leadership qualities. This gap in research on nonverbal communication opens more opportunities for further research, and it is open to question whether this study can fill this knowledge gap that has yet to be filled.

2.3. Leadership and Leadership qualities

Leadership has been mentioned from the era of Socrates and Plato – and it is argued that in the fast changing global context, leadership is they key to success of not only individuals, but also organizations and nations. Although it has been recognized, the definition for leadership remains a contest that has no winner. Stogdill (1974) mentioned that one can think of the number of definitions as the number of people who have tried to define it. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, which has been used since 1828, leadership means the position of a leader, or an ability to lead people to achieve the set goal. For the purpose of simplicity, this paper makes use of this definition.

Over millions of years, there have been multiple leadership theories as many researchers and philosophers have studied on what makes a leader stand out from the crowd.

Trait Theory by Stogdill (1974) assumes that people are born with innate traits, some of which are suitable to become a leader. It posits that effective leaders share some

common personality traits that layperson either has or does not have. Some traits are identified such as integrity, assertiveness, likeability, empathy, but it should be noted that there are no set combination that can guarantee a good leader.

Behavioral Theory by Lewin (1930) assumes that leaders can be made and leadership can be taught as a skill and that leadership should be defined from behaviors. Rather looking at how leaders are from personality's perspective, it considers what they do. This theory proposes that successful leadership can be attained by definable actions, and people can easily replicate these actions. Lewin mentioned three types of leaders: autocratic leaders who make decisions based on their own judgment, democratic leaders consult team and advisor before making a decision, and Laisses-faire leaders who allow their team to make decision. He argued that each type is appropriate for certain situation.

Transformational Leadership Theory by Bass (1990) advocates that people follow people who inspire them with enthusiasm, energy, passion and vision for better future. It seems that being lead by a transformational leader can be an inspiring experience as they have passion for everything, but one gap is that passion does not mean truth and trustworthiness. It is argued that just because people believe that a transformational leader is right does not mean he or she is actually right.

Transactional Leadership assumes that people are motivated by incentives such as reward or punishment – and that a subordinate is meant to follow what a leader wants them to do. Transactional leaders succeed by creating a clear structure of discipline of what subordinates get if they follow or disobey order. The gap in this theory is that it assumes contingency (outcome is based on performance) and rationality (a subordinate prefers rewards over punishment). Despite its limitation, this theory is still popular among leaders.

From the overview of these leadership theories, there has been no direct mention of nonverbal communication, but there exist some connections with literature, which can be used for this study's theoretical framework. It is suggested that leadership can be seen in some personality traits (Trait theory, Transformational leadership theory), or be concrete actions (Behavioral theory). This finding brings us to the possibilities

that employees may look for those traits in leaders, and that leaders can improve their leadership abilities through changing their behaviors, or at minimum, changing the way employees see how they behave. This is an essence for this study's theoretical framework.

2.4. Leadership qualities from nonverbal behaviors

Regarding workplace context, there have been some notable research on what personality trait people draw conclusions from nonverbal cues. These research seem to support Implicit leadership theory (Epitropaki, 2005), which states that because people seeks for traits (such as extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness – Judge et al. 2002) that they think a leader should have, aspiring leaders in turn show these stereotyped traits to gain approval. In other word, if employees do not see these favorable traits in leaders, their cognitive dissonance makes them rate their leaders unfavorably, and vice verse.

One important foundation is that it is scientifically proven that humans make a quick judgment the very first second they meet strangers based on nonverbal expressions, as Elfeinbein and Ambady (2002) points out, mainly because while verbal content demands cognitive processing, nonverbal content triggers an automatic response. Even more surprisingly, other research found that people can make accurate judgment over strangers' personality at that very first interaction (Borkenau, 1992). These social research are in line with scientific research, and thus their findings are fairly hard to disrepute.

As back as in 1997, Awamleh conducted an experiments with actors playing leaderial roles in real workplace, and found that employees think their leaders are more charismatic when they display dynamic gestures, hold eye contact and be expressive in their emotional display. Although Awamleh's research subjects are undergraduates thus weakening the validity of results as they did not have work experience, his finding corresponds with the concept of charismatic leadership first put forward by Weber in 1921.

On year later in 1998, Aguinis and Pierce found that nonverbal signals can affect chance of promotions for leaders, because of their employees' perception of their "power" traits, including referent, expert, coercive, reward, legitimate. This finding is one step further of what is chosen as the objective of this research, which is how nonverbal cues affect ratings and performance of leaders. However, the number of nonverbal signals used in this study is rather limited, coupled with the use of U.S students as subject may make the finding deficient as some cues were left out and did not have the chance to influence subjects.

In 1999, Degroot & Gooty suggested that interviewers perceive emotional stability, open-mindedness, agreeableness, extroversion, conscientiousness by seeing nonverbal behaviors. This research does not specifically target leaders, but it has implication when applicants for those executive positions are winnowed based on their perceived leaderial qualities by HR staff even though they are required to remain objectively assessing candidates based on their qualifications and skills. Thus, its finding has some relevance and may be examined through this study.

In short, although Implicit leadership theory is a respectable theory, these research over years vary in terms of quality and methodology, and it is not uncommon to find totally different sets of qualities among those research, thus this is an area of complication that has never been resolved.

2.5. Nonverbal behavior training for leaders

This section examines past research and relates to modern world of business to get a better understanding of whether nonverbal training is important for leaders to achieve their career development.

Firstly, nonverbal behaviors in general and facial expressions specifically are involuntary, and thus hard to consciously control all the time. Therefore, there are situations in which their nonverbal communications may tell on them, which diminish their impact of communication. Several authors and researchers have maintained that professionalism is inextricably linked to the ability to communicate effectively, aspiring

leaders need to be better at nonverbal communication. For example, Perin (2003) recounted an example of President Bush who tried to break the habit of having both palms down onto the lecterns as millions of TV audience may see this as a sign of narrow-mindedness and conservatism. One question that arises from these research and that is thus interesting to discover in this study is that when nonverbal signs conflict with verbal content, how employees would feel, whether confused, distrusting or simply ignore this incongruence? Another area that is good to explore is the purpose of offering training in firms nowadays: to facilitate communication and thus drive result for leaders, or to simply win trust by improving leaders' perceived self image and covering their blatant lies out of scrutiny of employees.

Secondly, it is important to know that individuals, depending on their innate ability and educational background, vary in their awareness of nonverbal expressions (Nowicki, 2000). Nowicki found that 1 in 10 kids are poor at recognizing nonverbal cues, and ends up underperforming academically and lacking social skills. Carton (1999) also mentioned that while good nonverbal decoders enjoy more fulfilling social relationships, the reverse is seen in bad nonverbal decoders, who struggle to blend in social circle because it is hard for them to stand in other people' shoes and see things from other people' perspectives. These findings raise recognition of the fact that nonverbal awareness is needed to ensure a well-rounded personal development, and they approach this need in a humanitarian way that is important to appreciate.

Lastly, the impact of globalization and the proliferation of multicultural teams seem to highlighted the need for a new level of mastery of communication. Leaders need to lead employees and business partners of various ethnic backgrounds. Misunderstanding of small nonverbal behavior can break business deals. Grossman (2011) found that on average, a company lose about $62 million yearly due to ineffective communication. Hamilyon (2010) reported that small firms lose on average $420000 yearly due to miscommunication. While these findings address miscommunication as a whole, one significant part of it comes from nonverbal behaviors, and thus they are relevant when this study explores the current state of nonverbal training programs for leaders allow for facilitation of cross-border nonverbal communication.

2.6. Theoretical Framework (PPRR)

From a variety of academic work on nonverbal communication and leadership, this study proposes a theoretical framework named PPRR (see Figure 1) to visually present how nonverbal awareness leads to leadership's success. This framework combines disparate models and theories and tie back to the subject matter of nonverbal communication. Interestingly, this framework supports three out of four qualities in Redding' s research (1972) that found that there are four qualities of leadership: sensitivity, supportiveness, empathy and persuasiveness. A number of other studies (Rosenthal 1979, Costanzo 1986, Sedmar 2006) gave the same finding that awareness of nonverbal cues leads to better performance and ratings.

An important caveat is that this conceptual framework is roughly based on several theoretical framework of various research in the past. The fact that one particular framework in the past is employed does not guarantee its validity, as the PPRR model is pre-research model and needs to be revisited after the research is conducted. Its goal is to streamline the relationship among various concepts reviewed in this literature so far, and present them in a synthesized manner for easier understanding. It is by no means the complete model, and serves to develop questions for the interview later and may be likely to be revised in the light of the result from this study.

2.6.1. Leadership models: Professionalism to Performance

- Flexibility: Being able to accurately what is going on without words gives leaders an ability to choose a well-fitting response to different scenarios (e.g. hold back vs push through), which is in line with Leary's interpersonal flexibility theory (1957) and Yukl's Situational leadership theory (1989), which mentioned that this is an advantage over being uncompromising when situation changes. This study attempts the gap of these two theories by exploring the connection between flexibility and persuasiveness, and whether combination of both is positively correlated with higher performance.

- Persuasiveness: Leaders can construct his arguments to avoid negative thoughts and draw positive opinions based on what he can see from employees' nonverbal behaviors, so that they can persuade employees to do certain tasks, such as take on expatriate assignment. So the ability to gauge reactions to see if others are buying their ideas helps leaders to decide whether to continue pushing that argument, or change direction and compromise or drop the persuasive effort. On the flipside, two other studies have specifically shown that persuasion based on emotions increase the chance of acceptance. DeSteno (2004) found that arguments that appeal to emotions, such as hope, joy, anxiety, tend to be more persuasive to listeners and thus work better. Menges (2014) found that emotional speech can move the audience who would recall less of what they hear, and cited Adolf Hitler as an example who was able to make his followers "stop thinking critically and just emote." This research attempts to go further from these past research by exploring if persuasiveness can be used to manipulate employees into doing certain task that are the expense of their interest. This exploration adds another dimension to the research by viewing the downside of being able to decode nonverbal behaviours.

- Efficiency and Effectiveness: The ability to change course of action and convince employees to act accordingly when situation demands it while still correctly assessing environment gives leaders an edge to navigate through workplace challenges. This notion is also in line with what Hall, Workman and Marchioro (1998) found in their study. However, one nuanced missing link of this 1998 study is that what is one advantage arising from the ability to read nonverbal cues that helps leaders know that their course of action is indeed the right decision, to get an optimal result. This missing link needs to be revealed from the result of this research.

- Professionalism to Performance: According to Merriam Webster dictionary, Professionalism is the competence expected of a professional, and Performance is the action of accomplishing an action, task or function. The PPRR model suggests that by giving employees with flexibility and showing them persuasiveness (two leadership's qualities that enhance professionalism), leaders enjoy higher performance by getting the right tasks done (effectiveness) and getting those tasks done right (efficiency). This PP part of the framework aims at exploring whether this connection between professionalism and performance is supported by the empirical
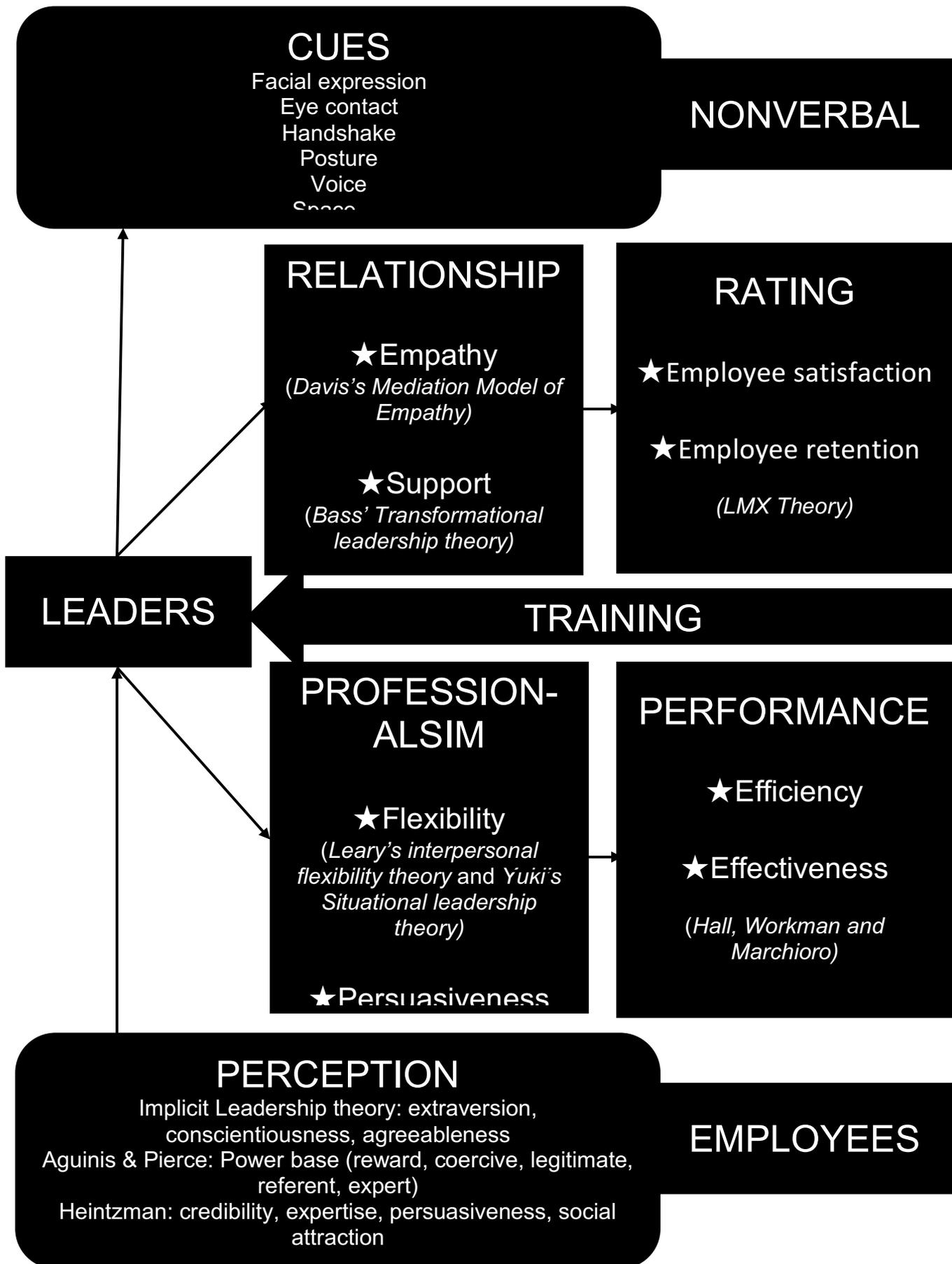
finding.

2.6.2. Leadership models: Relationship to Rating

- Empathy: According to Davis's Mediation Model of Empathy (1996), nonverbally discerning individuals are rated as less stern and more socially congenial and less discerning ones seen as more distressed and less company loving. Backing up this line is Morand' study (2011) that people who are better at nonverbal communication are considered more empathetic. These research's suggestions seem to be intuitively valid, because they reflect the need for leaders to be able to understand how employees feel and emotionally helpful, which is in line with modern leadership of influence. This research needs to go one step further by investigating how that empathy factor plays in improving employees' satisfaction.

- Support: Leaders may accurately discern employees' negative emotions (dissatisfaction, emotional breakdown, stress) and approach them with support, be it financially or emotionally whereas leaders who do not, would not be able to leverage this information. This is also supported by Bass' Transformational leadership theory (1990). This theory states that transformational leadership has four aspect, the essence of which is that that leaders need to be perceptive enough to understand employees to motivate them through taking into account of individual needs, thus inspiring them and influencing them intellectually. This research needs to go one step further by investigating how that supportiveness factor plays in improving employees' satisfaction.

- Employee Satisfaction and Employee Retention: In 2002, Eisenberger and Stinglhamber found out that turnover rate is negatively correlated to perception of leaders' support, so it can be assumed that employees do consider the leadership of leaders before deciding to leave their job. This study's limitation is the subjects are U.S retail employees of medium firms, and thus the finding may not representative enough for U.S population. However, it can be presumed that as leaders are responsive to nonverbal expression and take action to help employees, miscommunications happen less often, and quality of relationship is improved and

employees are more likely to stay with companies. This study attempts to inspect the strength of the connection between employee satisfaction and retention rate, which is the last link in the reasoning mentioned above.

- Relationship to Rating: According to Merriam Webster dictionary, relationship is the way in which two or more people or organizations regard and behave toward each other while rating is ranking of someone or something based on assessment of their quality, standard or performance. The PPRR model suggests that by treating employees with empathy and support (two leadership's qualities which builds a healthy relationship), leaders get better performance and leadership ratings from employees who are satisfied and stay with their companies. Regarding the relevance of relationship building to leader's success (the RR part of the PPRR model), it is interesting to note that it is backed up by LMX Theory, which states that leaders need to develop genuinely good bond with employees (Graen, 1995). Although this theory was introduced 20 years ago, it seems to still hold weight today, because after all, leaders depend on employees to get the work done.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework: PPRR Framework

CUES
Facial expression
Eye contact
Handshake
Posture
Voice
Space

NONVERBAL

RELATIONSHIP

★Empathy
(*Davis's Mediation Model of Empathy*)

★Support
(*Bass' Transformational leadership theory*)

RATING

★Employee satisfaction

★Employee retention

(*LMX Theory*)

LEADERS

TRAINING

PROFESSION-ALSIM

★Flexibility
(*Leary's interpersonal flexibility theory* and *Yuki's Situational leadership theory*)

★Persuasiveness

PERFORMANCE

★Efficiency

★Effectiveness

(*Hall, Workman and Marchioro*)

PERCEPTION
Implicit Leadership theory: extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness
Aguinis & Pierce: Power base (reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, expert)
Heintzman: credibility, expertise, persuasiveness, social attraction

EMPLOYEES

3. METHODOLOGY

This section discusses methodology of the study, which leverages primary data and analyzes based on qualitative basis. Based on secondary data analyzed in the literature review, interviews were administered with five employees who work in different firms of different industries in the U.S.

3.1. Research method

Conducting a primary research can be rationalized based on two reasons. Firstly, it is because of the need for more up-to-date data and practical implication for the subject as mentioned in research problem Secondly, it is due to subjectivity of the topic, which makes secondary data less suitable.

Inductive approach is often associated with qualitative study, and deductive approach with quantitative study. However, this rule is not hard set and qualitative study can use deductive approach. In this study, quantitative method is not chosen because this method works best to explore an organization or a group, not an intangible subject like awareness of nonverbal communication. For this subject which relies on perception and impression, face to face communication and flexible discourse over open-ended questions are preferred over statistically robust database. The goal is to explore further and provide deeper understanding of theories based on synthesizing explanations, observations and findings.

3.2. Data collection

Due to selection of qualitative method, which allows for the usage of a small sample size (Ghauri & Grohaug, 2005), interview is preferred to survey because this method goes hand in hand with the nature of research questions, which tilt toward probing opinions and experiences on nonverbal awareness. In light of this subject matter, it is optimal if it is possible to elicit detailed responses from participants (Gill et al, 2008), who can tap into their stream of thoughts and provide more in-depth interpretations

without being limited to pre-determined canned answers (Ghauri & Grohaug, 2005). Specifically, semi-structured interview is chosen, because interviewees can go further with their line of reasoning by elaborating more, thus giving interviewer relevant background issues that are not discovered in literature review.

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005), the best method to administer an interview is by face to face, but due to restraint on travel cost and difficulty in coordinating suitable time for both interviewer and interviewees, phone interview and email interview are employed. Of these five interviews, four were done through phone (tele-meeting) and one was done through emails (guided narrative). For phone interviews, all sound was recorded with the help of recording software, and transcribed into text format for later analysis. For email interviews, if there is a need to clarify answer, then exchange of further email is possible. The implication is that phone interview is arguably more flexible, free-flowing and interactive (hence, interviewer can provide some information after the interview is finished), while email interview may be less obtrusive, and allows for greater depth of content as the answers are deliberate through writing process but lacks the spontaneous interactivity. Thus, it may be argued that email response is a structured interview at best, and more likely an open questionnaire

All fifteen questions are developed based on theories in literature review, and formulated with the structure of the PPRR theoretical framework in mind. That is, they attempt at answering research questions by at least providing enough findings to draw conclusions from, which is essence of a deductive research. At the same time, they open a wider perspective to uncover other elements that may have a say in the subject matter and offer an overview into how theories are applied in real world setting. Most questions are open ended to allow interviewees to express opinions with their own stories. Fifteen questions are divided into 4 groups each with its own objective, to accumulate a holistic view of the issue and satisfy research objective.

The first group has 2 questions, which aim at narrowing down the scope of the research for the ease of comparison later, and also preparing interviewees for the familiarity of being asked about their leaders and about their perception as employees.

The second group is composed of 5 questions which provide insight into which nonverbal behaviors are used to form perception of a leader, and which leadership qualities are desired and sought after from those nonverbal signals. On top of that, they test participants over the degree to which they rely and trust nonverbal behaviors over other channels of communication, which is a critical point of reference which influence their responses to next questions.

The third group comprises of five questions, which are targeted at examining whether AND how the ability to decode nonverbal behaviors can help leaders cultivate genuine relationship with employees and get better at managing them to get the work done efficiently, thus receiving better rating for their performance.

The fourth group consists of 3 questions, which essentially explores the way in which nonverbal behaviors training is conducted at various firms studied. The focus is on getting to know if there is any need for further improvements, and exactly which recommendations should be made to make those training better serve their purpose.

Regarding the sampling procedure, five American employees is definitely a small sample size. The use on interview with small number of participants allows for more substance in their answers as more time is available to tap into personal wisdoms. Regarding the selection criteria, because the scope of this research focuses on Western context, it is necessary to collect primary data from employees working in Western world to allow for easier comparison among them. Specifically, American and Caucasian culture are chosen for interview to narrow down the scope and eliminate differences due to different cultures or nationalities, which may complicate research results and are not focus of this study. Ages and genders were not asked, because these variables also make comparison more tangled and difficult to manage. Regarding the employees and leaders, similarity in culture, ethnicity and nationality makes comparison much less formidable a task. This sampling technique is not random, and results need to be interpreted carefully and cannot generalized over the whole population of employees, who have different ethnic and culture background.

3.3. Data analysis

Qualitative data analysis uses collected data to provide explanations and enhance knowledge of the subject matter under study. In accordance with content analysis, responses are formatted, coded and tabulated for easier visual comparison. By methodically breaking down data into segments and categorizing and contrasting based on subjective interpretation, the analysis unveils relevant patterns and themes that recur and then compare with analyzed theories to see similarities and differences, reach a final, well thought-out conclusion.

Specifically, there are several questions that need to be addressed:
Which themes emerge from the data?
How do these themes shed light on findings gained through literature review?
How can the similarities and/or differences be explained?
Are there exceptions from these themes?
Which external factors might be able to explain these exceptions?
Do the themes imply that more research with different goal needs to be undertaken?

For example, a common theme that agrees with literature is how eye contact reveals honesty and competency, or how voice suggests competence and extroversion. Regarding another theme about extroversion, literature's finding that extroversion can be shown through physical attractiveness is not supported by respondents. This disagreement may due to the fact that physical appearance is not listed in the question, or at least, respondents did not have an incentive to write down that answer themselves.

It is also important to note that interviewees' responses are influenced by their interpretation of the situation and their identification of their identity or background and other who share the same experience.

4. FINDINGS

The interview was conducted with five participants who are U.S employees working in different industries, and who answered all of fifteen questions, which are mostly open ended questions. In line with research objective outlined in page 3, the structure of finding is delineated in the same order. First, information on interviewees and their leaders are introduced. Then, nonverbal cues and leadership qualities are discovered. Next, the paper explores the connection between nonverbal awareness and leadership success thoroughly. Finally, the current situation of nonverbal communication training is presented.

4.1. Background information on interviewees and their leaders

Overall, organizations and people involved in this study are fundamentally homogeneous. All leaders mentioned in interviews are pure American. Among five employees, 50% of them have partial ancestry outside the U.S border (Germany, Britain, Mexico). However, all of them have lived in the U.S for most of their life, and have assimilated deeply with native American culture and has taken that culture as their own identity.

Regarding languages, all employees and leaders communicate with each other in English, which they are all fluent in advanced level. Some can speak a second language, but this is not the language they use frequently in their everyday communication with colleagues and family members. The official language for all 6 firms is English, partly because their headquarters are located in the U.S, and because their international presence has made this international language most convenient.

No.	Industry	Dominant culture	Employee Ethnicity/ Nationality	Employee Language	Leader Ethnicity/ nationality	Leader language
1 (M)	Publishing house	Caucasian (American)	American	English	American	English French

2 (M)	Brokerage agency	Caucasian (American)	British American	English Japanese	American	English
3 (W)	Gaming software	Caucasian (American)	American	English	American	English
4 (W)	Financial auditor	Caucasian (American)	German American	English German	American	English German
5 (M)	Education provider	Caucasian (American)	Mexican American	English Spanish	American	English

4.2. Nonverbal cues and leadership qualities

Regarding how nonverbal signs influence how they perceive a person, the general consensus is that employees are somewhat aware that their opinions of how great their leaders are subconsciously AND substantially influenced by nonverbal cues. However, when provided with the scientific research that nonverbal communication accounts for 65 to 93 percent of all information communicated (Price, 2003), four out of five employees said they were astonished to know that fact. (This piece of information is not recorded on transcript, as interviewer revealed to them in a casual conversation after their interview were done). Apart from employee 2 who said that he tends to over-analyze nonverbal signals and he trust them "*most of the time and in most situations*", the other four did say that they, to some extent, rely on this unspoken language to gain more impression and interpretation about their leaders.

Interviewee 4 mentioned her reasoning about why she thinks employees are usually more attuned to nonverbal signals of their supervisors than the other way around. "*I think this may date back to our survival mechanism in tribal era. We have to know how tribe leader thinks and wants. Or else we accidentally displease him with our behaviors and risk being punished*".

Interviewee 1 said that he can at least narrate an experience when he thinks nonverbal signs are almost completely reliable. It is when he exchanges handshake with business partners, and he confessed that he can determine if the partner is overpoweringly aggressive just from how tight the grip is over his fingers. For him, a handshake is a

signature piece that entrenches deeply in his impression about a person he meets. It is important to note that this first question focuses on the influence of nonverbal behaviors on perception in general, and not in a narrow context of employer-employee because this is the first question on the subject to warm the interviewees up.

In terms of which channel they trust more to determine the intention and emotion of their leaders when there is a contradiction between verbal channel and nonverbal channel, the responses vary.

Interviewees 3 and 5 suggested that both (facial expressions with body language and voice tone AND verbal words) should be factored in, with no heavier weight given to either side. For example, interviewee 3 said that she is confused every time her leader's voice seems to be disdainful and face lukewarm when he compliments her on her project. She mentioned that these signals "*stick out to me as a sore thumb*", but she acknowledged that she could not entirely base her interpretation solely on these cues and disregard the whole verbal content, because "*maybe men are not good at showing the right signals outwardly, or maybe my leader just had a bad day*".

The other three interviewees agreed that they tend to put more emphasis on nonverbal channel, because "*that is where the authenticity of what the other person thinks lives in*", according to employee 1. He has an example when he presented his development idea to his leader, who said he was impressed with it and would like to take a closer look at it when he had time, while slouched and rolled his eyes upwards all the time during the presentation. He said that "*these negative signals speak volume, he was clearly fatigued and bored, and I feel like I hit the wall trying to finish my presentation while there was a huge communication barrier like that*". He definitely assured the interviewer that he had profound belief in the validity of nonverbal behaviors, especially when they signal uncomfortable feelings, such as anger, boredom, or frustration.

Employee 2 posited quite emphatically that "*Your body never lies; it just never*" because he thinks that humans rely on nonverbal behaviors since birth ("*babies can take advantage of their mother's facial expression to their advantage*"), so that

gestures and expressions should come way before any verbal content is heard and processed.

When asked to choose five personal qualities that are essentially important to make a great leader, five employees gave different answers; nevertheless, these top five qualities are listed below. Apart from employee 3, all of the other four said that leaders need to be able to account for his doings and should never "*wear the mask*". Employee 2 maintained that if leaders are dishonest and engage in unscrupulous behaviors behind the door, then sooner or later everything will be revealed and their teams will follow suit, which is a disaster for the firm.

Supportiveness ranks 2nd, and three employees thought that to make subordinates buy in their suggestion, leaders need to show that they are 100 percent genuinely caring about well-beings and development of employees. "*I think my boss can be imperfect in many ways, but if he allows us the freedom and helps us achieve our best we can be, then I will stay with his team no matter what*" – employee 4 said.

Competency also co-ranks 2nd, as it was mentioned as "the last thing we look for is a leader who does not know what he talks about", according to employee 1. They think that wisdom and expert knowledge are "*a form of charisma, which need to exist in their character. At least in our industry, when your direction is right, you are seen as a genius*".

Extroversion was mentioned twice: "*We all know that we American love some extroversion in our leaders, and personally I agree to that mainstream preference*". Both employee 2 and 5 thought that even the leaders feign to be extroverted, at least they try to appear more approachable to employees, which make employees feel they are heard and their opinions valued.

Inspiring was chosen twice, as it is said that sketching out the vision of success is vital to motivate employees to contribute more to companies. "*We love it when our team leader gives us a break and commend on our work when we are mired in workload and thus feel discouraged*". To them, the internal drive for better and

thoughtful advice are momentum for being inspiration.

Qualities	Number of times chosen by 5 employees
Honest (H)	4
Supportive (S)	3
Competent (C)	3
Extroverted (E)	2
Inspiring (I)	2

With respect to which nonverbal cues are used to evoke the perception that a leader has those top five qualities chosen by five employees, the result is summarized in the table below

5 qualities	H	S	C	E	I
Facial expression (Eye contact, Smile, Eye brow shape/position, Nod, Head tilt, Forehead, Mouth)	✔ (eye)	✔ (nod, smile)	✔ (eye)		
Body stance/posture (forward leaning, body orientation)	✔	✔ (lean)	✔		
Arm/Hand/Leg movement/position	✔			✔	✔
Touch		✔			✔
Space/Territory/Personal space		✔		✔	
Voice (speed, pitch, volume)			✔	✔	✔

Three out of four employees concurred that honesty is most easily seen through eye contact, as employee 2 put it: "*In American culture, maintaining eye contact shows that you are not hiding anything, you don't have to take time to divert your eyes away to think through your answer. Then it is more likely to be candid than false*". It was mentioned in responses that if they tell the truth, then usually they have firmly straight posture with two legs spreading equally shoulder level, a stance that signifies confidence in their belief of what they talk about. 2 employees pointed out that

trustworthy people tend to gesticulate more by using their arms and hands to demonstrate their points, while deceitful people have to think hard to fabricate an answer so they don't have much brain power to gesticulate.

Supportiveness is seen through warm smiling, frequent nodding, leaning forward, gentle touching like patting on the back or arm, sitting along side instead of face-to-face orientation, coming from behind the table to stand closer to employees. Employees talk a lot about smiling and nodding, which according to them, are signs of interest, attention, involvement and encouragement.

Competence is again thought to be shown through eye contact, as employee 3 said that people avoiding to see us directly are probably thinking of an appropriate answer, because they do not know the subject matter enough. Firm and open posture is also cited as another sign. Interestingly, voice tone is also mentioned as revealing mental acumen, as employee 1 claimed: "*I think fast speaker, in most instances I have experienced, equals having fast brain*".

Extroversion is suggested to be revealed by having a combination of verbal fluency, pitch variation and gestural activeness. Employee 5, after describing these cues, took two famous names as example: "*Think of the way Tony Robbins, or a bit extreme case, Adolf Hitler, I always think how visually demonstrative nonverbal communication can be as a way to show that you are essentially an extrovert. And we all love extroverted leader who is charismatic at the same time*"

Inspiration's nonverbal signals are not clearly described from the answers, as they seem to relate to how passionate leaders might be, from the energetic walk, warm touch and animated voice. Employee 3 said: "*When I think of an inspiring leader, I always think of my supervisor in the last project, who is zealously in love with what he does, never satisfied and always inspire us to be better. And he has all these nonverbal traits.*"

As to the connection between perception of employees over leadership qualities and chance of being promoted for their leaders, the same pattern seen in question #4 is seen again.

Interviewees 3 and 5 contended that there may be at least a positive connection in place, given that employees can rate how satisfied they are when working under the supervision and guidance of their leaders, and this rating is, in most firms and industries, does hold some weight when considering chance for promotion. However, one thing that made them restrained in their responses is that the perception is subjective per se, because any interpretive effort involves not only cognition but also emotion, which means that employees may vary widely in their ability to correctly deduce leadership traits based just from nonverbal cues of their leaders. Another reason is that in some industries, leaders are often not required to be in direct communication daily with subordinates (such as gaming software firms and IT companies, in general), so their nonverbal behaviors might not be a big factor in employees' mind.

Interviewees 1, 2 and 4, however, highlighted that they believe there is a strong positive correlation. They mentioned that it is human nature from ancient age to judge people based on nonverbal cues, and this proclivity has hardly changed over decades. Therefore, employees will continue being influenced by nonverbal signals whenever they rate performance of their leaders, which is one component to consider whether leaders deserve bigger pay next month! Employee 4 suggested one notable point: Whichever leadership qualities employees they perceive from this unspoken language; they keep them in their mind while performing their work. This means that leaders' behaviors may translate into their employees' belief of their team's competence, and affects performance outcome of the whole team and performance of the leaders, after all.

4.3. Nonverbal awareness and leadership success

Concerning if employees may benefit from their leaders' ability to read their body languages, all most all participants agreed and responded with similar reasoning. They suggested that if leaders can master nonverbal communication, they can see much more than what is told to them, and help employees when they are in bad situations and   don't   want   to   reveal   about   it.

For example, employee 2 said that when leaders see signs of lacking interest and lowered morale when companies are in difficult time, they can use that information to "*stir up team spirit to get things back on track*". To get employees motivated, they can step in and offer a day off with snack/beer office party for employees to release stress and keep the energy level up again. Employee 4 gave another example of her supervisor who was able to recognize that she had been distressed and had not performed well at work, and who politely, in an indirect way, ask her if she needs some counseling service offered for employees who are in stress.

Moreover, two employees mentioned that the more discerning their leaders are at decoding what nonverbal signals mean, the more personable and likeable they become. This is because they want to help employees in stead of caring only about whether employees finish their jobs before deadline. "*This is one single thing that may separate great leaders from good leaders*" – employee 3 emphasized.

In regard to whether good relationship with leaders improve employees' retention rate, there are two degrees of agreements among respondents

Employees 2 and 4 believed that this relationship is highly possible. Firstly, based on the idea that employee 4 answered in question 7, she reasoned that employees' perception of their leaders' leadership qualities is likely to affect their relationship with those leaders. This relationship will possibly translate into how motivated employees are toward finishing their task, and how satisfied they are with their job. This satisfaction with specific job may exert its influence on their satisfaction with their leaders, which is the rating. To make it easier, she said "*If you notice that your supervisor pays genuine attention to what you propose for next quarter's budgeting plan, you may think that he or she trust you. You are more than likely to trust him or her back. You feel like you get empowered and end up making great progress. You feel you get personal development, and satisfied with the job in general. And in the end, you are most likely to tick onto "Very satisfied" box with your leader's performance. And you stay with the company and your team for a long time. It's like a domino effect, with one outcome triggering the next outcomes.*"

Employees 1, 3 and 5 thought that this relationship is possible, given that these employees agreed to the notion that building relationship with subordinates is one of main tasks of any leaders, as they rely on them to perform daily tasks to release time for higher level, strategic tasks that they handle themselves. As employees get support and/or feedback from leaders, or at least perceive that is the case, the quality of relationship is enhanced, as it is now two-way relationship, both upward and downward. Thus they are likely to stay and not go anywhere. However, employees 5 pointed out that everyone is different, and they have seen cases in which "*good employees leave good bosses as well*". This is when conventional wisdom doesn't apply, because trusted and empowered employees have grown much through being challenged with more difficult tasks, and they leave their position to seek other better position with higher promotion chance or job salary. According to these employees, good relationship doesn't always guarantee lowered attrition rate.

In the matter of how important the ability to read nonverbal signals is to the rating leaders get from employees and to the performance leaders can achieve in their own responsibilities, here is the visual chart for the result:
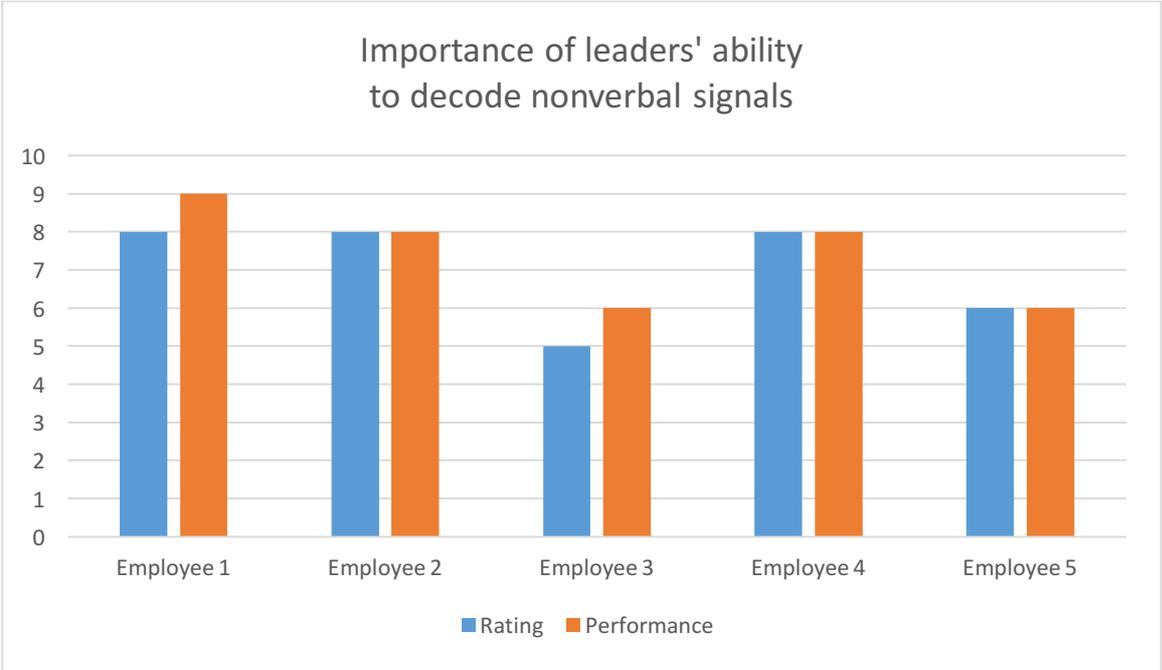
Overall, all scores are at least equal and most are above average (5/10), signifying a considerable positive view over the subject matter. The chart shows that employee 1 rates decoding ability most favorably out of 5 respondents, followed closely by employee 2 and 4 who rates both scores at 8/10. The last two, employee 3 and 5 are more conservative in their rating, giving from 5/10 to 6/10.

With reference to how the nonverbal decoding skill helps leaders become more persuasive and thus more flexible in his management of people, all respondents are somewhat in agreement with one another. The common line of reasoning is that based on seeing how employees react to their arguments, leaders can switch direction or slightly change their angle of positioning their opinion to make it sound more reasonable to employees' desire and needs.

For example, employee 1 narrated his experience: "*My boss once persuaded us to try working from home for one day per week. He told us that would save us time to commute per week. Our team members thought that this was not a good idea. It might lead to another situation where we would be relegated to remote employees with lower benefits. I thought my boss saw our facial expressions such as frowning and lips pressing. He paused a little and changed his angle, telling us that would be implemented for trial phase of 3 months to see how it works, and there is nothing to worry about. He probably picked up on our expressions and framed his suggestion to better suit our goal, which was job security! At that time, current job market was very competitive.*" This example showed the importance of appealing to anxiety and fear of loss to be more persuasive to listeners.

Moreover, two employees said that leaders can become more flexible in managing talents for better outcomes. "*If they can read those little things, they know which worker is truly interested about the project. Or which worker is more reliable to deliver results. Then they can give the right task to the right person. This is a golden skill for any leaders.*"

In respect of the possibility of using the decoding ability to manipulate employees to do something at their expense, there were several thought provoking answers.

Employee 4 said that in her experience, those who can read emotions well are often good at displaying emotion; manipulative people can get away suppressing their true emotion and disguising it with a fake emotion to coax others to do something at their expense.

Employee 3 cited an example of his team leader in his previous job, who was a woman who always "*feigned to be vulnerable, emotionally*", to elicit affectionate emotions from male subordinates; therefore, she was able to "*dumped them more work than they are supposed to do*". That is because she could read emotions and feign emotions at the same time, making others moved by her untrue stories and doing what she wants for her own interests.

Employee 5 added that: "*there are endless situations that people good at reading how others feel can play emotional tricks. Either to demean or alienate people they deem a threat*"

4.4. Nonverbal communication training for leaders

Concerning if they think leaders (and possibly employees) would perform better if firms offer them training on nonverbal communication, four employees gave a resolute yes. These four employees noted that there seem to be a gap in their education system and work training that ignored the applicability of nonverbal communication; instead, most of the training they got so far was either professional topics and industry updates, or productivity classes such as time management, financial management, personal budgeting, …

Two of them said that at least, they and their leaders would be better off at workplace even if they are simply given some information on this subject, either by being provided with short guidelines or books, because they think "*they have motivation to learn this subject by themselves without being forced into formal training class*".

One of them mentioned that if their firm is to operate on a global scale, and employed international workers, then nonverbal behaviors would be critical to master, as there are often lack of knowledge on how foreigners communicate nonverbally with their different system of gestures, which often leads to miscommunication, and "*people can get offended easily thinking that foreigners are rude, while they are simple who they are entire life. They are just different*". This is especially important knowledge for expatriates, as they can deal with new situations in a foreign country where locals communicate and behave differently from American. This saves them from embarrassing circumstances such as social faux pas, which may cost firms their valuable business if business partners feel uncomfortable or offended.

Interviewee 3, on the other hand, said training may be optional, although he did think that there are advantages for leaders if they get access to the material. According to him, "*digital communication such as Skype tele conferencing has replaced the needs for in person meeting*". So the importance of training on nonverbal communication is thus weakened by this trend.

The interviewees were asked if there is any form of training on nonverbal behaviors provided at their firm, and what information they have regarding that training. 3 of them stated that there was no such training, or at least they haven't heard of it before and there seems to be no plan for it in the future, either through their firm's intranet channel or through communication with colleagues and supervisors.

Interview 1 said that there was a presentation by a guest speaker at their firms' 3rd quarter party last year about how to read body language of others and how to use positive body language to feel better and improve self-image in other people' eyes. He said that almost all party goers were impressed by the content they were taught, and would be eager to learn more on this subject. However, that guest speaker had not been invited to come back to talk more, and it seems that his firm considered this subject with marginal importance, "*maybe just for the sake of entertaining at that party*", or "*maybe due to lack of funds, as our funds for personal development subject is usually diverted to more professional subjects. So our employees have to be provided so our firm stays on the cutting edge of industry's best practices.*"

Interview 4 revealed that his firm does have 2-day workshop on this subject, but it is provided only to a few top leaders of CXO levels, whose daily task is mostly to meet and make deals with business partners from other firms and "*of course, not to meet and talk with lower level employees*". He acknowledged that this training is likely to help those leaders to be better at negotiation, not improving relationship with employees. This workshop is taught in tele-conferencing format, whereby the trainer appears on large screen (due to inability to schedule time for travel, and also due to limited fund for this workshop). The format of two day made it too intensive and "*stuffy, as materials were covered quickly and everyone seemed they were rushed*" There was no coaching or workshop of any kind to other leaders of small departments and branches within his firm, and "*1-on-1 coaching is way out of the question, it is simple unheard of*".

The final question essentially aims at allowing participants to evaluate the quality and suggest improvements to their firms' training. Due to different situation at the five firms interviewed, below are several suggestions to improve training suggested by those five employees:

- There should be more formal, systematic way to offer training on a predictable basis, such as quarterly or yearly so that leaders and employees can learn more in depth. At the least, an access to learning platform, such as online program or online courses should be provided for easy access.
- Training should be conducted live with trainer directly teaching the material in person, due to nature of nonverbal behaviors, which are often visual.
- Training should be offered to a wider range of employees, not just limited to a few leaders, as this knowledge can be applied both way in terms of leader - subordinate's communication.
- The materials should incorporate new information on how foreigners are different from American in their use AND understanding of different nonverbal cues.

- The training should prepare learners a way to acknowledge that they need to be less judgmental towards foreigners as they are using American rules learned from early age in American context to judge a different culture, which makes them biased and unfair.
- Expatriates preparing for foreign assignments, leaders dealing with high profile negotiations, leaders struggling with communicating with employees, team leaders leading multi cultural teams should be given priority for the training.
- 1-on-1 coaching or private mentoring can be offered for small number of learners, and these types of training should be tailored heavily

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This section analyses the findings in section 4 in the light of literature in section 2

5.1. Nonverbal cues and leadership qualities

Firstly, respondents are to some degree aware that nonverbal behaviors do influence the way they judge their leaders' leadership qualities, but most of them do not know that nonverbal channels account for such a large percentage of all information communicated among humans. Thus, it can be assumed that there may be a lack of knowledge on this subject matter, either due to deficiency in American education system or job training programs. Interestingly, one response related to tribal era may support Perin (2003)'s claim that response to nonverbal cues is critical for survival (fight or flight). This also supports Blairy, Herrera and Hess (1999) finding that low-status individuals tend to be more attuned to what high-status individuals think about them. On the other hand, another response indicates that handshake can be used to determine aggression, while Gootnick (2000) mentioned that it shows professionalism, but both agrees that handshake is an important first impression in business. Regarding which qualities can be deduced from handshake, this topic needs further research for more comprehensive conclusion.

This first finding leads to a predictable second finding that respondents as a group has rather ambiguous answer over which channel they would trust more if there is a contradiction between what they hear and what they see. It seems that those who trust nonverbal cues are more sensitive when those cues signal negative emotions or thoughts, which support conclusion by Hybel & Weaver (2007) that people generally feel uncomfortable when they perceive negative expressions from other people, such as boredom, frustration, or anxiety. Those who are unsure and take a neutral approach by saying that we should take into account of both channels seem to neutralize and mollify Dr. Albert Merabia (1971) that nonverbal cues should carry as many as 13 times the weight verbal content does. The justification for this approach, such as men are inherently not good at expressing emotions correctly, or people may be in situation that distracts their thoughts are good examples of controlling factors (gender and environmental distractions) that modulate the degree of credibility of nonverbal cues.

Secondly, the finding over top five qualities (honesty, supportiveness, competency, extroversion, inspiration) people look for in a leader reveals several worthwhile discoveries. These are listed in Forbes and Entrepreneur's articles, and no respondents indicate any extra qualities that are not listed in the two lists, which may indicate that the two lists are rather comprehensive. Persuasiveness and Empathy, which are both listed as qualities of leaders by Redding (1972) and Goleman (1998) do not make into top five. Epitropaki (2005)'s Implicit leadership theory scores only one out of his three traits (extraversion), and his other two traits (likeable, diligent/conscientious) are not listed in top five. Five power bases (French & Raven, 1959) does score one base, which is expert/competency. These discrepancies may arise because those models and theories either are not up-to-date or they focus on smaller scale of traits and not attempts to cover all possible qualities, which may be overwhelming for any researchers to find enough evidence to support. It is important to differentiate this point when these theories and models are compared to those two articles above, which are essentially lists comprised with no substantiating research written by journalists as a piece of useful advice for general audience of business professionals who are not into social research.

It is crucial to note that regarding PPRR framework, only Supportiveness makes a presence in top five, but as indicated in the previous paragraph, previous famous studies have not scored well, either. It is safe to assume that the sample size of five respondents is small, and if the sample is broadened, or other five people are chosen, the top five will be different. That is, the fact that any frameworks or theories or models that have qualities not making into the top five does not disqualify their validity. Rather, an objective consideration of their goals, methodologies and reasoning may reveal that they are useful in providing a different angle to make a whole picture of the subject matter more comprehensive.

Thirdly, the task of matching nonverbal cues to corresponding qualities provides the research some interesting discussion points.

There are various agreements between what employees said and what can be learned from the literature. Research by Burgoon and Buller (1989) is supported by

respondents in that eye contact seems to reveal honesty and competency. Remland, Jacobson and Jones (1983) are also corroborated in that supportiveness may be shown through nodding, smiling and leaning forward. Respondents' opinions on how voice may suggest competence and extroversion are in line with findings of Nolen (2005) and Buller (1992).

On the flipside, there exist several disagreements between findings and literature. Regarding extroversion, although research by Riggio and Friedman (1986) about verbal fluency and gestural activeness is in line with what five respondents think, Kenny (1992) claim that physical attractiveness can create impression of extroversion is not supported. This disparity may be explained simply because physical appearance is not listed in the list that interviewees can choose from.

Moreover, body posture is mentioned by 5 employees as one cue to reveal competence. This notion is in disagreement with literature examined. Aguinis, Simonsen and Pierce (1998) found that "Body posture had no effect on the perception of power" – here, competence is one base of power. Another disagreement is that interviewees think that active gesticulation is a form of honesty and credibility, while this notion is not mentioned any where in the literature review. Whether these nonverbal cues do reveal those qualities, it is impossible to conclude without researching more advanced studies at this point.

Fourth, the five employees appear to agree with Aguinis and Pierce's finding in 1998 that nonverbal behaviors are important to leaders' chance of being promoted. The most ardent proponents of this view cited again the instinctual nature of using nonverbal cues to survive. They also reasoned that employees' perception of leadership qualities of their leaders are self fulfilling that it manifests into the team's performance and thus leader's performance. This reasoning is essentially in line with Pygmalion leadership found by the psychologist Robert Rosenthal, in that leaders' expectations and qualities can translate into how well their employees perform.

However, there are some important qualifications to Aguinis' findings. Employees mentioned the subjectivity thus variance (instability) of perception among different employees on the same behaviour, which is legitimate according to Nowicki (2000).

One notable point is that face-to-face communication is not required on a frequent basis in some industries, so leaders "nonverbal behaviors might not be a big factor in employees' mind". However, this argument can be easily refuted as Goman (2008) maintained that every time leaders need to present a significant change, employees tend to prefer them to do so in face to face. Goman (2008) also mentioned that video conferencing technology aiming at virtual projection of real people will be the major form of communication in the future. Although this technology may be used to facilitate communication out of geographical barrier, virtual simulation of human face and body is used and thus leaders still need to decode nonverbal behaviors to efficiently communicate with his team.

5.2. Nonverbal awareness and leadership success

It is surprising that even when they are not asked about the concept of Empathy explicitly in question 8, they subconsciously incorporate it in their answer about role of leaders' empathy to the benefit of employees. That is, they said that the more leaders can read those nonverbal signals, the more personable and caring to employees they become, which "one single thing that separate great leaders from good leaders". It seems that concept of Empathy is deeply connected to the concept of Supportiveness in Relationship part of the PPRR framework this research bases upon. Regarding the concept of Supportiveness, employees essentially support what is mentioned in Bass's Transformational leadership theory (1990), which emphasize the need to encouraging employees knowing what they really need.

What is more fascinating is the result about retention rate and quality of relationship. Two employees seemed to agree with Eisenberger and Stinglhamber (2002) that leaders need to build good relationship with employees because this helps reduce the desire to leave job to go to work somewhere else. However, their reasoning about Domino effect ("you are most likely to tick onto "Very satisfied" box with your leader's performance, and stay with the company and your team for a long time") is based on the assumption that Satisfaction (with job, and/or with leaders) is the only variable that determine whether employees will want to change their job. Three other employees

pointed out that this is not the case in reality, as chance of promotion higher, opportunities for further personal development, and higher pay make the situation a lot more complicated ("they leave their position to seek other better position with higher promotion chance or job salary"). So good relationship does not always translate to higher retention in the era of a multitude of frequent job hoppers. However, this does not weaken the importance of building a strong relationship, as Yuki (2002) emphasized, because leaders still need it to get employees get work done.

Question 11 is one the most thought provoking question among fifteen questions, as employees gave their best experience and stories to demonstrate their points.

Employee 1's story demonstrated the importance of reading nonverbal language and then appealing to fear of loss to make argument more persuasive, which supports Desteno (2004) 's viewpoint. Dr. Andrew Przybylski (2011) also mentioned the same psychological phenomenon called FOMO, which is fear of missing out, or fear of lost opportunity, and which is often used as one of effective persuasion techniques.

Another employee mentioned the importance of choosing the right people who are most likely to put their best effort in. Delegation is an essential skill, because at the end of the day, leaders have eight hours to work, and they can not stretch themselves too thin. They need to be able to assign functional tasks to have more time to take care of higher level tasks, which requires more strategic view.

Employees 3, 4 and 5 mentioned the dark side of using emotions to manipulate people, which is not new as there is a growing number of modern research supporting this notion. For example, Cote (2011) suggested that employees who are most likely to humiliate their colleagues are also Machiavellians who score highest in emotion detecting test. It is not surprising that the adeptness at reading emotions can be used not only for benevolent purpose, but also for malevolent purpose, especially in situation where power is desired.

Lastly, it is critical to the goal of this study to mention result of question 10 and 12. From the overall scores, it appears that participants think that leaders' ability to decode nonverbal signals are to some extent important for both rating and performance. This

is in line with various research mentioned in Literature review, such as Rosenthal (1979), Elfenbein (2002), Sedmar (2006). Employees 3 and 5 gave a more neutral scoring, which is consistent with their qualified responses in question 4 (how nonverbal signs influence how they perceive a person) and question 7 (the connection between perception of employees over leadership qualities and chance of being promoted for their leaders). Employees 1, 2 and 4 gave more scores, reflecting their deeper belief in the importance of nonverbal communication shown in question 4 and 7. These scores are essential to the objective of the study, and are used as a cross check to other questions' responses and can summarize the attitude of each employee.

5.3. Nonverbal communication training for leaders

Four out of five employees admitted that leaders would fare better if given training on nonverbal communication, which is in line with positive scores given in question 10 and 12 above. It seems that they acknowledge the lack of training and education, which also corresponds to the lack of more up-to-date academic research on this subject matter as mentioned in research problem. Even though their firms are operating within US market and don't have any international local offices or representatives, the need to learn nonverbal language of foreign culture is also mentioned. This is mainly to save expatriates from embarrassing and dangerous situation. Economic loss due to social faux pas at negotiation sessions when miscommunication happens is a major issue, which is supported by Grossman (2011) and Hamilyon (2010)'s research mentioned in the literature review.

On the other hand, interviewee 3 brought up a reason not to provide training because "firms are moving away from traditional face-to-face communication". It is true that new technologies are creating more digital channels for communicating globally; however, face-to-face communication is still an essential component of human communication, at least until humans are completely replaced with artificial intelligence.

Regarding the current situation of the five firms involved, 60% of them do not have any training on nonverbal communication. This result reinforces the disparity between favorable opinions of benefits of mastering nonverbal signs and the dearth or

procrastination of offering training in practice. Employees talked about several reasons for this from firms' perspective, such as lack of fund or lack of awareness and assigning training as entertainment time. It is thus suggested that there is a gap between employees' perspectives and the head of HR department's perspectives in those three firms. The limitation of who can join the training and the fast pace of the course are also mentioned.

Overall, the situation for nonverbal training in industry world is almost the same as that in the academia world.

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1. Main findings

Nonverbal behaviors influence the way employees judge their leaders' leadership qualities. Specifically, employees actively look for top five qualities (honesty, supportiveness, competency, extroversion, inspiration) in a leader to determine their leadership qualities. Due to small sample size, there are many more possible qualities also suggested in other theories and models that are not in this top five qualities. Moreover, both the study and the academic papers reviewed show that there are these qualities can be shown through several nonverbal cues, such as honesty (eye contact), supportiveness (nodding, smiling, leaning forward), competence (voice, eye contact), extroversion (verbal fluency, gestural activeness, voice).

Overall, leaders' ability to decode nonverbal signals is to some extent important for both their performance and ratings from employees, and it is suggested that there seems to be a connection between that ability and leaders' chance of being promoted. When leaders can read meanings of nonverbal signs, they become more empathetic, personable and understand employees' unspoken needs to support them, which seems to equate positively to employees' satisfaction and ratings. Moreover, leaders become more persuasive by framing their suggestion to meet employees' unspoken needs, and also more flexible in delegating the right job to the right employee, which is suggested to relate positively to the performance of teams, and thus of leaders.

Regarding current situation of firms in the interview, there seem to be a lack of training in nonverbal communication for leaders. This is due to lack of fund and/or lack of awareness of the importance of this subject matter. Of the firms that do have training, the depth and coverage of the training seem to be rather limited and can be improved.

In light of the conclusion, the framework is revised. The retention rate is removed due to difference between findings and literature. Moreover, cues and attributes are shortlisted to what are agreed upon by both findings and literatures, and color coded

in pair for easier reference. For example, both findings and literatures agree that voice and eye contact affects employees' perception of competence in a leader.

Figure 2: Revised theoretical Framework: PPRR Framework
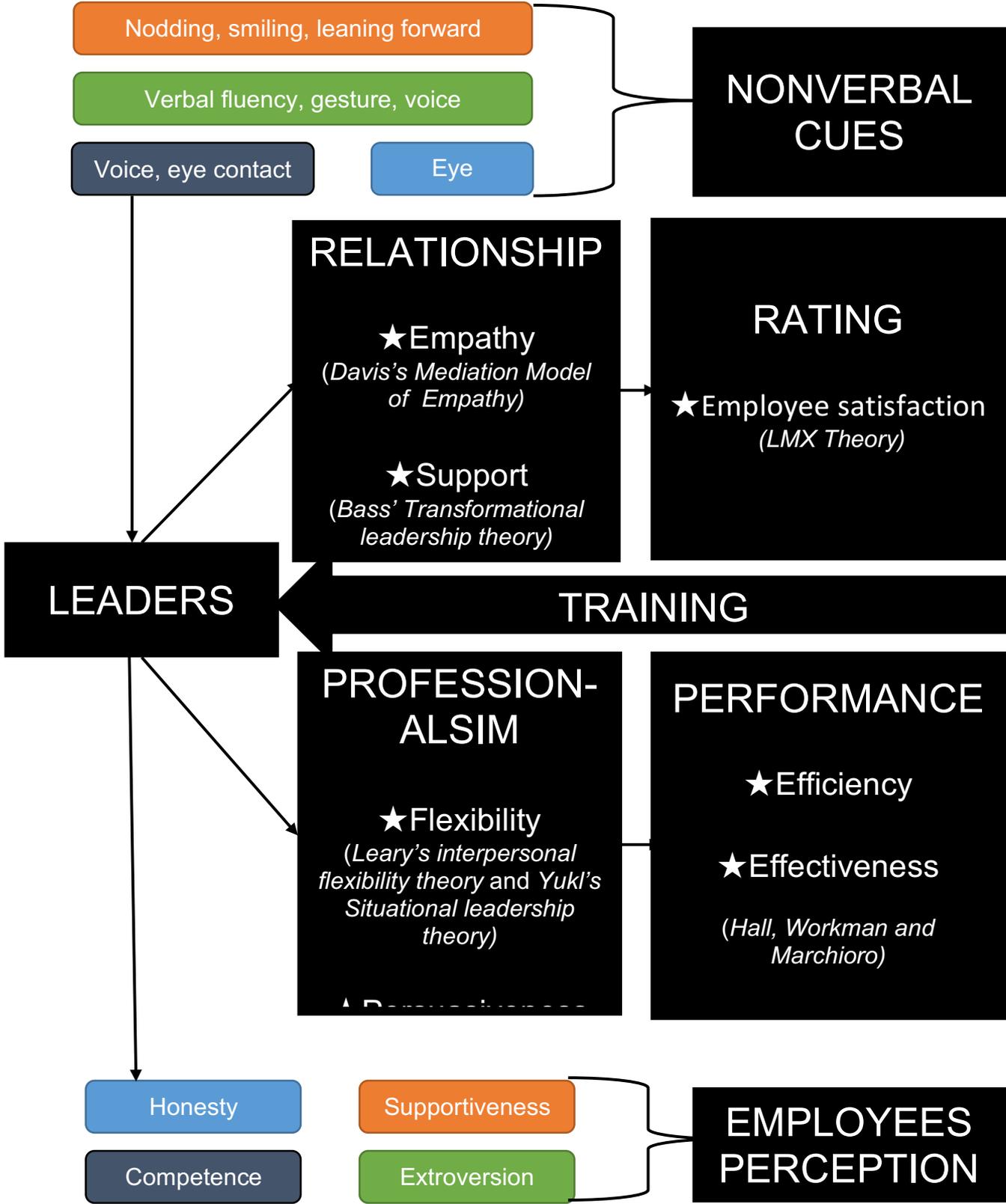
6.2. Implications for international business

This study suggests that nonverbal communication may be able to influence the chance of success of leaders. Leaders may want to consider how their own performance and the ratings of satisfaction from employees have a bearing on their career success so far. This research proposes three possible areas to help leaders and firms to leverage this knowledge to further their success.

6.2.1. Build fundamental mindset over the importance of nonverbal communication

Although most of interviewees in this study have a firm knowledge over the importance of nonverbal language, it can not be assumed this is the case for employees of other firms. In fact, the result shows that there is a lack of training, which suggests that this knowledge has not made to HR Department, or at least, the leaders themselves.

It is crucial for both leaders and employees to have an understanding that nonverbal channel conveys most of information, and it can subconsciously influence firms' performance in various ways, as indicated by this study. As business world evolves constantly, leaders are required to minimize their chance of failure to the minimal amount, thus it is crucial to avoid possible chance of failed communication leading to economic loss to their firms.

This task can be done as simply as providing leaflets, guidelines or short video trainings in electronic forms to all employees and leaders, thus they have a fundamental awareness of the issue. This is a cost-effective way to generate employees' feedbacks over the need and demand of the actual training, and to frame their mindset in a way that they need to know that the training is not simply entertainment occasion, but a chance to better their communication abilities for their personal   development.

There might be counter argument that nonverbal behaviors can not be taught. However, this claim is weakened when real life examples of nonverbal communication

is taught to different subjects. Teachers can get access to material related to how to convey the right nonverbal signals in classroom on Conflict Resolution Education Connection website (www.creducation.org). Teachcc Autism Program in UNC School of medicine also provided guidance on how to teach nonverbal skills for children with autism (www.teacch.com). It is reasonable to assume that leaders, who understand the importance of communication, can make effort to learn this skill.

6.2.2. Provide nonverbal communication training and improve its quality

The possibility of miscommunication due to lack of mastery of nonverbal language can be minimized by offering training to leaders. Of course, the cost and time needed have to be factored in and HR staff need to solicit approval from top executives. If there is limited fun for the training, HR staff also need to plan ahead which level of leaders need the training most, depending on their task, such as negotiation or management or doing foreign assignment so that the fund is utilized most efficiently.

Training schedule should be relayed clearly so participants have a clear plan of learning the material well enough before starting their task or assignment. Before booking the training with specialists and coaches, HR staff may want to send out surveys asking course participants already know about the subject, and what specific problems they need related to recognizing the meaning and displaying the right nonverbal signals. Similar surveys to access the usefulness and applicability of the knowledge they learn need to be sent out after they have accomplished their assignments.

The best method to learn seems to be in person, face to face training in which trainer travel and teach participants for several days, which allows for more in-depth learning. If financial situation or time limitation do not allow for that, an online platform with recorded videos should be given for easy access.

HR staff may need to negotiate with Finance staff to persuade them to allow more fund for the training, as it is indicated in the result of this study that some firms have not

been fully aware of the importance of nonverbal communication. If they have more budget, then more leaders and employees can access the training.

6.2.3. Allow employee feedbacks and upward communication

To improve the impact of nonverbal communication training, firms should establish open communication in which employees are free to provide feedbacks to leaders, and distribute educational material within firm to their colleagues. This will nurture the trust factor which makes them feel their voice is not lost and their opinions respected. In turn, they feel they are able to contribute to the decision making process and feel more satisfied with their relationship with leaders.

The open communication should provide a channel to express sensitive concerns confidentially where protected identity is granted. This strategy is one step further from nonverbal communication training, to facilitate flow of two-way communication, which is vital for success of any firms.

6.3. Limitations

The study, while attempting to paint a complete picture of the subject matter, has its own   shortcomings.

Regarding the sampling, there were five participants in the interview, their responses are by no mean representative of all firms. Although they are from firms of different industries, they can not cover all possible industries in business world.

On top of that, they are American, so impact of American culture, which has multifaceted nuances that make it different from other Western countries' cultures, has to be considered. The impact of multiculturalism within firms that have foreign workers is not researched and discussed. This limited sample may be broadened by recruiting

employees from international firms with more different cultural background into the interview.

Moreover, this research is narrowed down to Caucasian culture in general, and thus literature and findings apply to Western countries. Nonverbal communication with a plethora of nonverbal behaviors is too broad a scope and not the goal for this paper, which should be examined in later separate research.

Regarding how the research was conducted, the email response may lack spontaneous interactivity compared with phone interview. It can be argued that the questions need to be more open in nature.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

Various research has been carried on nonverbal language, but the effect of it on leadership success is still under-presented in the academic body. This research aims at a more up-to-date view of the subject matter, which is in dire need as most of the comparable research was done a long time ago.

Firstly, the paper has not taken into the influence of mediating factors, most notably, gender, age, job functions, and years of working to thoroughly examine differential benefits of nonverbal cue. Thus the findings and discussions from them are subjective and interpretative in nature. Future research may be conducted for these variables to see how they affect perception of employees over leadership qualities, which would involve more work. For example, personality plays a part in determining perception of nonverbal cues (Hodgins, 1990).

Secondly, regarding the literature review, it is impossible to curate and analyze all academic papers directly written on or indirectly related to this topic. This research may only be able to touch on the essential research, which opens the opportunity for bigger research on a larger scale. As the need for globalization and internationalization of workforce grow, the need to address miscommunication from lack of understanding of nonverbal language also grow, thus there will be more research on this topic.

Thirdly, concerning the lack of data on nonverbal training, it would make the study more useful for readers if more participants can provide information on the training of their firms. This is because they are employees and the training is provided only to the top leaders at their firms, so they cannot comment much on the curriculum, any updates on the material, instructional styles. Their responses on the training they haven't participated in may be biased or incomplete. A second research interviewing those leaders who participate in those trainings on what they have learned, how they have used it for better their performance, what outcomes they get,… may compliment to this study.

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APPENDICES

I am a Bachelor Degree Student at Aalto University, Finland. This is an interview aiming at researching how awareness of nonverbal behaviors can enhance leadership success. There are 15 questions, which would take from 30 to 40 minutes to answer. Interviewee's identity will be kept confidential, and content of the answers are used only for academic research, not commercial purpose.

Thanks for your cooperation.

1.What is the dominant culture in your workplace (e.g. Caucasian, Asian, Hispanic, African)?

2.Please indicate information about you AND your direct supervisor/leader:

	Nationality	Language
You		
Your direct supervisor or leader		

3.How important do you think nonverbal signals are in terms of influencing how you think about a person?

4.If what your leader says seem to be in contradiction to what you think he or she really means based on body language, which one would you trust more? Have you experienced this situation before?

5.What are your top 5 personal qualities that make or break a leader? Please underline the qualities in the list below, which is based on lists taken from Forbes and Entrepreneur of desired qualities that make great leaders – or write down qualities if they are not listed. Please explain why you choose such qualities.

Diligent	Extroverted	Open-minded	Emotionally mature
Decisive	Honest	Supportive	Competent
Communicate clearly	Confident	Persuasive	Positive
Persistent	Intuitive	Flexible	Responsible
Authentic	Innovative	Passionate	Empathetic
Inspiring	Likeable	Generous	Personable

Others: ____

6.What nonverbal cues do you think that may suggest that your leader has the above 5 qualities? Please tick onto the table below and explain more.

5 qualities	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Facial expression (Eye contact, Smile, Eye brow shape/position, Nod, Head tilt, Forehead, Mouth)					
Body stance/posture (forward leaning, body orientation)					
Arm/Hand/Leg movement/position					
Gesture/Touch					
Space/Territory/Personal space					
Voice (speed, pitch, volume)					

7.In your opinion, is there any connection between employees' perception of leaders' leadership qualities and the chance that these leaders get promoted?

8. Do you think it is in employees' best interest if leaders can discern what employees really think and feel without them saying it just from their body languages? If you agree, please indicate why.

9. In your experience, is it safe to say that good relationship with leaders improve employees' retention rate?

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important the ability to read nonverbal language to the rating leaders get from employees?

11. Do you think that being able to read employees' body languages gives leaders an edge in terms of persuading employees to do what they want, thus being more flexible in their management approach? And is there any chance they can use this ability to manipulatively coax employees into doing something solely for their own interests at the expense of employees' interests?

12. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important the ability to read nonverbal language to the job performance leaders can achieve?

13. Do you think that leaders would perform better if firms offer them nonverbal training?

14. Is there any form of nonverbal behaviors training (workshop, guideline, coaching, briefing, 1-on-1 mentoring) at your workplace? If you know about the format, content and duration of the training, please describe.

15. If you answered Yes to question 16, then is there anything you want to change in the training to make it better.