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Body Language and Social Interaction Among Youth: An Analysis of Student Perspectives on Nonverbal Communication

Huda A. ALhajjaj^{1*} , Mona A. Khairallah², Mohamed M. Kandil², Nahid A. El Awad³

¹ Department of Social Work, College of Arts, University of Jordan, Amman 11942, Jordan

² Department of Social Sciences, College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, Salalah 211, Sultanate of Oman

³ Language Instructor, Applied College, Jazan University, Jazan 45142, Saudi Arabia

ABSTRACT

Nonverbal communication, particularly body language, plays a crucial role in shaping social interactions among youth. This encompasses facial expressions, gestures, posture, eye contact, and proxemics. How young individuals interpret and utilize these nonverbal cues significantly impacts their peer relationships, emotional expression, and identity development during adolescence and early adulthood. This study investigates the patterns of social interaction among students at Dhofar University in the Sultanate of Oman, focusing on the importance of nonverbal communication in social interaction, its impact on social relationships, and its role in conflict resolution and emotional expression. A descriptive-analytical method was employed, and data were collected from 109 diploma and bachelor students in both Education and Social Sciences departments using a structured Likert-scale questionnaire. The results indicate that participants largely recognize the importance of nonverbal communication, particularly body language, in facilitating effective interpersonal interactions. The findings reveal that participants strongly recognize the significance of nonverbal cues, particularly body language—in facilitating effective interpersonal communication. Additionally, body language was found to complement verbal language and play an essential role in daily social exchanges. The study recommends future research to explore the dynamic interplay between verbal and nonverbal communication, with a

*CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:

Huda Alhajjaj, Department of Social Work, College of Arts, University of Jordan, Amman 11942, Jordan; Email: h.alhajjaj@ju.edu.jo

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particular emphasis on their function in specific social contexts and their influence on young adults' relationships and social interactions. Furthermore, integrating comprehensive nonverbal communication training into university curricula could enhance students' interpersonal skills and social development throughout their academic journey.

Keywords: Nonverbal Communication; Body Language; Social Interaction; Youth

1. Introduction

Communication is fundamental to establishing meaningful relationships, as it enables individuals to share diverse viewpoints and build mutual understanding. It is essential for expressing and interpreting thoughts, feelings, and emotions in social contexts. Among the various modes of communication, nonverbal communication, the transmission of messages without spoken or written words, plays a particularly vital role in human interaction. Both verbal and nonverbal aspects of face-to-face communication are embedded within specific situational and contextual frameworks that shape their meaning and effectiveness. Nonverbal communication, in particular, is distinguished by its capacity to engage and direct the sensory perceptions of individuals, influencing how messages are perceived and understood^[1].

Nonverbal communication encompasses a broad range of non-linguistic cues, including facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye contact. These cues often operate at a subconscious level, yet they significantly affect how messages are received and interpreted^[2]. For young people navigating complex social environments, such as university settings, nonverbal signals are crucial in shaping interactions, establishing peer relationships, and expressing personal identity. Despite its critical importance, nonverbal communication remains an underexplored area in youth communication research, especially regarding its impact on social interaction, peer dynamics, and conflict management. Previous studies have recognized nonverbal communication as a vital technique that positively influences students' comprehension and engagement^[3].

A key component of nonverbal communication is body language, which enhances verbal messages by reinforcing meaning and providing emotional context. Posture, defined as the specific positioning or way an individual holds their body, is a central element of body language^[4]. According to Allan^[5], only 7% of a message is conveyed through words, while a remarkable 93% is communicated

through nonverbal cues. While body language may vary across cultures, certain elements, such as eye contact, are widely regarded as universal. For example, gaze direction often signals attention, honesty, or dominance during interpersonal exchanges, making it a powerful social cue.

The study of social interaction involves an in-depth examination of how individuals engage with one another in everyday, real-world settings through a combination of verbal and nonverbal communication. Building on this foundation, the present study aims to investigate the significance of nonverbal communication in youth interactions, with particular attention to its influence on social relationships, its contribution to emotional expression, and its role in resolving interpersonal conflicts. By focusing on university students at Dhofar University, this research seeks to contribute valuable insights into the complex dynamics of communication among young adults within an academic context.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Communication

Communication has always been of great importance in people's lives. To know how to communicate means to know how to speak and listen, to know not only the verbal language but also the language of signs and gestures used by societies, nations, and other cultures different from ours^[6]. Communication can be defined as the process of transmitting information and common understanding, which usually links individuals together^[7]. Communication refers to any behavior through which one individual transmits or receives information from another concerning their needs, feelings, intentions, understanding, or emotional state^[8]. Communication is also a word of numerous meanings in various points of view. Communication is a special kind of transaction in which people generate, share, and regulate meaning^[9].

Despite the various definitions, the unifying theme

across these perspectives is that communication involves both verbal and nonverbal elements that shape human interactions. Understanding these elements is critical, especially in social contexts where nonverbal cues often convey more meaning than words alone. This foundational understanding supports the focus of this research on the nonverbal aspects of communication among youth.

2.2. Types of Communication

There are four types of communication, the first of which is intrapersonal communication. Intrapersonal communication is a form of internal dialogue that occurs within an individual as they contemplate, conceptualize, and formulate their thoughts or ideas before expressing them^[10]. Interpersonal communication is the second one, where two persons exchange messages; a certain degree of relationship between the sender and receiver, and both may have seen each other closely, including the facial expressions, body language, postures, gestures, etc.^[11].

A third form of communication is called group communication. These groups can be formal and informal depending on the nature of the communication and the goals, but they typically have common interests and objectives^[12]. Finally, mass communication refers to messages transmitted to a general audience across time and distance, utilizing media, such as print, radio, television, or the Internet, and usually through an organization^[13].

Despite the importance of all communication types in different contexts, the present study concentrates primarily on interpersonal and group communication. These forms are particularly relevant because they involve complex nonverbal cues that significantly affect social interactions among youth. Understanding these cues can provide insight into emotional expression, relationship development, and conflict resolution, which are crucial to this research.

2.3. Nonverbal Communication and Body Language

Nonverbal communication fulfills many specific purposes, such as coordinating language, facilitating interpersonal interactions, expressing emotional expression, and conveying attitudes^[14]. Nonverbal communication is

the common denominator in social life; there is hardly any domain of social experience that is not connected to it. It is defined as the behavior of the face, body, or voice excluding linguistic content, in other words, everything but the words^[15].

One significant aspect is nonverbal communication, commonly defined as the conveyance of messages through means other than spoken or written words^[15]. Nonverbal gestures that contradict the spoken message pose one of the greatest threat to communication. It is important that the message and the gestures coincide for a positive association to exist^[16].

Body language communication encompasses facial expressions, gestures and movements, posture and body form, overall appearance, as well as touch-based interactions^[17]. Types of body language include the following: First, facial expressions are considered the most expressive element of body language. Next, posture refers to how individuals sit and walk, often reflecting their social status^[18]. the four basic body postures are standing, sitting, squatting, and lying down^[19]. Lastly, gestures vary across cultures, and a lack of awareness regarding these cultural differences in body language can lead to conflicts and misunderstandings during cross-cultural interactions^[18]. Gestures involve movements of the hands, arms, shoulders, head, and torso, and when used appropriately, they can emphasize key points, enhance communication, and add meaning to spoken words. Well-chosen gestures help clarify or reinforce ideas and should be appropriate to both the audience and the context, while also avoiding distraction from the intended message^[20].

The target audience is particularly attentive to body language, as it is quickly registered by the subconscious mind. Even when the spoken language is not understood, body language helps the audience effectively grasp the intended message^[21].

2.4. Nonverbal Communication Types

There are many types of nonverbal communication. First important one is facial expressions. Facial expressions are powerful, often involuntary signals that reveal emotions like joy, sadness, anger, or fear. All parts of the face—eyes, mouth, lips, and more—contribute to expressing these feelings^[22]. Facial expressions for basic emo-

tions such as happiness, sadness, surprise, anger, fear, and disgust are believed to be universal ^[23].

Another important form of nonverbal communication is eye movement. Among all parts of the human body involved in communication, the eyes are especially significant, as they can convey a wide range of messages. Eye contact plays a crucial role in face-to-face interactions; its presence often indicates interest and engagement, while its absence may suggest disinterest or lack of understanding ^[24].

Body and head movements are additional forms of nonverbal communication. They can indicate levels of engagement and attention, differences in status, and even the degree of affection or comfort. Body posture includes actions such as lying down, sitting upright, standing, slouching, and crossing the arms, among others ^[21].

2.5. Importance of Nonverbal Communication

Miller described that nonverbal communication is learned well before a child begins the process of verbal communication ^[25]. The saying, “Actions speak louder than words,” captures the vital role nonverbal communication plays in human interaction. This is particularly relevant in cross-cultural contexts, where nonverbal cues can bridge language and cultural gaps. Communication studies have shown that a significant portion of emotional and intentional content is conveyed without spoken words. Researchers have shown that only about 7% of a message is delivered through spoken language, while as much as 93% comes from nonverbal signals — although some authors estimate the verbal component to be as high as 35% depending on context ^[22]. Nonverbal communication serves several important functions ^[26], including:

Complementary: It enhances spoken messages by adding depth and clarity. For instance, apologizing while gently patting someone on the back reinforces the sincerity of the apology.

Ease of Presentation: Visuals, gestures, and silent expressions can effectively convey information without relying on speech, making communication more accessible and efficient.

Help for Handicapped People: Nonverbal communication plays a vital role in assisting individuals with disabilities, especially those who are deaf. Deaf individuals

often rely on hand gestures, finger movements, eye direction, and other body language signals to exchange messages effectively.

Attractive Presentation: Since nonverbal communication often uses visuals such as images, graphs, signs, and symbols, it tends to be visually appealing. This form of communication can easily capture the audience’s attention due to its graphic and engaging nature.

Reducing Wastage of Time: Messages conveyed through nonverbal methods typically reach the recipient more quickly than spoken or written communication. As a result, it helps the sender save time by eliminating unnecessary delays.

Quick Expression of Message: Signs and symbols used in nonverbal communication allow for the rapid delivery of information. In many cases, these cues can communicate a message faster than either spoken words or written text.

Nonverbal communication involves a diverse array of behaviors such as gestures, facial expressions, body posture, eye movements, and proxemics. These forms of expression are deeply influenced by cultural norms and social identities, leading to substantial variations in how they are interpreted and practiced across different societies ^[24].

2.6. Social Interaction

Humans are inherently social. We interact while learning, working, playing, forming relationships, parenting, negotiating, buying and selling, or simply conversing. Those interactions are not confined to face-to-face encounters; we also connect by watching people on television and video, listening to talk radio hosts, speaking via mobile phones and chat rooms, or meeting virtually on platforms like Zoom ^[27]. Researchers ^[28] indicated that all types of nonverbal communication affect university students’ social relationships. When the various types of nonverbal communication are used appropriately, the social relationships among university students can become stronger.

On the other hand, online social interaction often relies on alternative forms of expression to compensate for the absence of traditional nonverbal cues. In this context, emojis have been proposed to function as a medium for conveying meaning, allowing users to express emotions, tone, and intent in text-based communication ^[29].

The significance of these visual symbols is not fixed but rather shaped by the situational context in which the emoji is used, influencing how messages are interpreted within such environments.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

A descriptive analytical approach was employed to fulfill the objectives of the study. Descriptive analytics, a branch of data analytics, focuses on summarizing and interpreting past data to explain the current state or trends. This method provides an overview of the data by analyzing insights gathered through a questionnaire distributed to a randomly selected sample of diploma and bachelor students at Dhofar University. As noted, this sampling technique ensures that “every individual has an equal

chance of being selected in the sample from the population” ^[30].

3.2. Participants

The study sample consisted of 109 undergraduate students from Dhofar University, drawn specifically from the Education and Social Sciences departments (**Table 1**). A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that each student within the target population had an equal probability of being selected. Although the population includes students from two distinct departments, simple random sampling was chosen for its methodological simplicity and ability to provide a representative sample of the overall student body. This approach enhances the representativeness of the data and supports the generalizability of the findings across the university’s undergraduate population.

Table 1. Demographic variables for the study sample.

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender	Male	53	48.6%
	Female	56	51.4%
Academic Level	Diploma	34	31.2%
	Bachelor	75	68.8%
Department	Education	24	22%
	Social Sciences	85	78%
Age	18–20	66	60.5%
	21–23	21	19.3%
	More than 23	22	20.2%
Total		109	100%

The demographic characteristics of the students based on the variables of gender, academic level, department, and age reveal that:

Gender: The sample included a nearly even gender distribution, with male participants making up 48.6% of the total, and female participants slightly higher at 51.4%. This balance suggests that gender-based bias is minimal and that the study findings are likely representative of both groups.

Academic Level: In terms of academic qualifications, a significant portion of the participants were pursu-

ing or had completed a bachelor’s degree, accounting for 68.8% of the sample. The remaining 31.2% held a diploma qualification. This indicates a predominance of undergraduate-level students in the study, which may reflect the academic context of the institution or the specific population targeted.

Department: When considering departmental affiliation, the majority of participants (78%) were from the Social Sciences department, while only 22% belonged to the Education department. This noticeable imbalance in departmental representation could influence the findings,

especially if the study's variables are discipline-specific. It may also highlight accessibility or interest differences between departments.

Age: Regarding age distribution, the largest age group was those between 18 and 20 years old, who comprised 60.5% of the sample. Participants aged 21 to 23 years represented 19.3%, while those aged over 23 years made up 20.2%. This age spread indicates that the study population is relatively young, which is typical in higher education settings and may affect outcomes related to maturity, experience, or digital proficiency, depending on the study's focus.

3.3. Research Tool

The research instrument was a questionnaire designed to assess the impact of body language and nonverbal communication on social relationships. The tool consisted of two main sections:

Part 1 gathered demographic information, including gender, academic level, department, and age.

Part 2 focused on key dimensions related to nonverbal communication, such as its importance in youth social interactions, its influence on social relationships, and its role in conflict resolution and emotional expression. This section comprised 25 items, all targeting perceptions of body language's impact on interpersonal connections.

Each item in Part 2 was rated using a five-point Likert scale, where responses ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). A Likert scale is a type of psychometric measurement tool that presents respondents

with a range of response options to express their views, attitudes, or emotional reactions toward a specific subject or issue ^[31]. It typically includes multiple, ordered categories that allow individuals to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a given statement, thereby capturing varying degrees of opinion or sentiment.

The researchers created the questionnaire, and a group of specialists in educational research methods and English language instruction verified its content to ensure it was reliable, relevant, and clear for the intended study goals.

3.4. Validity and Reliability

Validity. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by experts in the field. They evaluated each item for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's focus. Based on their feedback, revisions were made to improve the accuracy and appropriateness of the items.

Reliability. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha

Table 2 shows that the values of the Cronbach Alpha subdivisions of the scale ranged from 0.89 to 0.92, which are acceptable for the purposes of the current study. The overall reliability coefficient of the instrument, which consisted of 25 items across three main domains, was estimated at 0.91. This value indicates a high level of internal consistency, suggesting that the instrument is reliable for measuring the constructs related to nonverbal communication in social interaction.

Table 2. Stability coefficients for study tool paragraphs using the Cronbach Alpha test.

Main Domains	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
The importance of nonverbal communication in social interaction among youth.	7	0.92
The impact of body language on social relationships.	9	0.91
The role of nonverbal communication in conflict resolution and emotional expression.	9	0.89
The instrument as a whole	25	0.91

3.5. Data Collection

Data were collected using a standardized Likert scale questionnaire addressing the study's primary research questions. The researchers in this study used both second-

ary sources and primary sources to meet the study goals. The sources are as follows:

1. Secondary sources of information: These include access to the studies through books, articles, and sci-

entific research on body language, nonverbal, and social interactions.

2. Sources of preliminary information: To address the research questions, the researchers administered a questionnaire to a sample of 109 diploma and bachelor's students. The data were collected through this questionnaire, which was specifically designed and distributed to university students.

3.6. Data Analysis

The study used a quantitative descriptive research design to analyze the collected data. The following statistical procedures were applied:

1. Frequencies and percentages were calculated to describe the demographic characteristics of the study participants.
2. Descriptive statistical analysis, including mean and standard deviation, was employed to analyze the data regarding three main aspects:

Research Question 1: What is the importance of nonverbal communication in social interaction among

youth?

Research Question 2: What is the impact of body language on social relationships?

Research Question 3: What is the role of nonverbal communication in conflict resolution and emotional expression?

4. Results and Discussion

The study's results are reported based on the data gathered and analyzed through statistical measures like the mean and standard deviation to fulfill the research objectives. The outcomes are systematically presented and discussed for each research question as outlined below:

4.1. Results Related to the First Main Research Question: What is the Importance of Nonverbal Communication in Social Interaction among Youth?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for all items under the first domain, "The importance of nonverbal communication in social interaction among youth," as shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for the Items of the First Domain "The importance of nonverbal communication in social interaction among youth." (N = 109).

N.Item	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
7	I believe that body language is still essential despite the development of modern communication methods.	4.55	0.60	1
1	I prefer interacting with my friends face-to-face rather than online.	4.43	0.72	2
5	I find it difficult to interact with people who do not use clear facial expressions.	4.39	0.66	3
4	I like being in an interactive environment that relies on direct communication.	4.36	0.71	4
6	I rely on tone of voice and body language to understand the meaning of the conversation	4.10	.76	5
3	Nonverbal communication is important for understanding others' intentions.	3.71	1.00	6
2	I avoid communicating with people who do not show interest in body language during conversation.	3.55	0.96	7
Overall		4.15	0.79	

In **Table 3**, the mean scores indicate a strong overall agreement among participants on the significance of nonverbal communication, particularly body language and face-to-face interaction. This reinforces existing literature suggesting that nonverbal cues play a pivotal role in interpersonal communication. The highest-rated statement, with a mean score of 4.55, highlights a strong belief that body language retains its essential function even in an age increasingly dominated by digital communication technologies. This finding is noteworthy as it underscores a perceived irreplaceability of physical presence and visual cues in conveying meaning and intent.

Participants also demonstrated a clear preference for in-person interaction, as reflected in the relatively high mean score of 4.43. This suggests that while virtual communication tools are widespread and convenient, they may not fully satisfy the human need for direct, embodied interaction. The reliance on facial expressions and immediate feedback further supports the argument that effective communication often depends on the integration of verbal and nonverbal elements. These findings align with prior research emphasizing that nonverbal signals such as eye contact, gestures, posture, and tone of voice are crucial for building rapport, expressing emotions, and interpreting messages accurately.

On the other hand, slightly lower mean scores for items related to interpreting others' intentions (mean = 3.71) and avoiding individuals who disregard body language (mean = 3.55) indicate some variability in how non-

verbal communication is prioritized. While participants value nonverbal cues, these results suggest they may not consider the absence of such cues as a complete barrier to communication. This flexibility could reflect adaptability to contemporary communication environments, such as text messaging and video conferencing, where nonverbal cues are either limited or partially filtered.

Overall, the data reflect a consistent appreciation for the role of nonverbal elements in enhancing understanding, building trust, and fostering deeper human connection. These insights are consistent with expert claims that a minimum of 75% of all communication is nonverbal ^[16]. Some contemporary linguists estimate that up to 90% of human communication occurs through nonverbal channels ^[18], highlighting the dominance of nonverbal behavior in daily interactions. Therefore, they not only reaffirm the foundational role of nonverbal communication but also highlight its continued relevance in both traditional and modern communicative contexts.

4.2. Results related to the Second Main Research Question: What is the Impact of Body Language on Social Relationships?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for all items under the first domain, "*the impact of body language on social relationships*," as shown in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for the Items of the Second Domain "*the impact of body language on social relationships*." (N = 109) .

N.Item	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
16	I interact better with those who smile or show positive expressions.	4.35	0.78	1
9	I notice that friends who use positive body language are more accepted.	4.23	0.76	2
13	Body language plays an important role in team cohesion	4.17	0.68	3
11	I can distinguish between lies and truth through nonverbal cues.	4.08	0.90	4
8	Body language helps me build successful social relationships.	4.06	0.76	5
12	I use gestures to express my thoughts during discussions	3.91	0.83	6
14	I notice nonverbal cues when interacting with others.	3.91	0.89	7
10	Body language significantly influences my initial impression of others.	3.89	0.96	8
15	I enjoy interacting with people who convey their thoughts and emotions clearly through their body language while speaking.	3.84	0.85	9
Overall		4.05	0.83	

The data presented in **Table 4** reflect a generally high level of agreement among participants, with mean scores ranging from 3.84 to 4.35. This range suggests a consistently positive perception of the statements evaluated, pointing to a strong endorsement of the concepts being measured. The highest-rated item, with a mean value of 4.35, indicates particularly strong agreement, suggesting that this specific statement most closely aligns with participants' beliefs or experiences. Such a high level of concurrence implies that the statement likely addresses a widely accepted or intuitively understood aspect of nonverbal communication.

Items with mean values of 4.23 and 4.17 also received notably positive responses. These scores imply that multiple aspects of the survey resonated with participants, not just isolated items, thereby lending robustness to the findings. Even the lowest-rated items, while relatively lower, still reported mean scores of 3.84, indicating a moderate to high level of agreement. This suggests that none of the statements were rejected or viewed negatively, and instead, all received some degree of approval, reinforcing the overall credibility and coherence of the survey instrument.

The relative consistency in the high scores across all items points to a shared positive attitude among respondents regarding the importance and influence of nonverbal communication. The minor variations observed in the degree of agreement are likely reflective of personal experiences, individual differences in perception, or contextual

factors that influence how participants engage with non-verbal cues in daily life.

Importantly, the data can be interpreted in light of the notion that nonverbal behavior often occurs unconsciously. As individuals are frequently unaware of their nonverbal expressions, body language is generally considered to provide a more authentic reflection of one's emotional state or intentions, compared to verbal communication, which tends to be more deliberate and consciously constructed to fulfill specific communicative objectives^[32]. This perspective may help explain why participants rated the statements positively: they recognize the inherent truth and communicative value embedded in nonverbal cues, even if they do not always consciously focus on them. Consequently, the findings underscore the psychological and communicative depth of body language as an integral, often subconscious, component of human interaction.

4.3. Results Related to the Third Main Research Question: What is the Role of Non-verbal Communication in Conflict Resolution and Emotional Expression?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for all items under the first domain, "the role of nonverbal communication in conflict resolution and emotional expression," as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviations for the Items of the Third Domain "the role of nonverbal communication in conflict resolution and emotional expression." (N = 109).

N.Item	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
25	I can recognize emotional reactions through body language.	4.29	0.63	1
19	I can perceive anger or irritation through others' looks	4.23	0.77	2
21	I rely on tone of voice to understand true emotions during discussions.	4.17	.67	3
18	Understanding other people's body language helps me de-escalate the conflict	4.08	0.73	4
20	I don't always need words to express my anger or sadness.	4.00	0.76	5
17	I use my facial expressions to clarify my position during conflicts.	3.99	0.84	6
23	I use gestures to request calm or reconciliation.	3.91	.71	7
22	Body language helps me avoid misunderstandings during conflicts	3.91	0.89	8
24	Nonverbal communication is essential for understanding others' emotions.	3.84	0.92	9
Overall		4.05	0.77	

According to **Table 5**, the mean scores indicate a generally high level of agreement among participants re-

garding the role of nonverbal communication in emotional recognition and conflict resolution. The highest-rated item,

with a mean of 4.29, reflects a strong belief among respondents that they can effectively recognize emotional reactions through body language. This suggests a high level of intuitive understanding and reliance on physical cues when interpreting others' emotional states. Closely following are mean scores of 4.23 for the ability to perceive anger or irritation through others' looks and 4.17 for the use of tone of voice to understand emotions. These findings emphasize the importance that participants place on subtle, yet powerful, nonverbal elements in emotional interpretation.

The remaining items in this section, while slightly lower, still reported solid mean scores of 4.07, 3.98, and 3.89, indicating consistent recognition of the importance of gestures, facial expressions, and body posture in communication. These values reinforce the view that participants do not merely acknowledge the existence of nonverbal communication but actively consider it a vital aspect of emotional awareness and interpersonal understanding. The consistency in these scores reflects an overall agreement that nonverbal communication significantly contributes to decoding emotional messages, especially in situations where verbal language may be limited, ambiguous, or deliberately masked.

The universal nature of facial expressions—particularly those expressing basic emotions such as happiness, sadness, surprise, anger, fear, and disgust—is well documented in the literature^[16]. This cross-cultural consistency further supports the participants' shared perspective, suggesting that such recognition of nonverbal cues may stem not only from individual learning but also from innate human capacities for emotional decoding. The overall mean score of 4.05 across the items further confirms a generally positive attitude toward the relevance of nonverbal communication in understanding emotions and managing interpersonal conflict.

Moreover, nonverbal communication is widely recognized as a channel for conveying genuine feelings, thoughts, and intentions, often more reliably than verbal communication^[32]. Participants' agreement with this notion reflects an awareness of the layered and often subconscious dimensions of human interaction. Through various nonverbal signals, such as facial expressions, gestures, body language, eye contact, vocal tone, and physiological reactions, individuals are able to express complex emo-

tions and meanings^[33]. Taken together, these findings underscore the integral role of nonverbal communication in enhancing empathy, improving emotional literacy, and resolving conflicts in both personal and professional settings.

5. Conclusions

Overall, the demographic characteristics of the sample indicate a well-balanced gender distribution, a predominant representation of undergraduate students, a clear majority from Social Science disciplines, and a primarily young age group consistent with typical university populations. These characteristics provide a relevant context for interpreting how youth perceive and understand nonverbal communication.

This study explored university students' perceptions of the role of nonverbal communication in social interaction. The findings reveal that participants largely agree on the importance of nonverbal cues, especially body language and direct interpersonal engagement, in facilitating effective communication. Consistent with existing literature, body language was perceived as a complementary and often indispensable element of verbal communication, reinforcing meaning and emotional content during interactions.

The analysis also highlights students' perceptions of the impact of body language on social relationships. As an integral component of nonverbal communication, body language is recognized as shaping daily interpersonal dynamics among young adults. Additionally, this study investigated students' perceptions of the function of nonverbal communication in emotional expression and conflict resolution. It was found that university students recognize and report using a broad range of nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, gestures, body movements, eye contact, and vocal tone, to convey complex emotions and meanings. These nonverbal signals are perceived to play a crucial role in reducing misunderstandings and mitigating conflicts. For instance, Researchers noted that individuals experiencing depression may actively suppress expressions of happiness through facial muscle control, illustrating the nuanced role of nonverbal cues in emotional regulation^[34].

While these findings reflect students' subjective perceptions, the study does not directly measure actual behavior or causal relationships. Future research should investigate how verbal and nonverbal communication interact

in real social contexts among youth. However, given the high perceived importance of nonverbal communication expressed by participants, it may be beneficial for university curricula to include awareness-oriented content or skill-building activities that support students' interpersonal development and academic collaboration.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.A.A. and M.A.K.; methodology, H.A.A. and M.A.K.; software, M.M.K.; validation, M.A.K., M.M.K. and N.A.E.A.; formal analysis, H.A.A.; investigation, H.A.A. and M.M.K.; resources, H.A.A.; data curation, H.A.A. and M.A.K.; writing—original draft preparation, H.A.A., M.M.K., and M.A.K.; writing—review and editing, H.A.A. and N.A.E.A.; visualization, H.A.A.; supervision, H.A.A. and M.M.K.; project administration, H.A.A., N.A.E.A., and M.M.K.; References, H.A.A. and M.A.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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Data Availability Statement

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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