

Innovations

The Differences of Gender in the way of Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication in Social Relationships

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Abstract

The research is centered on gender differences in their way of verbal and non-verbal communication in social relationships. A descriptive research method has been used in obtaining information about the study. The respondent consists of 10 women, 10 men, 10 gays, and 10 lesbians, an equal proportion was taken to have accurate data. The method used in gathering data is the use of a questionnaire. The majority of the respondents are from 15 to 20 years old. They are not the reserved type because they said that they prefer to share their problems with friends rather than those who said that they will keep it to themselves because they are the shy type. Gays are more expressive compared to the other types of gender because they are willing to share their problems with their friends compared to males and females and lesbians. The respondents see themselves as unique people and said that they have their own identities. Gays believes that they are a unique person while women are. Both gays and women are friendlier and easier to approach. The majority of the respondents will approach anyone in the crowd for them to have somebody to talk with and serve as a company. The common "hi, hello" was the words used in approaching a stranger no matter what gender they belong to. Love life and love is the favorite topic that our respondents want to talk about, since my respondents are teenagers, this will be the favorite topic that corresponds to the total respondents. The majority of the lesbian group prefers a topic about their love life, while gays love to talk about boys, men talk about their favorite sports, and women about their crushes. Beautiful and handsome physically is the basis of the respondents of what is beautiful and handsome. Most of the respondents do not consider the brand of their clothing, bags, and shoes, as long as it is in fashion, no matter what the brand does not matter, and they consider the price as their main factor in buying their stuff. The respondents believe that they are handsome, with a pleasing personality, and are hot.

Keywords: 1.gender difference, 2.verbal, 3.non-verbal communication, 4.social relationship

Introduction

All of us have different styles of communicating with other people. Our style depends on a lot of things: where we're from, how and where we were brought up, our educational background, and our age, and it also can depend on

our gender. Generally speaking, men and women talk differently although there are varying degrees of masculine and feminine speech characteristics in each of us. Women are more talkative than men, men have few words whereas women have a lot of things to say. Men are more reserved whereas women are loud. But men and women speak in particular ways mostly because those ways are associated with their gender. The styles that men and women use to communicate have been described as "debate vs. relate", "report vs. rapport, or "competitive vs. co-operative". Men often seek straightforward solutions to problems and useful advice whereas women tend to try and establish intimacy by discussing problems and showing concern and empathy to reinforce relationships.

Jennifer Coates, in her book *Women, Men and Language* (New York: Longman Inc., 1986) studied men-only and women-only discussion groups and found that when women talk to each other they reveal a lot about their private lives. They also stick to one topic for a long time, let all speakers finish their sentences, and try to have everyone participate. Men, on the other hand, rarely talked about their relationships and feelings but "competed to prove themselves better informed about current affairs, travel, sport, etc." The topics changed often and the men tried to "over time, establish a reasonably stable hierarchy, with some men dominating the conversation and others talking very little".

Gender difference emerges in both social and professional settings. This is not surprising as at the core of all dealings whether they be social or professional is the art of conversation. Often the professional-social lines cannot be drawn. Do men and women behave differently?

Gender exerts a powerful influence on all facets of human communication and raises many profound social issues. How does our gender affect our everyday interactions? Are we treated differently because we are male or female? When we speak to someone, does the way we speak depend on the listener's gender?

Gender and communication have a variety of fascinating topics which include interruptions in conversations, gender bias in vocabulary and language, patterns of inequality in speech and conversations, cultural images of men and women, male-female differences in movement and kinesics, the intriguing communication patterns in different ways in cultures around the world. It also carves new territory in its examination impact of gender on key areas of speech, language, social interactions, and nonverbal behavior.

Objectives of the Study

The research is centered on gender differences in their way of verbal and non-verbal communication in social relationships. The following objectives were drawn:

1. To understand the difference between sex and Gender.
2. To identify the differences in their verbal and non-verbal communication such as speech, language, way of conversation, body language, and gestures.
3. To determine these gender differences in communication.

Review of Related Literature

Gender and communication is a relatively new specialization in the Communication field that focuses on the ways females and males of the human species communicate in different contexts. For example, research in this area could reveal the differences and similarities between the ways a female talk show host like Pia Guanio and a male talk show host like Vic Sotto of Eat Bulaga interact with their guests, this study will show the distinction between sex and gender before providing an overview of this specialization's areas of research, main theories, and theorists, and

highlights from research findings of feminine and masculine communication styles. While taking a communication lens to the study of gender, we need to acknowledge the contributions made by other academic disciplines such as women's studies, linguistics, and psychology (Stephen, 2000). As with other specializations in communication, definitions of gender abound (Gamble & Gamble, 2003; Gilbert, 1993; Howard & Hollander, 1997; Lorber, 1994; Vannoy, 2001). For our purposes, we will use Ivy and Backlund's (2000) definition of gender communication which is, "communication about and between men and women." Central to this definition are the terms about and between, and men and women. About addresses the attention this specialization pays to how the sexes are "discussed, referred to, or depicted, both verbally and nonverbally." Between addresses how members of each sex communicate interpersonally with others of the same, as well as the opposite, sex (Ivy & Backlund).

The Social Construction of Gender

Meanings for masculinity and femininity, and ways of communicating those identities, are largely determined by culture. A culture is made up of belief systems, values, and behaviors that support a particular ideology or social system. How we communicate our gender is influenced by the values and beliefs of our particular culture. What is considered appropriate gender behavior in one culture may be looked down upon in another. In America, women often wear shorts and tank tops to keep cool in the summer. Think back to summer vacations to popular American tourist destinations where casual dress is the norm. If you were to travel to Rome, Italy to visit the Vatican, this style of dress is not allowed. There, women are expected to dress in more formal attire, reveal less skin, and cover their hair as a display of respect. Not only does culture influence how we communicate gender identities, but it also influences the interpretation, understanding, or judgment of the gender displays of others (Kyratzis & Guo, 2001; Ramsey, 2004).

Gender and Interpersonal Communication

A particular focal point of gender and communication focuses on ways in which males and females are represented in culture by mass media. The majority of this representation in the 21st century occurs through channels of mass media—television, radio, films, magazines, music videos, video games, and the internet. From the verbal and nonverbal images sold to us as media consumers, we learn the "proper" roles and styles of being male and female in American culture. During World War II, for example, there was a shortage of workers in factories because many of the workers (men) were being sent overseas to fight. Needing to replace them to keep the factories in business, the media launched a campaign to convince women that the best way they could support the war effort was to go out and get a job. Thus, we saw a large influx of women in the workplace. All was fine until the war ended and the men returned home. When they wanted their jobs back they discovered that they were already filled—by women! The media once again launched a campaign to convince women that their proper place was now back in the home raising children. Thus, many women left paid employment and returned to a more traditional role. (This phenomenon is depicted in the film, *Rosie the Riveter*.) As media and technology increase in sophistication and use in our lives, they become new sites of gender display and performance (Krolokke, 2003).

Are There Differences in Gender Communication Styles?

Language

Both males and females can perform these jobs. Since we know that language influences perception and constructs our reality, it is important to use language responsibly to reflect nonsexist attitudes (Beal, 1994; McConnell and Fazio, 1996; O Barr, 2001; Stringer & Hopper, 1998). Numerous studies have shown that there are many more sexual terms used for women than men. Stanley (1977) found that there were 220 terms for sexually promiscuous women and 22 similar terms for men. Without the language, this would have been impossible to accomplish: “the development of a vocabulary with which to accurately describe one’s experiences is an important process during which one needs to reflect on the political implications of that experience” (DeFrancisco & Palczewski, 2007, p. 119).

Purpose of Communication

Starting in childhood, girls and boys are generally socialized to belong to distinct cultures and thus, speak in ways particular to their own gender's rules and norms (Johnson, 2000; Tannen 1986, 1990, 1995.) This pattern of gendered socialization continues throughout our lives. As a result, men and women often interpret the same conversation differently. Culturally diverse ways of speaking can cause miscommunication between members of each culture or speech community. These cultural differences are seen in the simple purpose of communication. For those socialized in a feminine community, the purpose of communication is to create and foster relational connections with other people (Johnson, 2000; Wood, 2005). On the other hand, the goal of men's communication is to establish individuality. This is done in several ways such as indicating independence, showing control, and entertaining or performing for others. To understand these differences, we must think about the role of culture and social expectations in the purpose of communication for gender (Mortenson, 2002).

Patterns of Talk

One way to think of gender communication is in terms of co-cultures or speech communities. A speech community is a “community sharing rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech” (Hymes, 1972, p. 54). Muted group theory (Kramerae, 1981) explains the social differentiation of gender and its corresponding language development. This develops on two levels: Women (and members of other subordinate groups) are not as free or as able as men are to say what they wish, when, and where they wish because the words and the norms for their use have been formulated by the dominant group, men. Women’s perceptions differ from those of men because women’s subordination means they experience life differently. However, the words and norms for speaking are not generated from or fitted to women’s experiences.

Sotirin (1990), suggests that “women use bitching to cope with troubles by reaffirming rapport; men address troubles as problems of status asymmetry and respond with solutions. The characterization minimizes the political import of women’s bitching; it’s not political but interpersonal; not transformative but cathartic” (p. 20). Examining the role of swearing in women’s friendships, Stapleton (2003) explains that swearing for women can function as a marker of trust between friends, a marker for the in-group versus the out-group, or as a means of negotiating and actively constructing that friendship identity.

Masculine Speech Community

Finally, men generally perform “minimal response cues” (Parlee, 1979). Response cues include saying, “mmm” or “go on” while nodding when listening to others. Fewer verbal indicators of sympathy, empathy, or understanding are likely to characterize this style of talk. While members of this speech community may be less likely to verbally express sympathy or other similar emotions, this is not the same as saying the members of the community do not feel such emotions. Both men and women feel and care for others in a variety of ways. The difference is how they are communicated, not if they are communicated.

Nonverbal Communication

Below we discuss six areas of nonverbal communication and the role of gender in each.

artifacts

Personal artifacts are objects that humans use to communicate self-identity. The jewelry we choose to wear (or not wear) communicates something about our tastes and social roles. Our clothes indicate a preference for certain designers or fashions or may be used to subvert dominant fashion trends and expectations.

Personal Space and Proxemics

As you recall, the study of space and our use of it (proxemics) has two important dimensions. First, we understand space as our personal space or the bubble in which we feel comfortable. When someone stands or sits too close to you, you may react by pulling away and describing the interaction as “they invaded my space.” Second, space can be thought of in terms of the kinds of physical spaces we have access to.

Haptics

Both men and women in our culture use touch to communicate with others. However, there are differences in both the types of touch used and in the messages conveyed (Lee & Guerrero, 2001). Women are more likely to use touch to express support or caring, such as touching someone on the shoulder or hugging them. Men are more likely to use touch to direct the actions of another. The relative power of men to women, coupled with a greater level of social power that can manifest itself in unwanted closeness or touching, has been linked with the problems of sexual harassment and domestic violence (Wood, 1993; 1993; 199; May 1998). However, men do not use touch only to show control. Men use touch to display affection and desire to romantic partners, to communicate caring and closeness to children, and to show support to friends. Since men are culturally sanctioned for showing caring through touch, especially to other men, a choice to do so is a conscious choice to challenge gender stereotypes for men. Another strategy for touch between men is to create contexts in which it is acceptable such as wrestling, play punching or fighting, or football.

Kinesics

Like haptics, men and women use body language differently and convey different meanings. Coinciding with cultural messages, men use their bodies to signal strength and control while women use theirs to communicate approachability and friendliness. Women, for example, smile more often than men and Caucasian women do this more than African-American women (Halberstadt & Saitta, 1987). Whether the cause is social or biological, men tend to take up more space and encroach on others' space more often than females.

Paralanguage

Consistent with a communication goal of maintaining and fostering relationships with others, women tend to use more listening noises or back-channeling. Such noises are “mmm,” “ah,” and “oh” and are often accompanied by nodding the head. Often they mean, “I am listening and following what you are saying. Keep going.” While men also make listening noises, they do so less frequently and often the meaning is “I agree.” Hopefully, you can see how this could cause some miscommunication between the sexes. Likewise, being aware of this difference can reduce miscommunication. When two of your authors (Laura and Scott) talk, Scott will often ask Laura, “are you saying ‘mm hmm’ because you agree, or are you just listening?” trying to determine which gendered approach to listening paralanguage Laura is employing.

Physical Attributes

A final area of nonverbal communication that has gendered implications is physical attributes—the most common one for gender being body size and shape

Research Methodology

A descriptive research method has been used in obtaining information about the study. The respondent consists of 10 women, 10 men, 10 gays, and 10 lesbians, an equal proportion was taken to have accurate data. The method used in gathering data is the use of a questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of the Respondents

The respondent consists of an equal proportion according to gender. The majority of the respondents are from 15 to 20 years old which is (75%) of the total population whereas only (25%) of them are 20 years old and above (Table 1).

Differences in gender communication styles

In this section, the study tries to differentiate the approach of each gender in a different situation that needs communication. Are there similarities and differences?

Respondents Self Expressions

The majority of the respondents are not reserved type because (65%) of them said that they prefer to share their problems with friends rather than the (35%) who said that they will keep it to themselves because they are the shy type. Looking at the table, gays are more expressive compared to the other types of gender because (90%) of them are willing to share their problems with their friends compared to males and females (50%) and lesbians (70%). With regards to discussing problems, men and women respond differently (Table 2),

Respondents Self Identity

The majority of the respondents see themselves as unique person, (and 60%) said that they have their own identity. Gays believes that they are a unique person (90%) while (70%) are women. Both gays and women are friendlier and easier to approach (Table 3).

Respondents' Manner of Personal Approach

The majority (82.5%) of the respondents will approach anyone in the crowd for them to have somebody to talk with and serve as a company compared to those who are the shy type and loner who prefers to stay in one place and choose to be alone which is (17.55%) of the respondents. (Personal space and proxemics) preferring to be alone may refer to as a personal space, a place where we feel comfortable, we do not want anyone to invade that place...our comfort zone.
(Table 4).

Respondents Manner of Approaching the Stranger

The patterns of talk in this table show the different approaches used by the different gender when starting a conversation. The common "hi, hello" were the words used in approaching a stranger no matter what gender they belong to (35%) but usually, gays use it very commonly as the table shows it, followed by the "hi, how are you" greetings (27.5%) commonly used by the female group., and the "can I help you" approach used by the lesbian group (12.5%) (Table 5).

Respondents' Topics that Usually Talk With Friends

Love life and love is the favorite topic that our respondents want to talk about, since the respondents are teenagers, this will be the favorite topic that corresponds to (17.5%) of the total respondents. The majority of the lesbian group prefers a topic about their love life, while gays love to talk about boys, men talk about their favorite sports, and women about their crushes (Table 6).

Respondents' Basis of what is Beautiful and Handsome

Beautiful and handsome physically is the basis of the respondents of what is beautiful and handsome (35%) followed by being simple means beautiful and handsome (15%) descent looking, sexy and smart and being a gentleman is the same proportion of (5%), and the remaining characteristics of being beautiful and handsome follows with (2.5%). (Table 7).

The respondents' favorite color.

Pink, which is known to be a feminine color came out to be the favorite of the respondents (25%), although the female and gay respondents said that their favorite color is pink which shows in table 8. (22.5%) is black, since our generation today prefers black as their color. Blue came out to be one of their favorite (15%), red follows (10%), and then green (7.5%). Several respondents choose purple (5%) and the remaining colors like violet, blue-green, gray, yellow-green, sky blue and maroon have an equal proportion of (2.5%). (Table 8)

Respondents' particular brands for clothing, bags, and shoes

The majority (60%) of the respondents do not consider the brand of their clothing, bags, and shoes, as long as it is in fashion, no matter what the brand does not matter, and they consider the price as their main factor in buying their stuff. (35%) of the respondents said that they are very particular about the brand because this signifies status symbol and quality. Only (5%) of the respondents said they do not care as long as it is comfortable to wear and it serves the purpose (Table 9).

Respondents Self Description

The respondents believe that they are handsome, with a pleasing personality, and are hot (17.5%). They are also God-fearing and religious (15%) and (10%) said that they are a jolly and friendly person. An equal proportion of (7.5%) said that they are fun to be with, snob, loner and shy, good friend, a small portion of (5%) said that they are a simple guy with a simple dream, hardworking, industrious and helpful and they are smart and intelligent. And the remaining (2.5%) of the respondents said that they are sporty, choir members, ambitious, happy-go-lucky, and tall (Table 10).

Conclusions

Gender differences in communication style are not new to us by any means, we are very aware of the different approaches each gender uses when they are communicating, although they use the same words the approach and how it is said are far different from each other.

All the findings in this study had shown that women and gays are more expressive in how they feel and are showy through actions and gestures. Men and lesbians are more reserved few in words and direct to the point. When they talk they mean business.

Gender in this study is friendly, they can express themselves and can share their problems with their friends. Due to their peers, the usual greeting used is "hi! and hello" these are the common words wherein they are grown, and female respondents prefer the "hi, how are you" in approaching strangers.

During the conversation, each gender has a certain topic to talk about. Love and their love life is the most favorite topic. But if we are going to dissect, men love to talk about their favorite sport, gays about boys, and women about their crushes.

Non-verbal communication is also important in communication, there are instances that one can judge or say about something a person by just merely looking at the way they dress, the brand of gadgets they use ... or shall we say their physical attributes, the artifacts they use and the way they project themselves in a situation.

The respondents believed that they are unique people and can easily approach anyone (kinesics) they are approachable and friendly. When asked about the basis of a person to be beautiful and handsome, they say that physically they should be beautiful and handsome, have the right attitude and of course must be sexy, smart and for men they must be a gentleman. When asked about how they described their selves (physical attributes) they are very confident to answer that they are handsome and hot for men and lesbians, and the women and gays humbly say that they have a pleasing personality and the majority of them said that they are God-fearing aside from being handsome, hot and with pleasing personality.

Pink for women and black for men is the usual color that signifies feminism and masculinity. The brand for clothing indicates a preference for certain designers or fashion, it symbolizes status in life, but in the study, the respondents said that they do not consider the brand of what they wear, what matter is that as long as they are comfortable with what they wear it would just be fine. It is how they carry themselves and as long as they are in fashion and updated.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered to the following:

1. To the parents – for our children not to be grown as they are female or male, we should treat them as equals inside the house, doing the household chores should not be specified who will do it and who will not. In our own home is where our children are trained and learned and from there we should already start to nurture them as equals in all aspects. We should teach our children to voice out their rights and to express themselves whether they are boys or girls. As the saying “everything starts in the home.”
2. To community – while our society is slowly accepting the existence of the transgender, there are still instances that they are being discriminated against in some ways. It is also the community that classifies what is the right place for women and men, jobs, skills, and proper way of talking are being classified by the community. It is the community now that will accept freely the equality of gender, not necessarily saying that "you are a girl that you are not allowed to talk first, " or "you are a girl that you should not be wearing such a thing," and the like.
3. To the future researcher - given that this study provides a basis for concluding that males and females differ in their communication style, a further study should be made to measure the difference for the community to understand and give consideration if ever they will encounter difficulty in communicating of a certain gender and be sensitive enough to understand situations.

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Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents

CHARACTERISTICS	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Age		
20 and above	10	25
15-20	30	75
10-15	0	0
Total	40	100%
Gender		
Men	10	25
Women	10	25
Gay	10	25
Lesbian	10	25
Total	40	100%

Table 2. (Personal talk) Respondents Self Expressions

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	f	%
Keep it to myself	5	5	1	3	14	35
Share it with friends	5	5	9	7	26	65
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 3. (Kinesics) Respondents Self Identity

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	f	%
Similar to others	3	5	1	7	16	40
Unique person	7	5	9	3	24	60
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 4. (Kinesics) Respondent's Manner of Personal Approach

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	f	%
Approach anyone	9	9	9	6	33	82.5
Stay in one place and prefer to be alone	1	1	1	4	7	17.5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 5. (Personal talk) Respondents Manner of Approaching the Stranger

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	f	%
Hi, how are you	6	2		3	11	27.5
May I know your name?				3	3	7.5
Can I help you?	1			4	5	12.5
Excuse me....		1			1	2.5
Hi, where are you from?		2			2	5
Hi, hello...	3	2	9		14	35
Hi! I am _____ may I know your name?		2			2	5
Can I ask a question?		1			1	2.5
Just wear a big smile			1		1	2.5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 6. (Patterns of talk) Respondents' Topics that Usually Talk With Friends

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	F	%
Course and subject	1			1	2	5
Love life/ love	1			6	7	17.5
Foods	1			1	2	5
Places				1	1	2.5
Our past/memories				1	1	2.5
Life's experiences		1			1	2.5

Family problems		1			1	2.5
Activities in school		1			1	2.5
Jokes		1			1	2.5
Plans		1			1	2.5
Favorite sport		5			5	12.5
Anything that comes to our mind			1		1	2.2
Trending in social media			1		1	2.5
Virginity			1		1	2.5
Sex life			1		1	2.5
Boys			5		5	12.5
Future	1				1	2.5
Likes and dislikes	1				1	2.5
Books	1				1	2.5
Religion	1				1	2.5
Crushes	2				2	5
Family	1				1	2.5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 7. (Physical attributes) Respondents' Basis of what is Beautiful and Handsome

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	F	%
Descent looking				2	2	5
Good behavior				1	1	2.5
Right attitude	1		1	1	3	7.5
Simple	1		3	2	6	15
Loving				1	1	2.5
Beautiful/handsome physically	3	3	5	3	14	35
Good grooming		1			1	2.5
Respectful		1			1	2.5
Intelligent		1			1	2.5
Sexy and smart		2			2	5
Talented		1			1	2.5
Humble		1			1	2.5
Responsible			1		1	2.5
Good heart	1				1	2.5
Confident	1				1	2.5

Strong personality	1				1	2.5
gentleman	2				2	5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 8. (Artifacts) The respondents' favorite color.

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	F	%
Green	1			2	3	7.5
Black		4	1	4	9	22.5
Violet				1	1	2.5
Blue	1	2	1	2	6	15
Pink	4	1	4	1	10	25
Blue-green		1			1	2.5
Gray		1			1	2.5
Red		1	3		4	10
Yellow-green			1		1	2.5
Sky blue	1				1	2.5
Purple	2				2	5
Maroon	1				1	2.5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 9. (Artifacts) Are you very particular with branded clothing, bags, and shoes?

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	F	%
Yes	1	3	6	4	14	35
No	9	7	2	6	24	60
You just do not care			2		2	5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

Table 10. (Physical attributes) Please describe yourself

CHARACTERISTICS	WOMEN	MEN	GAY	LESBIAN	F	%
Simple guy with a simple dream		1	1		2	5
Hardworking Industrious/ helpful		2			2	5

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Religious person/Godfearing		1		5	6	15
Tall		1			1	2.5
Handsome/pleasing personality/ hot	1	4	2		7	17.5
Smart/intelligent	1	1			2	5
Talkative and approachable	2		1		3	7.5
Good friend			1	2	3	7.5
Jolly person & friendly	1		3		4	10
Loner/shy/suplada	1		2		3	7.5
Happy and go lucky	1				1	2.5
ambitious	1				1	2.5
Choir member	1				1	2.5
Sporty	1				1	2.5
Fun to be with				3	3	7.5
TOTAL	10	10	10	10	40	100

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