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INCONSISTENT VERBAL-NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
OF REGARD AS A FUNCTION OF COUNSELOR RESPONSE
ORIENTATION.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, PH.D., 1979

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

INCONSISTENT VERBAL-NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
OF REGARD AS A FUNCTION OF
COUNSELOR RESPONSE ORIENTATION

A DISSERTATION
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

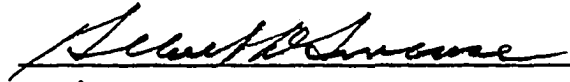
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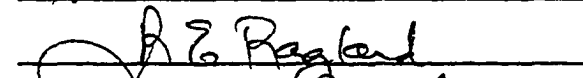
1979

INCONSISTENT VERBAL-NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
OF REGARD AS A FUNCTION OF
COUNSELOR RESPONSE ORIENTATION

APPROVED BY



Abraham Scler



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DISSENTATION COMMITTEE

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ABSTRACT

The relative impact of the nonverbal channel during the inconsistent verbal/nonverbal communication of counselor regard to client was investigated. Two independent variables, verbal/nonverbal message and counselor response orientation, were incorporated into a 4 x 3 ANOVA design. One hundred and twenty subjects, assigned to 12 independent groups, viewed video-tapes of an analogue counseling session that portrayed the different counselor message/response orientation conditions. After viewing the tapes, the subjects rated the counselor on level of counselor regard for client and on counselor effectiveness. Although previous research has indicated the dominance of the nonverbal component of an inconsistent message, the results did not confirm the overall superordinancy of the nonverbal channel across all levels of response orientation. An interactive relationship was found, however, with the nonverbal channel functioning relatively more impactfully at the confrontive level of orientation. This finding was considered in terms of the differential communication decoding process, and stress induced reduction of cue utilization. Implications for counselor training and practice were discussed.

INCONSISTENT VERBAL-NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION
OF REGARD AS A FUNCTION OF
COUNSELOR RESPONSE ORIENTATION

Introduction

It seems to be a relatively common assumption among theorists and counselors alike that the interaction between verbal and nonverbal cues is a very important part of the overall communication process. Nevertheless, much of the training literature in the counseling field (Egan, 1975; Hackney & Nye, 1973; Delaney & Eisenberg, 1972), as well as actual training programs (Heimann & Heimann, 1972; Colwell, Note 1) seem to have largely associated the concept of communication with a verbal-linguistic model, evidenced by an emphasis on such factors as verbal responses and reinforcement, as well as the utilization of good verbal and listening skills.

Only in the last few years have researchers begun to explore the process of inconsistent communication within the counseling-therapy situation. Several of these studies have demonstrated the considerable impact of the nonverbal channel on the communication process in counseling. Haase and Tepper (1972) found that the nonverbal channels accounted for more than twice as much variance in judged counselor empathy than did the verbal channel. Graves and Robinson (1976) found that inconsistent counselor messages were associated with

greater interpersonal distances, as well as lower ratings of counselor genuineness.

In addition to underscoring the substantial impact of nonverbal messages, these studies also emphasize the importance of counselor congruence in the verbal and nonverbal channels. Both Haase and Tepper (1972) and Graves and Robinson (1976) seem to be making the following assumptions about the decoding process of inconsistent messages: (a) inconsistent verbal-nonverbal components of a message are decoded separately, (b) there is no orderly, functional relationship between the two components of an inconsistent message, and (c) these factors generate conflict and confusion in the mind of the decoder of the message. Therefore, according to these researchers, the lack of verbal-nonverbal congruence by the counselor may lead to lessened rapport, genuineness, and effectiveness in counseling.

On the other hand, Mehrabian, et al., report findings which suggest a somewhat different interpretation of the decoding process (Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967; Mehrabian, 1970). Mehrabian (1970) has maintained that in simultaneously inconsistent verbal-nonverbal messages it is the nonverbal component that determines whether the message is decoded as a positive or negative one, and that all inconsistent messages can be classified into one of these two categories. Mehrabian and Wiener (1967) report that when the vocal channel (intonation cues) was inconsistent with the explicit verbal channel, the total attitude communicated was delivered by the vocal channel.

These researchers conclude that the more dominant nonverbal component in a two-channel communication determines the meaning of an inconsistent communication.

Mehrabian (1970) has also researched the possibility of inconsistent messages functioning communicatively in ways which are not possible for consistent messages to function. He found that the explicit verbal component functions to convey attitudes toward the specific behaviors of the addressee, while the nonverbal component functions to convey attitudes toward the addressee's deeper sense of self. Mehrabian also found that inconsistent messages were more preferred in informal than formal situations.

If the nonverbal channel differentially impacts the addressee's sense of self or person, then the nonverbal channel may be an intrinsically more valid indicator about how an individual is regarding a relationship than is the verbal component (Watzlawick, 1967). This factor could help explain the apparent dominance of the nonverbal channel in the attitude communication studies reported above. From this point of view, it may follow that lack of congruence in the verbal-nonverbal channels may not be intrinsically confusing or conflictual to the decoder, and may well function as a more intimate form of attitude communication (Mehrabian, 1970).

Furthermore, the postulate of nonverbal superordinancy raises the question of a possible relationship between the relative dominance of the nonverbal channel and counselor response orientation. Several writers have stated that it is

important for a counselor to be strategic and selective in his utilization of responses, the assumption being that various response modalities have a differential impact on how the client experiences himself in counseling (Delaney & Eisenberg, 1972; Egan, 1975; Hackney & Nye, 1973; Truax & Carkhuff, 1967). Therefore, if the nonverbal channel conveys evaluative attitudes to the client's more intimate sense of self, it may follow that the magnitude of the impact of the nonverbal component would vary with the particular kind of response employed, depending on how directly the response involves the client's deeper sense of self.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the role of the nonverbal channel in the inconsistent communication of counselor regard to client. Specifically, with respect to a counseling situation, the following questions were asked:

1. When a counselor communicates inconsistent attitudes simultaneously in the verbal and nonverbal channels, does the nonverbal channel function superordinately in the decoding process, and thereby determine an overall positive or negative attitude that is communicated to the client?

2. When a counselor communicates inconsistent verbal-nonverbal messages, does the magnitude of the impact of the nonverbal channel vary with the orientation of counselor response, depending on how directly the response involves the client's sense of self or person?

Method

Subjects

The subjects consisted of 120 undergraduate students who were currently enrolled in educational psychology courses at the University of Oklahoma, with females comprising 75% of this group. The subjects ranged from 19 to 37 years of age.

Design

Two independent variables, verbal/nonverbal counselor message and counselor response orientation, were incorporated into a 4 x 3 ANOVA design. The first independent variable, verbal-nonverbal message, included the following levels: (a) verbal positive-nonverbal negative (V+/NV-), (b) verbal negative-nonverbal positive (V-/NV+), (c) verbal positive-nonverbal positive (V+/NV+), and (d) verbal negative-nonverbal negative (V-/NV-). The verbal component of counselor message was defined as either positive verbal statements that convey a counselor's approval of client and a willingness to accept his problem, or negative verbal statements that indicate a basic disapproval of the client and his problem. For constructing the nonverbal conditions, facial expression and vocal intonation cues were used, as these cues have been demonstrated to be important nonverbal dimensions in previous research (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967; Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967). Specifically, positive nonverbal behaviors included the three

facial expressions of slight smiling, affirmative head nod, and constant eye contact, as well as approving vocal intonation. Negative nonverbal behaviors included slight frowning, infrequent eye contact, and negative head nod, as well as disapproving vocal intonation.

The second independent variable, counselor response orientation, was operationally defined in the following way: (a) cognitive orientation; a paraphrase by the counselor of the cognitive content present in the client's statement, (b) affective orientation; a paraphrase by the counselor of the feeling related material in the client's statement, and (c) confrontive orientation; a counselor response that points to a contradiction, rationalization, or misinterpretation by the client.

Stimulus Materials

Twelve five minute video-tapes of a simulated counselor-client dyad were constructed to portray the different counselor message/response orientation conditions. Two female actresses were used for the counselor-client roles in all twelve video-tapes. Written scripts were constructed for both roles, with the client's script remaining constant for all twelve conditions. Ten response exchanges were included in each five minute tape, with the counselor displaying either the positive or negative nonverbal cues while simultaneously verbalizing either the cognitive, affective, or confrontive responses. The simulated counselor had six one-hour practice sessions prior to the actual video-taping, in which she was trained to manipulate

her verbal and nonverbal behavior to be in accordance with the requirements of each of the twelve stimulus conditions. The scripted problem dealt with the simulated client's depression over the loss of a boyfriend.

Validation of Stimulus Materials

The twelve video-tape treatment conditions were rated independently by four doctoral level students in Counseling Psychology. The judges were asked to rate both the verbal and nonverbal conditions for each tape on two separate scales ranging from a positive (+) 5 to a negative (-) 5. Criteria for validation required that all four judges make their evaluations in the correct direction (positive or negative), and that a correct mean score of either +3 or -3 be achieved for each condition on both the verbal and nonverbal dimensions.

Procedure

The twelve stimulus conditions were randomly assigned to independent experimental groups, with each group containing 10 subjects. The subjects were told that they were going to watch a short video-tape of a counselor working with a client, and were asked to try and imagine being in the client's place, while working on a problem of similar significance to them. Following the viewing of the tape, the subjects were instructed to complete the Level of Regard Sub-Scale of the Relationship Inventory, and the Counselor Effectiveness Scale. After completing the experiment, the subjects were debriefed.

Hypotheses

1. Since the nonverbal component of an inconsistent message is said to dominate the verbal component, a positive nonverbal inconsistent message (V-/NV+) will yield a significantly higher decoding score than will the negative nonverbal inconsistent condition (V+/NV-).

2. There will be an interactive relationship between the two inconsistent message conditions (V-/NV+, V+/NV-) and the orientation of counselor response. More specifically, the difference between these two conditions will increase from the cognitive, to affective, to confrontive levels of orientation, with the positive nonverbal inconsistent message (V-/NV+) yielding significantly higher scores at each level of orientation.

3. Since the nonverbal component of an inconsistent message is said to dominate the decoding process, the comparison between the consistent and the inconsistent conditions (i.e., V+/NV+ with V-/NV+, and V-/NV- with V+/NV-) will not yield significant differences.

For hypothesis 1 and 2, an alpha level of .05 was adopted. However, since the null was predicted from the theory base, an alpha level of .10 was adopted for hypothesis 3, in order to avoid capitalizing an error variance.

Dependent Measures

Two dependent measures were recorded: (a) subject perception of counselor's attitude of regard for the client, as

measured by the Level of Regard Sub-Scale of the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (Barrett-Lennard, Note 2), and (b) subject perception of counselor effectiveness, as measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Scale (Ivey, 1978). A 4 x 3 ANOVA design was used to analyze the scores on both dependent measures.

Results

A factorial analysis of variance was performed on the scores of each dependent measure. On the level of regard ratings (LR), a significant main effect for verbal-nonverbal message was found, $F(3,108) = 36.0$, $p < .001$, as well as a significant interaction between verbal-nonverbal message and response orientation, $F(6,108) = 3.25$, $p < .05$ (see Table 1).

For the second dependent measure, counselor effectiveness ratings (ER), a significant main effect for verbal-nonverbal message was also found, $F(3,108) = 24.5$, $p < .001$, along with an accompanying significant interaction between verbal-nonverbal message and response orientation, $F(6,108) = 2.25$, $p < .05$ (see Table 2). Since the significant main effects found in the analysis were accompanied by significant interactions, the Dunnized Tukey technique (Price, et al., Note 3) was used to make more specific post-hoc comparisons.

The first hypothesis predicted the dominance of the positive nonverbal inconsistent condition (V-/NV+) over the negative nonverbal inconsistent condition (V+/NV-) for all three levels of response orientation. For the LR scores, this

Table 1

Analysis of Variance
of Level of Regard Scores

SOURCE	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Counselor Message (M)	26088.1	3	8696.3	36.0**
Orientation (O)	130.11	2	65.0	0.27
M x O	4705.5	6	784.2	3.25*
Error	26090.9	108	241.6	

* $p \leq .01$

** $p < .001$

Table 2

Analysis of Variance
of Counselor Effectiveness Scores

SOURCE	<u>SS</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>
Counselor Message (M)	39039.20	3	13013.06	24.49**
Orientation (O)	2226.51	2	1113.25	2.12
M x O	8039.55	6	1339.92	2.52*
Error	57378.60	108	531.28	

* $p < .05$

** $p < .001$

prediction did not hold, as no significant main effect was found between these two conditions. Specific cell mean comparisons revealed that the V-/NV+ condition did yield significantly higher scores than did the V+/NV- condition at the confrontive level ($p < .05$), but not at the cognitive or affective levels (see Figure 1). Similarly for the ER ratings, the V-/NV+ conditions resulted in significantly higher scores than did the V+/NV- condition at the confrontive level of orientation ($p < .05$), but not at the cognitive or affective level (see Figure 2). Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations for all 12 experimental groups.

Since the post-hoc analysis of the LR scores revealed a significant difference between the V-/NV+ condition and the V+/NV- condition at the confrontive level but not at the other two levels, hypothesis 2, which predicted an interactive relationship between the two inconsistent message conditions and response orientation, was partially confirmed. Since significance was not found between these two conditions at either of the other levels of orientation, the portion of hypothesis 2 predicting an increase in the superiority of the V-/NV+ condition proceeding from the cognitive to the affective level was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 predicted no significant difference between the positive consistent and positive nonverbal inconsistent conditions (V+/NV+ and V-/NV+) or between the negative consistent and negative nonverbal inconsistent conditions (V-/NV- and V+/NV-). Although the predicted lack of difference in LR

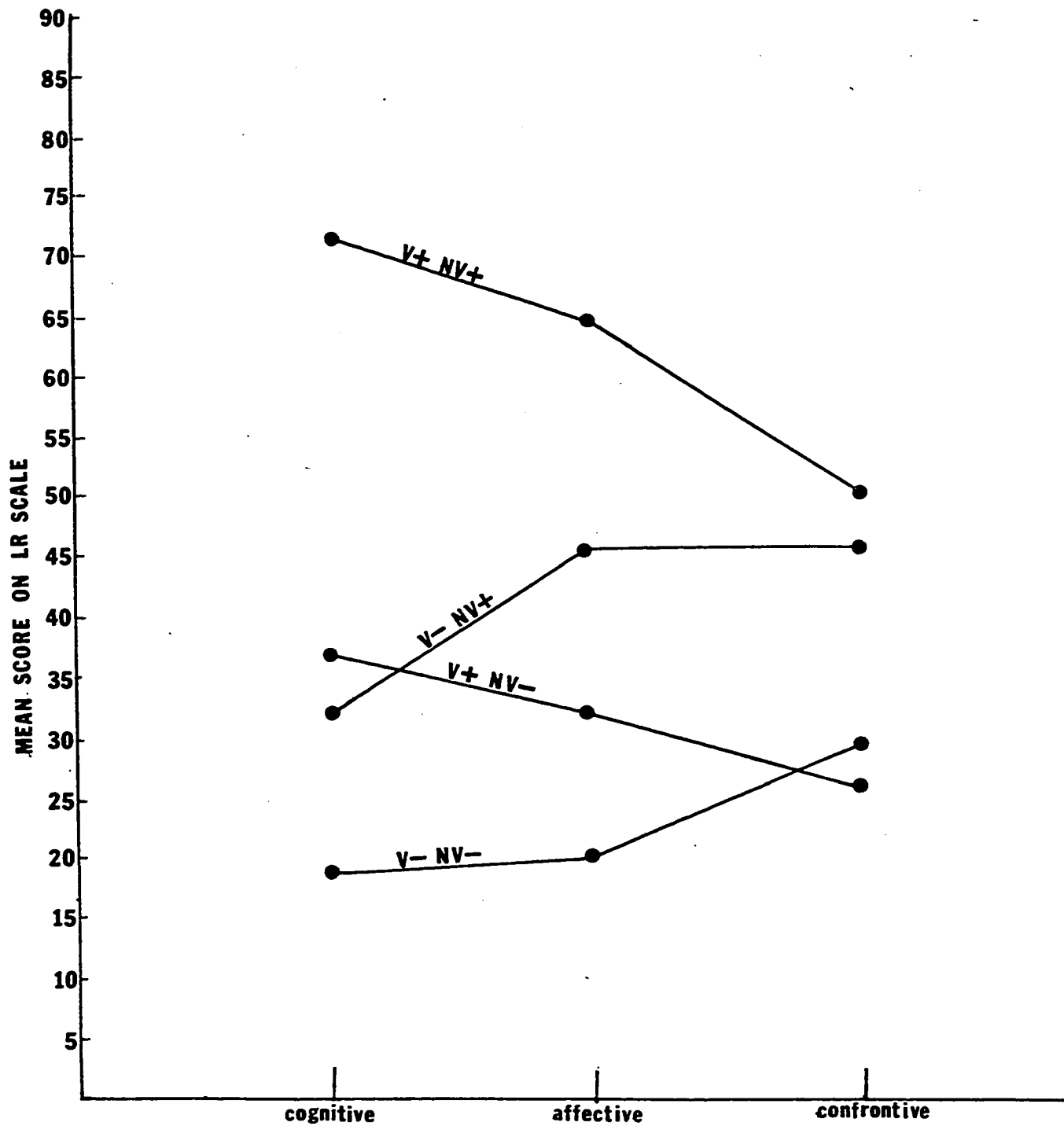
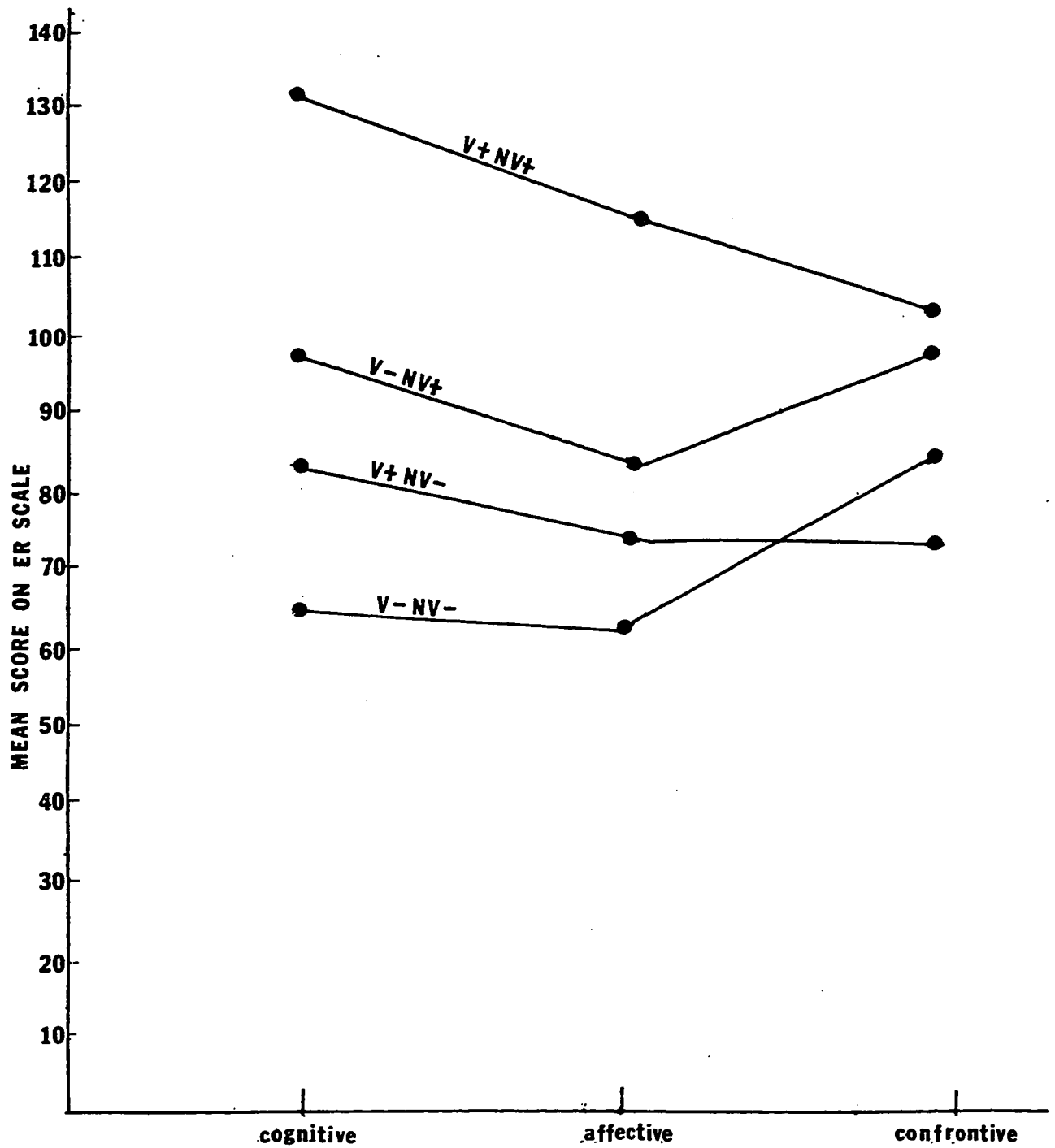


FIGURE 1 COUNSELOR MESSAGE X RESPONSE ORIENTATION
FOR REGARD RATINGS



**FIGURE 2 COUNSELOR MESSAGE X RESPONSE ORIENTATION
FOR EFFECTIVENESS
RATINGS**

Table 3
Means and Standard Deviations
for Counselor Message Conditions
and Levels of Response Orientation
on LR and ER Ratings

COUNSELOR MESSAGE	RESPONSE ORIENTATION					
	COGNITIVE		AFFECTIVE		CONFRONTIVE	
	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}	SD
<u>LR Scale</u>						
V+/NV-	72.3	16.1	65.3	11.9	51.3	23.7
V-/NV+	23.3	17.8	46.5	15.2	45.7	16.2
V+/NV-	36.0	18.3	33.5	14.4	27.5	11.1
V-/NV-	18.6	11.6	20.2	9.5	30.9	14.7
<u>ER Scale</u>						
V+/NV+	134.1	22.6	118.1	18.4	106.6	27.3
V-/NV+	97.4	24.4	85.4	25.0	101.0	21.8
V+/NV-	87.7	35.1	73.5	16.1	73.4	20.7
N-/NV=	65.2	13.0	65.9	10.8	89.3	29.2

scores occurred at the confrontive level, the hypothesis was not supported overall. That is, at the cognitive level, contrary to the hypothesis, the V+/NV+ condition yielded a significantly higher score than did the V-/NV+ condition ($p < .10$), and the V+/NV- condition resulted in a significantly higher score than did the V-/NV- condition ($p < .10$). The V+/NV+ condition also yielded a significantly higher score than did the V-/NV+ condition ($p < .10$) at the affective level, while the difference between the V+/NV- condition and the V-/NV- condition fell just short of significance (see Figure 1).

A similar pattern was found for the ER data (see Figure 2). The comparison of the positive consistent and positive nonverbal inconsistent conditions (V+/NV+ and V-/NV+) and the comparison of the negative consistent and negative nonverbal inconsistent conditions (V-/NV- and V+/NV-) revealed no significant differences at the confrontive level, but this was not the case at the cognitive and affective levels of orientation.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was computed between the LR and ER ratings. A correlation of +.82 was found, indicating considerable overlap between these two measures. Given this amount of shared variance, the strong similarity of the overall patterns depicted in Figures I and II is not surprising.

Discussion

Of the two dependent measures, the Level of Regard Sub-Scale (LR) is more directly related to the theoretical postulates being tested by the hypothesis of this study, as this

scale purports to measure the perception of attitude being sent from communicator to addressee. Therefore, the basic test of Mehrabian's decoding theory will involve this dependent measure. However, since researchers (Haase & Tepper, 1972; Graves & Robinson, 1976) have assumed the communication of such attitudes is strongly related to the counselor's overall effectiveness, the second dependent measure, the Counselor Effectiveness Scale (ER), was also included in the design.

With respect to the LR data, it was hypothesized, based on Mehrabian's theory, that the non-verbal channel would be functionally dominant in an inconsistent communication of counselor regard. The results reported above, however, only partially support this view of the decoding process. The comparison of the two conditions where the counselor was communicating inconsistently revealed the dominance of the V-/NV+ condition (over V+/NV-) at the confrontive level, but not at the cognitive or affective levels of orientation. Therefore, this finding does not confirm the generalized superordinancy of the nonverbal channel across various response orientations.

The comparison of the consistent with the inconsistent conditions adds further evidence that the nonverbal channel does not unconditionally dominate the decoding process of inconsistent messages. Although the predictions of hypothesis 3 were substantiated at the confrontive level of orientation, the significantly higher ratings of the V+/NV+ condition over the V-/NV+ condition at the cognitive and affective levels

fails to support the postulate of an overall, superordinate nonverbal process.

The findings do, however, indicate an interactive relationship between the relative impact of the nonverbal channel and the counselor's response orientation (hypothesis 2). That is, while the counselor was confronting the client, the V-/NV+ condition resulted in significantly higher LR scores than the V+/NV- condition, whereas differences between these two message conditions were not significant for the other two counselor orientations. This overall pattern indicates that the relative impact of the nonverbal component may best be conceptualized in conditional terms, and as contingent upon the particular kind of response orientation being used by the counselor.

The data shown in Figure 1 also illustrates the importance of the nonverbal channel to the overall communication process. Although not explicitly hypothesized, the comparison between the V+/NV+ and V+/NV- conditions indicates the strong nonverbal influence on the decoding process, as the V+/NV+ condition yielded significantly higher LR scores at all three levels of response orientation.

A possible explanation for the interaction findings is that the counselor's use of the confrontive orientation more directly involves the client's sense of person or self. Further assuming that the nonverbal channel conveys attitudinal elements more directly to the client's intimate sense of self than does the verbal channel, the relatively greater impact

of the nonverbal channel with the confrontive orientation logically follows.

An alternative theoretical context in which to interpret present findings is that of reduced cue utilization with increased arousal of the organism (Easterbrook, 1959). That is, if the confrontive orientation is associated with increased arousal, then the verbal cues can be viewed as those utilized to a lesser degree.

The analysis of the counselor effectiveness ratings (ER) revealed an overall pattern similar to the one described above for the LR ratings (see Figure 2). Researchers in the counseling field (Haase and Tepper, 1972; Graves and Robinson, 1976) have asserted the importance of verbal/nonverbal congruence to perceived counselor effectiveness, and examination of Figure II shows a pattern of ratings that tends to support this view. The positive congruent condition (V+/NV+) did, in general, lead to significantly higher ratings of counselor effectiveness, as the V+/NV+ condition was significantly higher than the other message conditions at the cognitive and affective levels of orientation, though it did not retain significance at the confrontive level.

Several implications for counselor training and practice stem directly from the above discussion. Firstly, the findings of this study indicate that it is important for a counselor to be congruent as to the verbal and nonverbal channels while communicating with a client. Both the LR and ER data support the generally accepted desirability of counselor congruence. Furthermore, it would seem that developing skill in

understanding, identifying, and strategically implementing nonverbal cues should be an important part of counselor training programs, particularly when training counselors in the use of client confrontation. Results of this study specifically suggest that it is especially important for the counselor, when confronting or using responses involving intimate or stressful material, to be keenly aware of what he is communicating to the client nonverbally.

Limitations of the present findings include recognition that this was an analogue study. Other limiting factors are the brevity of the stimulus tapes, the use of only one simulated problem, the use of a single pair of same-sex actors, and a sample obtained exclusively from a university population.

Although each of the above methodological limitations provides a basis for further study, the investigation of message decoding under explicitly defined levels of arousal represents a likely theoretical direction for continued research. Moreover, further research could more fully explore the role of positive nonverbal inconsistent communication during the confrontation process. Mehrabian (1970) has noted that positive nonverbal inconsistent messages are often used as a humorous form of expression. It is possible that a positive nonverbal inconsistent message that is being used in a confrontive situation may have the capacity to function dually, by generating a humorous context while at

the same time disapproving of specific behaviors of the counselee. This process may be close to what Haley (1963) has called the beneficial double-bind in therapy, where the therapist intentionally and strategically uses double messages to eliminate the secondary gain associated with maladaptive behaviors.

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APPENDIX A
PROSPECTUS

Problem Statement

Over the last few years researchers have become increasingly aware of the importance of nonverbal behavior in emotional attitude communication. In fact, Mehrabian (1968, 1970) has maintained that in simultaneously inconsistent verbal/nonverbal messages it is the nonverbal component that determines whether the message is decoded as a positive or negative one, and that all inconsistent verbal/nonverbal messages can be classified into one of these two categories (pos. or neg.).

Given the fact that in most communication situations verbal and nonverbal cues occur together, the understanding of attitude communication necessitates the investigation of the interactive effects of such cues. Specifically, in respect to a counseling situation, the following questions can be asked:

1. When a counselor communicates inconsistent attitudes simultaneously in the verbal and nonverbal channels, does the nonverbal channel function superordinately to the verbal channel in the decoding process, and thereby determine an overall positive or negative attitude that is communicated to the client?

2. Assuming the dominance of the nonverbal channel, is there an interactive relationship between the magnitude of the impact of the nonverbal component (on attitude decoded) and the particular orientation of counselor response? In

other words, does the overall impact of the nonverbal channel depend upon whether the counselor is using a response that is cognitive (restatement), affective (reflection), or confrontative (confrontation) in orientation?

This research problem is a viable one for both theoretical and practical reasons. On a theoretical level, researching this problem will allow empirical test of established communications theory. Mehrabian's theorization of the primacy of the nonverbal channel will provide a clear theoretical base that will generate the formulation of hypotheses and provide the context for the interpretation of the results.

There are also practical reasons for investigating this problem. If the nonverbal component is superordinate to the verbal component in inconsistent attitude communication, then it is of obvious importance that the counselor-therapist be especially aware of what kinds of attitudes he may be sending to the client nonverbally. To de-emphasize or ignore the importance of the nonverbal channel in counselor training and practice may well lead to the attenuation of counselor effectiveness, and eventuate in the communication of unintended and deleterious attitudes to the client. Therefore, the investigation of this problem has relevance for both counselor education and practice.

This study will also allow a closer analysis of possible relationships between inconsistent communication and specific counselor response modalities. If Mehrabian's (1970) finding

that the nonverbal component conveys an evaluative attitude toward the addressee's sense of person is correct, then it may follow that the magnitude of the impact of the dominant nonverbal channel would vary with the kind of counselor response orientation, and how directly the response involves the client's more intimate sense of self.

If an inconsistent message impacts differentially relative to the particular kind of response orientation, then the understanding of this process could allow the counselor greater awareness and control over the implicit attitudes he may be sending to the client nonverbally.

Review of Literature and Rationale of Study

Introduction

It seems to be a common assumption among theorists and counselors alike that the interaction between verbal and nonverbal cues is a very important part of the overall communication process. Nevertheless, most counselor/therapist training programs have largely associated the concept of communication with a verbal-linguistic model, evidenced by an emphasis on such factors as verbal responses and verbal reinforcement, as well as the development of good verbal and listening skills (Heimann & Heimann, 1972; Colwell, 1968).

Over the last few years, however, evidence has continued to accumulate indicating the importance of nonverbal forms of information sharing. Studies from the various fields of communications, anthropology, and social psychology all seem

to indicate that there is a constant interplay between verbal and nonverbal cues, and that whatever an individual is trying to say verbally, emotions and attitudes are also projected as part of the overall communication (Argyle, 1972; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1972; Key, 1975).

Key (1975) has argued that in order to fully understand verbal or nonverbal communication, it is necessary to study them as they function in relation to one another. The relationship of verbal to nonverbal communication can be conceptualized on a number of levels, and in terms of different communicative functions. Ekman and Friesen (1969), in conceptualizing the relation of the nonverbal act to language, postulate that nonverbal cues can repeat, illustrate, accent, or contradict the verbal message. Therefore, from Ekman and Friesen's point of view, nonverbal acts can function differentially relative to verbal behavior, depending upon the contingencies of a given communication situation.

There has been very little research in the counseling field that has explored the relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication. The present writer agrees with Key (1975), that a full understanding of nonverbal communication demands that it be studied in relation to verbal communication, and the present study was conceptualized within this theoretical context. Specifically, the present investigation wished to focus on the fourth possibility in Ekman and Friesen's typology; that is, those communicative situations

in which the nonverbal cues contradict the verbal cues, and by what process or principle such incongruous messages are communicated.

The following review will consider representative non-verbal research that indicates the fundamental and differential role played by nonverbal behavior in the communication of emotional attitude, thereby establishing a basis for examining how these nonverbal behaviors function in relation to verbal behavior. The first part of the review will concern itself with some of the issues important to nonverbal research in general, and offer an overview of the three basic areas of proxemics, paralanguage, and kinesics. The second part will take a more focused look at the literature providing the theoretical rationale for the present study, including research in the area of inconsistent verbal-nonverbal communication, and a review of the concept of differential counselor response.

General Issues in Nonverbal Research

There are some important issues that exist in nonverbal communication research, relating to some fundamental differences in how nonverbal communication has been conceptualized and defined. It is important for anyone reading the nonverbal research literature to have some perspective on these issues, as it will allow a more meaningful context for the consideration of the varied and often disparate studies common to non-verbal research.

Conceptualization of Nonverbal Research

Nonverbal communication has been conceptualized from a "narrow view" and a "broad view" (Gladstein, 1972), and these two approaches make very different presuppositions about the nature of nonverbal communication.

Birdwhistell (1970) can be thought of as representing the "broad" cultural school, conceptualizing nonverbal communication as all encompassing and as often unintentional behavior. Birdwhistell maintains that nonverbal communication can best be studied similar to the way verbal communication is studied, by identifying nonverbal behaviors of all kind and then establishing the basic structural units for analysis. According to this researcher, it is not possible to really know the substantive meaning of any particular nonverbal behavior unless it is understood within the total context of the action.

Watzlawick, Deavin and Jackson (1967) and Scheflen (1965, 1967) also adopt a concept of nonverbal communication that emphasizes the entire social context. For these writers communication can result from any behavior occurring in the presence of another, and the nature of the communication is largely determined by the social context surrounding the behavior.

On the other hand, Wiener, et al., (1972), and McKay (1972) both believe that nonverbal communication studies should restrict themselves to a much narrower definition of communication that emphasizes intentionality and includes: (a) the

transmitting subject (encoder), (b) the receiving subject (decoder), and (c) the behaviors by which the encoder communicates with the decoder (code). According to Wiener, et al., a strictly defined communication model is seldom used:

Instead, a review of the extensive literature in this area indicates that most investigations seem to be concerned with the significance which some observer can attribute to a particular behavior; that is, the emphasis seems to be primarily on decoding. Even given a decoding approach, there is little consensus about any set of behaviors which can be considered to serve communication functions, and the literature consists, for the most part, of a fragmented and unsystematic array of reports, with almost any conceivable behavior considered by one or another investigator to have some communicative significance (1972, p. 186).

These writers believe that most researchers have implicitly taken a decoding perspective in their studies, and seem to assume that if an observer makes an inference about an individual from his behavior, then communication has taken place. According to Wiener, such writers as Birdwhistell (1970), Scheflen (1965), and Waslawick et al., (1967), have confused the notion of sign with that of communication. For Wiener, sign implies that an observer of another person's nonverbal act has made an inference based upon that act; while communication implies a specific code, an encoder making something

public via the code, and a decoder who responds systematically to the same code.

Wiener, et al., have made explicit a very important issue in nonverbal research. Investigators have proceeded from very different presuppositions regarding the nature of nonverbal communication, making it extremely difficult to synthesize and integrate the disparate and seemingly contradictory studies. A large part of this problem extends from basic definitional differences. Mehrabian (1972) states that studies in nonverbal communication will obtain different results, depending on whether the researcher is studying the encoding or decoding process. Gladstein (1972) states that it is imperative that researchers carry out encoding as well as decoding studies, and that research in counseling/psychotherapy should be concerned with the counselor's sending and receiving as well as the client's sending and receiving of nonverbal communication.

Even though researchers have taken very different approaches to the investigation of nonverbal communication, there seems to be basic agreement concerning the areas to be included as nonverbal communication. Gladstein (1972), after reviewing nonverbal research over a period of twenty-six years, concludes that the majority of researchers have basically limited themselves to the study of proxemics (distance, posturing, orientation), paralanguage (noncontent aspects of speech), and kinesics (body movement). These three areas will be more completely defined later in this paper.

Function of Nonverbal Communication

Researchers have also taken different approaches to understanding the functions of nonverbal communication, and how a researcher conceptualizes function is closely related to his larger view of the nature and origins of nonverbal communication.

Schefflen (1972) and Birdwhistell (1970) have both emphasized the broad, cultural approach to nonverbal communication, and they basically see nonverbal behavior as interacting with and as supplemental to verbal communication. For these researchers, it is important to recognize total patterns of communication, and such patterns are to be understood holistically, rather than isolating differential functions for the verbal and nonverbal components.

Other writers (Argyle, 1972; Ekman & Friesen, 1966, 1969), emphasize biological origins as well as cultural origins, and have proposed that nonverbal communication can function differentially in certain situations. Argyle (1972) suggests that there are three distinct kinds of nonverbal communication that represent different origins and functions; nonverbal communication that communicates attitudes and emotions and help manage social situations, nonverbal communication that supports and complements verbal communication, and nonverbal communication that functions to replace language.

In a similar vein, Ekman & Friesen (1966) summarized the following functions of nonverbal communication, underlining

the pervasive importance of the nonverbal component to the overall communication process:

1. nonverbal communication can be considered a relationship language, the primary means of signaling changes in an ongoing relationship.

2. nonverbal communication is the primary means of expressing emotion, either because of the physiology of the organism or because of the priority of nonverbal behavior to verbal behavior in the formative years of personality development.

3. nonverbal behavior has special symbolic value, expressing in body language, basic, perhaps unconscious attitudes about the self or body image.

4. nonverbal behavior provides qualifiers as to how verbal discourse should be interpreted.

5. nonverbal behavior is the leakage channel of communication, less susceptible than verbal behavior to either conscious deception or unconscious censoring.

Consistent with their efforts in isolating the differential functions of nonverbal communication, Ekman and Friesen (1968, 1969) have argued that the central problem for nonverbal research is the gaining of information about affect and emotional states of the person which differs from the verbal channel. Central to this orientation is the notion that nonverbal behavior is often less regulated by social norms

than is verbal behavior, and that nonverbal cues offer information about a person's subjective state which may be a more valid indicator than simultaneously offered verbal cues.

Proxemics, Paralanguage, and Kinesics

Most of the research in nonverbal communication falls within one of the three basic categories of proxemics, paralanguage, and kinesics, and a general review of this research can help elucidate the process by which emotions and attitudes are shared nonverbally between counselor and client.

Proxemics

Hall (1959, 1963, 1964) has offered a relatively broad conceptualization of those variables that can be considered within the category of proxemics. Hall includes as proxemic variables distance between the communicator and addressee, directness of orientation, presence or absence of touching behavior and eye contact between the communicator and addressee. Therefore, as Mehrabian (1968) points out, the concept of proxemics can include all the variations in distance and postural variables which correspond to the directness and immediacy of the interaction between the communicator and the addressee.

One of the most researched areas in proxemics is that of evaluative attitude communication. Generally speaking, most of these studies have indicated that the distance between an individual and subject decreases with increasing positive attitude, and that the incidence of eye contact increases

with more positive attitude (Argyle & Dean, 1965; Ellsworth & Carlsmith, 1968; Mehrabian 1968, 1969; Mehrabian & Friar, 1969; Brown & Parks, 1972; Haase & Tepper, 1972; Evans & Howard, 1973).

Concerning eye contact and distance, research has also indicated that there may be a complementary relationship between the two. Argyle and Dean (1965) have proposed a theory that postulates a compensatory relationship between eye contact and distance. According to this "equilibrium" theory, eye contact is functionally connected to affiliative motivation, and that approach and avoidance forces generate an equilibrium between distance and eye contact. In their research Argyle and Dean found that there was less eye contact and glances were shorter the closer the two subjects were placed together, and concluded that people move towards an equilibrium distance and adopt a particular level of eye contact. A number of other studies have also found an inverse relationship between eye contact and proximity, giving support to Argyle and Dean's theory (Mehrabian, 1969; Brown & Parks, 1972; Patterson, 1973).

Mehrabian (1968) has also studied eye contact in relation to communicator attitude, finding a curvilinear relationship between the two; where eye contact was lowest for disliked subjects, highest with neutral subjects, and a little less for intensely liked subjects.

Body posture and orientation have also been shown to be expressive of the attitudes of like and dislike. Mehrabian

(1968, 1969) investigated the effects of various proxemic variables on inferred attitudes. In general, he found that when a communicator sits in a relaxed posture, a forward lean towards the addressee communicates a positive attitude. Sitting in a relaxed posture with an open position of the arms and legs also communicated a more positive attitude than did a closed position. There were important sex differences, however, with females tending to maintain a relaxed posture while interacting with a disliked person of either sex. Males, in contrast, were relaxed with disliked females but tensed with disliked males and liked females. There was also a tendency for females to prefer an indirect body orientation with disliked persons, while males preferred to face directly towards a disliked person. Females were also more likely to exhibit coldness and passivity by using closed armed postures (1969).

It also appears that posturing behavior can reflect much about the relationships of individuals within counseling, both group and individual. Scheflen (1973) states that those individuals who like each other in group therapy often express this nonverbally by sitting side by side, by touching often, and by moving synchronously in their micro-movements. He also found that disaffiliation may be indicated by increasing distance, imposing postural barriers, and by utilizing incongruent postures. Charney (1966) also found that rapport in

individual psychotherapy is positively related to the degree of congruence of postures of the client and the therapist.

Research in proxemics has indicated that counselor and client inclinations for the use of interpersonal space may be somewhat different in the interview situation. Haase and Dimattia (1970) found that while therapists seemed to prefer a direct orientation without a desk between he and the client, the clients had a preference for a seating arrangement across the corner of a desk. These researchers theorize that such an arrangement may still be open enough to allow for interaction, but at the same time offers a sense of security and distance as the client attempts to deal with the uncertainties of the counseling situation.

On the other hand, Brockmann and Moller (1973) found that subjects preferred sitting across the table in the interview situation, but suggest their results may differ (from Haase and Dimattia study) because the subjects they used were not actually in counseling and had no counseling experience. These researchers conclude that individuals possibly tend to prefer a relatively formal seating position under unfamiliar circumstances, and a more informal position when in a more familiar situation.

Clients also appear to respond proxemically to counselor behaviors. Graves and Robinson (1970) studied client use of distance as a function of consistent-inconsistent counselor messages. They found that greater interpersonal distances resulted when counselors communicated inconsistent messages,

especially verbal positive/nonverbal negative.

In summary, the studies reviewed above suggest that attitudes of like--dislike can be conveyed through the proxemic behaviors of physical closeness or distance, eye contact or lack thereof, congruence or discongruence of body posture and movements, as well as body posture orientation. Research has also shown that clients and counselors may have different preferences in the way they utilize personal space, and that the client's use of interpersonal space seems to be related to perceived counselor behaviors and attitudes.

Paralanguage

Generally speaking, paralanguage can be thought of as referring to the noncontent aspects of speech. Key (1975) defines paralanguage in the following way:

Paralanguage is some kind of articulation of the vocal apparatus or significant lack of it, i.e., hesitation, between segments of vocal articulation. This includes all noises and sounds such as hissing, shushing, whistling, and imitation sounds, as well as a large variety of speech modifications, such as quality of voice (sepulchral, whiney, giggling), extra high-pitched utterances, or hesitations, and speed in talking (p.10).

One of the primary findings established by communications research is that an individual's paralinguistic behavior can be revealing of internal emotional anxiety states. Duncan (1969) maintains that filled pauses (ers, ums, and repetitions)

indicate anxiety and correlate with Galvanic Skin Response spikes, while Jurich and Jurich (1974) report similar findings, stating that filled pauses, increase in tone, speech rate, and speech errors can all indicate anxiety. Rosenfield (1966) and Kash and Mahl (1965) found that deceitful communicators tend to speak at a slower rate, produce a fewer number of words, and produce more frequent speech errors. Mehrabian (1971) reports similar findings, stating that deceitful communicators talked less, talked slower, and produced more speech errors.

Investigators have also found that differential interpretations of attitude are often made on the basis of discrepancies between words and accompanying intonation. Bugental (1974) reports that a low credible voice that pauses and chooses words deliberately is more likely to elicit a negative reaction than a credible spontaneous voice. Mehrabian and Wiener (1967) studied the decoding process of inconsistent communication and found that the inferences made about communicator attitude, made on the basis of both content and tone of message, was largely a function of variations in tone alone.

In counseling/therapy literature, the most highly reliable classification systems concern paralanguage (Gladstein, 1972). For example, Matazarro (1968) used a therapist-patient interaction model and produced highly reliable findings for duration of utterance, duration of latency, and percentage of interruption. According to these researchers, audio tapes and

written transcripts of actual therapy sessions showed a correlation of $+ .92$.

Several other counseling/therapy studies have used similar classification systems to investigate therapist-client interaction. Duncan and Butler (1968) compared therapists during peak and poor interviews, and found that in peak interviews the therapist used normal stress with open voice, normal stress with oversoft intensity and overflow pitch, and nonfluencies (with exception of filled pauses). During poor interviews the counselors tended to use flat stress, normal stress with oversoft intensity and normal pitch, and inappropriate stress. These researchers hypothesize that during the good therapy interview the therapist exhibited warmth, seriousness, and relaxation, while during the poor interviews they conveyed an uninvolved attitude to the client. Lassen (1969) varied the distance between therapist and client and observed the paralinguistic behavior that resulted. She found that the most speech disturbance occurred at nine feet, less at six feet, and the least amount at three feet. Rubenstein and Cameron (1968) studied the relationship between emotionality and content in therapy and patient vocal responses of frequency, amplitude, and duration. They concluded that a client's emotional change can most effectively be detected by changes in work frequencies.

It also appears that empathy and rapport in the counseling relationship may be directly related to aspects of the

counselor's paralinguistic behavior. Hargrove (1974) states that the latency of counselor responding was the best single indicator of judged counselor empathy. Counselors judged to be more empathetic had a slower responding time, gave clients a longer time to express themselves, and made fewer interruptions. Seals and Prichard (1973) also investigated rapport in therapy in relation to paralanguage, and found that rapport was positively related to length of counselor verbalization and hand movement.

In summary, some studies have indicated a direct relationship between internal anxiety states and paralinguistic behavior, while other studies have demonstrated the importance of intonation cues to the communication of attitude. Research reviewed in the area of counseling/psychotherapy suggests that paralanguage is different in peak and poor therapy sessions, that the distance between client and therapist can have an effect on client speech disturbance, and that word frequencies seem to be the best paralinguistic indicant of client anxiety in the counseling situation. It also appears that counselor paralinguistic behavior is directly related to the level of empathy and rapport in the counseling relationship.

Kinesics

The third basic area in nonverbal research is kinesics, and includes all forms of body movement. Key (1975) defines kinesics in the following way:

Kinesics is the articulation of the body, or movements resulting from muscular and skeletal shift. This includes all actions, physical, or physiological, automatic reflexes, postures, facial expressions, gestures, and other body movements (p. 10).

Both communication and counseling/therapy studies have demonstrated that specific emotional states seem to be correlated with kinesic behavior. Deutsch (1962, 1966) and Ekman and Friesen (1968) have both reported that body movements correlate with emotional states and changes during the course of counseling psychotherapy. Waxer (1974, 1976) found that depression correlated with downward head and mouth angle, while Davis (1973) and Waxer (1976) report that depression associates with lack of muscle tone. Anxiety has also been associated with decreased muscle tone, decreased eye contact, and posture shifts, as well as increased self manipulation (Jurich and Jurich, 1974).

It also appears that a counselor's kinesic behavior influences the kind of qualities that a client may attribute to him during the course of therapy. Several studies indicate that the level of counselor activity is directly related to the perceived counselor qualities of attractiveness, persuasiveness, and empathy. Strong, et al., (1971) found that counselors who exhibited greater frequencies of nonverbal movements during interviews were judged by subjects as being more attractive than those counselors who made fewer movements. Lacrosse (1975) found that subjects rated counselors who behaved

in a more affiliative and active nonverbal manner as significantly more attractive and persuasive than counselors who did not exhibit these behaviors. And finally, Heimann and Heimann (1972) suggest that those therapists who are more active in therapy are also perceived as more empathetic by clients.

A considerable body of research has underlined the importance of a particular kind of kinesic behavior, facial expressions, in the communication of emotion and attitudes. It has been argued that much of the facial expression of emotion is culturally universal, being more or less independent of social conditioning processes. Ekman and Friesen (1971) state that the face is the major site of the affect displays, and present data which indicates distinctive neuro-muscular movements for each of the basic affect states: happiness, anger, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, and interest. These writers hypothesize a neural linkage of the facial muscles as affect programs, which are capable of being enervated by both voluntary and involuntary factors. This hypothesis implies that facial gestures can function as a mode of intentional communication as well as a source of emotional leakage. Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1972) studied the behavior of deaf and blind born children of different ages, and found that the basic patterns of facial expression were present in these highly deprived subjects. This researcher concludes that it is highly unlikely that all these gestural expressions were acquired through learning processes, and more reasonable to assume that

neuronal and motor structures developed in a process of self-differentiation by decoding of genetically stored information.

Cuceloglu (1967) has also hypothesized the pan-cultural generality of facial communication, citing evidence that both within and across cultures subjects show high agreement on the affective meaning of facial expressions. Cuceloglu has conceptualized a general theoretical model of facial communication consisting of the following elements: (a) the face, which functions both as a response for the encoder and as a stimulus for the decoder, (b) encoding--those processes which control the posturing of the face, and (c) decoding--those processes which happen between the facial posturing and interpretation of message. Cuceloglu's model is very useful in theoretically distinguishing between the encoding and decoding processes, and addresses itself to the criticisms made by other writers (Wiener, 1972; Mehrabian, 1972; Gladstein, 1972) that most researchers have restricted themselves only to the investigation of the decoding process.

Within this theoretical context, Cuceloglu(1972) has investigated the question of whether one particular code is employed in the encoding and decoding of facial expressions, analogous to the code employed in verbal communication. Subjects were instructed to construct facial expressions utilizing abstract eyebrow, eye, and mouth features. Cuceloglu found a prototypical expression for each affective mode included in the study, and concluded that the construction of facial

expressions to represent a particular emotional state was governed by a discernible set of rules (or code). In comparing his results to previous research, Cuceloglu also concluded that the same facial code is used in both encoding and decoding studies.

Of all the nonverbal channels, it appears the facial channel is the most effective in communicating the most personal form of emotional information. Mehrabian and Zaidel (1969) explored the connection between encoding and decoding abilities in facial and vocal channels. They found that negative attitudes were more effectively communicated than positive ones, and that the facial channel was more effective than the vocal one in conveying attitudes. Ekman and Friesen (1967) report the primacy of the facial channel in communicating emotion, finding that facial expressions communicated both kind and intensity of emotion, while body position communicated only the intensity of whatever emotion was being expressed. Dittman, Parloff, and Boomer (1965) found that judges were significantly more affected by facial cues than by body cues, and Cuceloglu (1967) found that subjects could judge emotional meaning via facial expression very well, but not referential forms of meaning. All of the above studies support the view that nonverbal communication, specifically facial expressions, functions differentially in the communication of intimate forms of affective information.

The human face is a very fast sending system which is capable of expressing a wide variety of emotion. Such being the case, it appears that certain aspects of facial expression are extremely difficult to control, even though there often exists cultural prescriptions against the open display of emotion (especially negative emotion). Haggard and Issacs (1966) first detected the occurrence of micro-momentary facial expressions, which often run contrary to the more predominant facial display. Ekman and Friesen (1969) have also noted the importance of micro-displays, stating that even during intentional deception there are affect displays which emerge before becoming subject to conscious control. They found that micro-displays, when recorded on video-tape and shown in slow motion, do convey emotional information to observers, and that trained clinical observers could perceive these displays without the aid of slow motion viewing.

Although facial expression can be a course of leakage of underlying emotion, it has also been shown that emotions can be deliberately encoded and successfully communicated. Several studies (Thompson & Meltzer, 1967; Drag & Shaw, 1967; Buch, Saving, Miller, & Caul, 1972) have demonstrated that subjects were quite capable of intentionally conveying various affective states to a panel of judges. It is interesting to note that in all of these studies, as well as the Mehrabian and Zaidel study (1969), female subjects were generally better at deliberately encoding and communicating emotional states than their male counterparts. Mehrabian and Wiener (1968)

interpret such findings by pointing out that our culture discourages the explicit expression of negative attitudes, and as a result the more implicit nonverbal channels have taken over this function. The fact that females appear to be better encoders of facial messages is consistent with this line of reasoning, as males traditionally have had more role support for the explicit expression of negative feelings than have females.

Only a few studies have investigated facial expressions within the context of counseling and psychotherapy. It is important, however, that counselors and clinicians be aware of their own facial expressions while interacting with clients. Shapiro, Foster, and Powell (1968) found that therapeutic attitudes are communicated through the nonlinguistic behavior of the counselor, and also found that the clients were much more responsive to facial rather than body cues while decoding counselor attitude.

A counselor's facial expression can also have an influence on the likelihood of a client sharing affective material during the course of counseling. Hackney and Showalter (1967) studied facial expressions within the context of an operant model, using three facial gestures as contingent stimuli: (a) affirmative head nod, (b) smile, and (c) affirmative head nod accompanied by a smile. Using all female subjects, they report that smiling behavior produced significantly more positive affect statements by clients than did the other two stimuli.

Contrary to previous studies (Wiches, 1956; Gross, 1959; Rogers, 1960) Hackney and Showalter found that the affirmative head nod had either no effect or a depressive effect on client's positive affective statements.

In summary, the research reviewed suggests that kinesic behavior is related to specific emotional states in counseling, and that these can change during the course of counseling. Studies have also shown that the more active counselors are perceived by clients as more attractive, persuasive, and emphatic. The facial channel is the most effective of all non-verbal modes in communicating emotional attitude, conveying both kind and intensity of emotion. Individuals can be relatively successful in deliberately communicating facial emotion, but it is likely that the expression of spontaneous emotion cannot be entirely concealed. Counselors should try to be aware of their own facial expressions, as clients seem to be more responsive to facial cues than body cues.

Inconsistent Communication

The overview of the nonverbal literature presented above clearly establishes that nonverbal behaviors can function to communicate subjective feeling states and evaluate attitudes, possibly more effectively than does linguistic behavior. It must be remembered, however, that nonverbal and verbal cues almost always occur simultaneously in normal face to face interaction; therefore a substantive understanding of attitude communication demands that we ask a larger question.

That is, how do nonverbal emotional and attitudinal cues function in relation to linguistic cues, particularly when the verbal attitude being expressed runs contrary to the attitude being expressed nonverbally?

There is very little research in counseling literature dealing with inconsistent communication, but a number of communication studies have investigated the decoding process of inconsistent verbal-nonverbal communication (Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967; Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967; Mehrabian, 1970). These studies postulate a superordinate-subordinate relationship and a functional differentiation between the verbal and nonverbal channels. This work by Mehrabian, et al., elaborates on the theoretical orientation of Ekman and Friesen (1966), and provides the theoretical frame of reference for the present study.

Mehrabian and Wiener (1967) investigated the decoding of inconsistent verbal-nonverbal messages, involving the simultaneous and inconsistent communication of attitudes in two or more components of a message. The results indicated that when the vocal channel was inconsistent with the explicit verbal channel, the total attitude communicated was determined by the vocal channel. These researchers conclude that when an implicit communication of attitude is inconsistent with the explicit communication of attitude, the contribution of the implicit component is disproportionately greater than its independent effect.

In a related study, Mehrabian and Ferris (1967) studied the inference of attitude from two different nonverbal channels, the facial and the vocal. The results indicated that the facial component was more dominant than the vocal one in determining the overall attitude that was decoded. The researchers proposed a linear model for conceptualizing multi-channel communication, with the explicit verbal component contributing the least to overall attitude decoded, the facial component the most, and with the vocal component in between.

The results of the two studies cited above suggest that inconsistent attitudinal components in a message are not decoded separately or conflictually. To the contrary, it seems that the nonverbal channel is superordinate to the verbal channel and that inconsistent messages can be classified into one of two basic categories; one where the overall impact is positive and another where the overall impact is negative.

In addition to his work on the decoding process, Mehrabian (1970) has also researched what possible function an inconsistent message might serve that a consistent one cannot. He found that inconsistent communication can be a more intimate form of attitude communication, being more preferred in informal than formal situations. Mehrabian also found that the explicit verbal component of an inconsistent message functions to convey attitudes toward the specific behaviors of the addressee, while the nonverbal component functions to convey attitudes toward the addressee's more intimate sense of self.

Following from this fact, it was found that a positive inconsistent message was more probable when the addressee's behavior was disapproved of but was liked as a person. Conversely, a negative inconsistent message was more probable with disliked addressees whose behavior was approved by the communicator.

Mehrabian gains support from Watzlawick (1967), who states that nonverbal affective information naturally accompanies all other forms of information, being present even when no conscious efforts are being made to communicate it. Watzlawick also maintains that affective nonverbal information is communication about interpersonal relationships, and is an intrinsically more valid indicator about how an individual is regarding a relationship than is verbal forms of communication. Therefore it seems that Watzlawick is saying essentially what Mehrabian (1970) has maintained, that the nonverbal component speaks differentially to the addressee's deeper sense of self.

Mehrabian's work is important because it attempts to explain how inconsistent verbal and nonverbal components function in relation to one another. His results suggest that the verbal and nonverbal components of an inconsistent message function differentially, and that an inconsistent message may have the communicative capacity to impart more complex attitude information than do messages that are consistent in both verbal and nonverbal channels.

Only a few counseling studies have focused on the interaction between simultaneous verbal/nonverbal messages. Contrary to Mehrabian's conceptualization, these studies seem to presuppose inconsistency, per se, as dysfunctional to the communication process, and therefore the therapeutic process. Haase and Tepper (1972) found that the nonverbal channels accounted for two-thirds of the variance in judged counselor empathy, and argue for the importance of counselor training in nonverbal communication. They also proposed an operational definition of counselor congruence, consisting of the extent to which verbal and nonverbal channels present contradictory information.

In another counseling study Graves and Robinson (1976) studied proxemic behavior as a function of inconsistent counselor verbal/nonverbal messages. They found that inconsistent messages were associated with greater interpersonal distances, especially when the nonverbal portion was negative and the verbal portion was positive. Lower ratings of counselor genuineness also resulted from the inconsistent conditions, especially when the nonverbal was negative and the verbal was positive. Graves and Robinson suggest that inconsistency may be interpreted as deceiving and dishonest by the client and be destructive to counseling rapport.

Both the Haase and Tepper and Graves and Robinson studies were concerned with the extent to which a discrepant nonverbal message might erode the credibility of the verbal message. The assumptions being made here seem to be:

1. inconsistent components of a message are decoded separately
2. there is little subordination of components in relation to one another
3. this leads to confusion, conflict and resultant client attribution of counselor insincerity or lack of genuineness.

At least in respect to evaluative attitude communication, the work of Mehrabian, et al., (1968, 1969, 1970) contradicts these assumptions. Their investigation of the decoding process seems to demonstrate that inconsistent components are not decoded separately, and that there is a subordination of the verbal to the nonverbal channel which results in the decoding of an overall positive or negative attitude.

Counselor Response Orientation

It seems to be an established principle in the fields of counseling and psychotherapy that a counselor should be strategic and selective in his utilization of responses, and that such responses function differentially to impact the client's experience of himself in counseling, as well as the topics he chooses to pursue (Delaney & Eisenberg, 1972; Egan, 1975; Hackney & Nye, 1973; Truax & Curkhuff, 1967). During the course of counseling a counselor must choose from a number of alternative courses of action, and particular kinds of responses may be used to selectively focus upon, encourage, and reinforce specific aspects of client behavior and experience.

According to Hackney and Nye (1973), the counselor's responses have a strong impact on the client and it is necessary for the counselor to be aware of the effects of his responses. Hackney and Nye provide a useful typology of counselor responses and related functions, classified within the three areas of client cognitive content, client affective content, and discriminative responses for affective and cognitive content:

Cognitive Content

1. restatement - a response that focuses upon the cognitive content of a client's verbal communication, restating all or a selected portion of the client's previous communication.

2. probe - a question that requires more than a minimal one or two word answer by the client, and helps put more responsibility for control of the interview on the client.

3. silence - a response that effects the course of the interview by indicating to the client that the counselor does not want to take responsibility for the topic at that particular point in time.

Affective Content

4. reflection - a response that is a paraphrase of the affective portion of a client's response, and functions to mirror the feeling or emotion in the client's message. This response may reflect surface feeling or implied, more intense feeling.

5. summarization of feeling - a response that is an integration of several affective components of client's communication.

Discriminative Responses

6. the accent - is a one or two word restatement which emphasizes a small part of the client's message, functioning as a request for elaboration.

7. the ability potential response - a response in which the counselor suggests to the client that he has the ability to successfully participate in a specified activity, functioning to reinforce a client's sense of control and the counselor's faith in the client.

8. confrontation - a response that points out a discrepancy present in the client's behavior, functioning to help a client identify a contradiction, rationalization, or misinterpretation.

The above typology clearly points out the connection between counselor response orientation and the differential impact and function of such responses. It is also possible to consider the differential impact of counselor responses in relation to the degree to which they may impact the client's more intimate sense of self. A continuum of such responses can be laid down as follows:

1. those counselor responses which focus on the cognitive details of events, people, or objects least involve the deeper sense of self or person.

2. those counselor responses dealing with the client's emotional reactions to events, people, or objects in his environment more directly impact the client's sense of person.

3. those counselor responses that are confrontive in orientation, which question the credibility of the client's presentation of self, most pervasively impact the client's personal sense of self.

Design of Study (Overview)

An experimental design will be used to test the relative dominance of the nonverbal component in the inconsistent verbal/nonverbal communication of counselor attitude toward client. The subjects will be required to view a five minute video-tape of an analogue counselor/client dyad. After observing the video tape, the subjects will be asked to complete the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory and the Counselor Effectiveness Scale. The scores on these two dependent measures will be analyzed by a 4 X 3 factorial analysis of variance design.

Research Design

The subjects will consist of 120 undergraduate students currently enrolled in educational psychology courses at the University of Oklahoma. The twelve stimulus conditions will be randomly assigned to independent experimental groups, with each group containing 10 subjects.

One independent variable will be inconsistent verbal/non-verbal counselor messages: (a) verbal positive-nonverbal negative

(V+/NV-), (b) verbal negative-nonverbal positive (V-/NV+), (c) verbal positive-nonverbal positive (V+/NV+), and (d) verbal negative-nonverbal negative (V-/NV-).

The second independent variable will be mode of counselor response orientation, consisting of the three levels of cognitive, affective, and confrontive orientations.

Definitions

The verbal component (V) of the inconsistent messages will be operationally defined as either positive verbal statements that convey the counselor's approval of the client and a willingness to accept his problem, or negative verbal statements that indicate a general disapproval of the client and his problem. The nonverbal component (NV) will be defined as variations in facial expression and vocal intonation that function to communicate either a positive or negative evaluation of the client and his problem. Facial expression and vocal intonation will be used in this study because of the empirically demonstrated dominance of these nonverbal channels in the research literature (Mehrabian & Wiener, 1967; Mehrabian & Ferris, 1967; Mehrabian, 1970).

Mode of counselor response orientation will be operationally defined as follows: (a) cognitive orientation refers to paraphrase by the counselor of the cognitive content present in the client's response, (b) affective orientation refers to a paraphrase by the counselor of the feeling related material

in a client's response, and (c) confrontive orientation refers to a counselor response that points to a contradiction, rationalization, or misinterpretation by the client.

Instruments

Two dependent measures will be recorded for each experimental group. The first dependent measure, the Level of Regard Sub-scale of the Barrett-Lennard Relationship Inventory (1962) will be used to measure perception of counselor regard. The Relationship Inventory consists of 64 items, which include four sub-scales: Level of regard, Empathic Understanding, Unconditionality of Regard, and Congruence. Scores on the Level of Regard Sub-scale can range from +48 to -48, with high positive scores indicating high counselor regard and low negative scores indicating low counselor regard. A constant of +50 will be added to all the scores on this sub-scale, in order to eliminate having to deal with negative numbers.

The reliability of the BLRI has been established by test-retest methods (Barrett-Lennard, 1969) with coefficients ranging from +.79 to +.89 on the sub-scales and +.85 on the overall total scale score. The construct validity of this instrument has been established by a number of studies, which were designed to test the association of the BLRI with other measures and variables that extend logically and theoretically from the conceptual foundation upon which the BLRI was based (Clark & Culbert, 1965; Gross & DeRidder, 1966; Cahoon, 1962).

The second dependent measure, counselor effectiveness, will be measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Scale (Ivey, 1978). This scale has been previously used in measuring client attitudes toward counselor, and consists of 25 items of the semantic differential type.

Parallel form reliability was computed between Form 1 and Form 2 of this scale, resulting in a value of .975 (Ivey, 1978). Construct validity has also been reported for this instrument, where the Counselor Effectiveness Scale successfully discriminated between rationally defined good model and bad model counselor behavior (Ivey, 1978).

Hypotheses

1. The primary hypothesis of this study is that, according to Mehrabian's theory, the nonverbal component of an inconsistent message will dominate the verbal component. Therefore, with a V-/NV+ condition, an overall positive attitude will be decoded. Conversely, with a V+/NV- condition, an overall negative attitude will be decoded. The means of these two inconsistent conditions will differ significantly.

2. There is an interactive relationship between the magnitude of dominance of the nonverbal component and the mode of counselor response orientation. The more directly the response involves the client's more intimate sense of self, the greater the strength of the nonverbal component. Therefore, the magnitude of nonverbal impact will increase from the cognitive

to the affective orientation, and from the affective to the confrontive orientation.

3. The inclusion of the consistent conditions (V+/NV+ and V-/NV-) in the design will allow the comparison of consistent and inconsistent groups. Assuming the dominance of the nonverbal component, an overall positive or negative attitude will be decoded in both of the inconsistent groups. Therefore, the comparison of the two positive conditions, V+/NV+ and V-/NV+, and the two negative conditions, V-/NV- and V+/NV-, will not yield significant differences.

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