



Presenter: James Salazar

Session & Time: Postre II

Room/Time: GLH / 2:30-3:30

Discipline: Psychology

Faculty Mentor: Ben Rosenberg

Digital Portfolio URL:

Title: The Impact of Nonverbal Persuasive Cues on Compliance and Attitudes Toward Persuasive Messages

Abstract:

The present study examines how intentional nonverbal cues, specifically gestures and facial expressions, can shape compliance and attitudes toward persuasive messages in a controlled, AI-generated environment. Nonverbal behaviors such as eye contact, hand movements, and expressive facial cues have been long tied to an increase in credibility and trust yet previous research has struggled to isolate these cues from the verbal message itself. This study builds on that work by presenting participants with persuasive scenarios in which only the presence or absence of a nonverbal cue can differentiate. Participants were randomly assigned to view an AI-generated cartoon speaker delivering the same persuasive request either with nonverbal cues (such as smiling, open gestures) or without such cues (neutral face, still posture). In each scenario, the cartoon

speaker makes a simple verbal request, “Can you hold this for a second?” , and only the nonverbal cues surrounding the request are manipulated. Afterward, participants completed a compliance likelihood measure as well as an attitude assessment evaluating perceived credibility, trustworthiness, likability, and positivity of the message. I predicted that participants exposed to intentional nonverbal cues will report a higher likelihood of complying with the request compared to participants who view the cue-absent scenario (H1). We further expect that participants in the nonverbal-cue condition will evaluate the speaker and message more positively, indicating greater perceived credibility, trust, and overall favorable attitudes (H2). Independent samples t-tests are expected to show that participants exposed to intentional nonverbal cues will report significantly higher compliance likelihood, higher ratings of the speaker’s credibility, trustworthiness, likability, and positivity toward the message compared to those in the cue absent condition. These findings would indicate that even smallest of differences in nonverbal behavior can meaningfully shape both behavioral intentions and evaluative judgments in environments where interaction occurs. Findings from this study may contribute to a clearer understanding of how nonverbal persuasion functions across diverse audiences and may help inform communication strategies in educational, organizational, and online settings.