

**ISCKMC 2020****International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC  
ADMINISTRATION: MODERN CHALLENGES**

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**Abstract**

The authors have analyzed current risks and problems in the field of nonverbal communications in public administration. These include the following risks: the gradual loss of a modern person's ability to observe due to smartphone addiction; insufficient attention paid to the non-verbal communication channel in professional service activities; lack of the formation of non-verbal competencies in future officials. Using historical and comparative analysis, we studied the development of public communication in society, analyzed the manifestation of non-verbal communication in modern politicians. The public communication means the level of verbal communication and social behavior of government representatives when information is transmitted to a large number of listeners. Therefore, it is necessary to train future politicians and officials and start this training from the first courses of higher education. The identified problems can be solved by implementing a special program "non-verbal communication in public administration" in the professional training of future officials. The results of a survey among students at Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin in the field of "State and Municipal Management" show that 63.4 % of respondents believe that the image of a competent and erudite official is also formed by knowledge of the laws of non-verbal communication in public activities.

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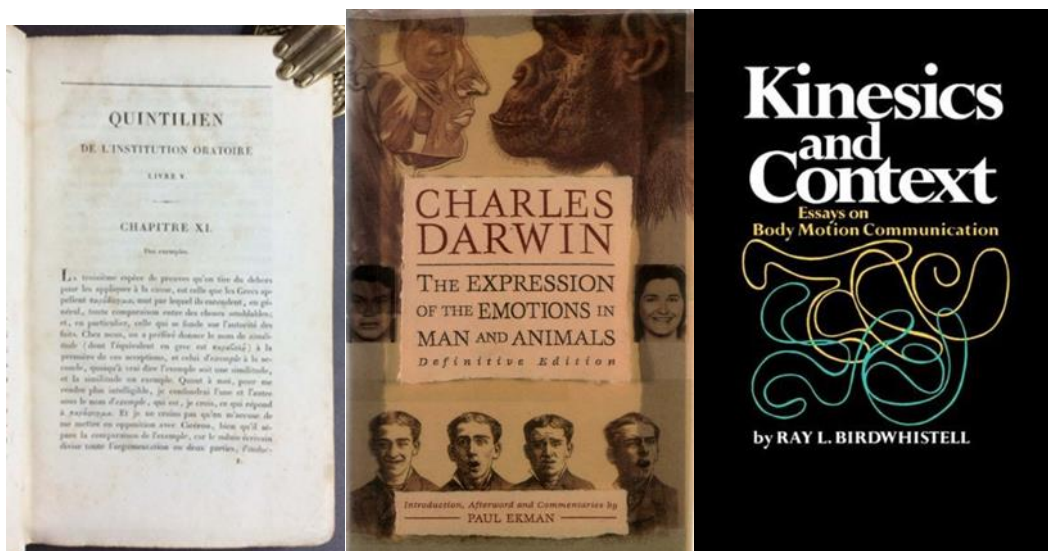
*Keywords:* Nonverbal communication, digitalization, smartphone addiction, public administration, modern challenges and features



## 1. Introduction

The history of research on nonverbal communication in the process of communication goes back to the depths of time. Even the scientific works of the ancient Greeks and Romans contain information about non-verbal means of communication. For example, the work of M.F. Quintilian “Institutes of Oratory” was published around AD 95.

Most foreign researches on nonverbal communication have been published in England and in the United States. In the second half of the nineteenth century Delsarte tried to describe and decipher the voice, body movements, and gestures, and identify various forms of body language. One of the most influential works that gave rise to modern research on facial expressions was the book “Expression of emotions in humans and animals” written by Darwin, published in 1872 and it was descriptive (Darwin, 2001). The covers for these works are shown in Fig. 1.



**Figure 1.** The most important works about non-verbal communication

“Body Structure and Character” by Ernst Kretschmer, published in 1925, and “Introduction to Kinetics” by Ray Birdwhistell, published in 1952, are considered as classics. Pease (2007) wrote that it seemed almost improbable that in more than a million years of human evolution, nonverbal aspects of communication had only begun to be seriously studied since the early 60s of the last century by various social groups.

The issues of nonverbal communication have moved to the background in the pace of development of the modern individual and personality. It is scientifically grounded and proved by scientists that individual features of the person define the person’s type of nervous activity and the main features of the person’s character (Argyle, 1975; Birdwhistell, 1982; Knapp & Hall, 2007).

The verbal response of the individual gives us an opportunity for rapid characterization and judgment of the individual, it is often found in public administration and social interaction (Efron, 1941; Fast, 1989).

A modern man loses the ability to ‘read’ the emotional state and internal experiences of the individual in social interaction. So, 70-80% of the information in the process of social interaction is

received through non-verbal channels, and it is explained by the evolution of consciousness (Mehrabian, 1982; Pease & Garner, 2006).

Digitalization of state and municipal management does not imply the disappearance of business communication and social interaction in professional activities. According to the pace and volume of speech, the speed and expressiveness of speech, we can determine the significance of the problem for a particular individual when applying to the public administration. Therefore, we need to learn about how a modern man is able to use nonverbal human reactions including in public administration.

## **2. Problem Statement**

In our opinion, one of the most urgent problems of the modern development of public administration is the definition of modern challenges in it and the reflection of the latter in modern models of public administration. This problem is relevant because the requirements for the quality of public administration have increased. Currently, it is becoming obvious that research is needed in the public administration of non-verbal communications, which is due to several reasons.

These trends reflect existing challenges and contradictions:

- at the scientific and public level: between the increased demands on the quality of public administration by civil society and the existing gaps in modern science in the field of studying non-verbal communication among modern politicians and officials and identifying current challenges in this area;
- at the socio-public level: between the state's need for high-quality public administration and the neglect in modern scientific works in the field of theory and practice of non-verbal communications in the field of public administration;
- at the scientific and methodological level: between the trend of focusing public administration research on interdisciplinarity and the narrowness of scientifically based methodological support for the process of training future officials in the field of non-verbal communications, taking into account modern features and challenges.

## **3. Research Questions**

The subject of the article is the study of modern challenges and features of non-verbal communications in public administration. The study takes into account the historical and political aspects and the existing scientific heritage in this field. The motivation for addressing this topic was the practical observation of modern citizens and public figures, their distraction in virtual reality.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to analyze modern challenges and features of non-verbal communications in public administration based on historical and political heritage and real events in the political sphere.

## 5. Research Methods

The method of monitoring communications in business and social communication was used. We have found photographs of people and their descriptions taken every ten years since 1950. Retrospective analysis of facial expressions and poses of people in the photographs showed that a person reading books, newspapers, and noticing people and natural phenomena around him or her in the twentieth century, gradually began to turn into a person in the 21st century with his/her head bowed, hands clasped together, clutching a phone, abstracting from natural phenomena and the world around him.

The socio-pedagogical method to determine students' knowledge of nonverbal communication and its use in public administration was also used (Akhyamova, 2009).

It allows us to conclude that modern man is gradually losing his/her biological function that is observation.

We carry out research within the framework of project training in the direction of training State and Municipal Administration to identify the level of public communication formation. We have found the level of smartphone addiction among students: 51.1% of respondents are distracted by social networks twice during classes. Only 14 % of respondents can correctly determine the emotional state of a person that can be associated with young age and lack of sufficient social experience.

## 6. Findings

Nonverbal communication is a set of non-verbal communication tools: a structure of gestures, signs, symbols, and codes that are used to convey a message with a high degree of accuracy. It plays an important role in people's understanding of each other. Movements, gestures, postures, facial expressions, changes in voice and other manifestations are encrypted and decrypted, they act as signs with a limited range of meanings and perform a communication function. It should be taken into account that in communication the environment is a set of factors that affect the people's communication while not being a direct part of it.

All public figures use non-verbal communication tools in their speeches. They use various hand gestures, facial expressions, and speech directions such as tempo, intonation, and diction. As a rule, high-ranking public figures are able to manage non-verbal communication and use it to attract attention to them in order to establish contact with people (Jaeger et al., 2017). But there are also public figures who are 'betrayed' completely by nonverbal means of communication. We can often see high-ranking officials talking on TV and notice how they show their dislike for each other through gestures and facial expressions, although they are friendly and courteous to each other in the process of communication, which is an unusual aspect of public interaction.

Even in 1960, during the United States presidential election, John F. Kennedy actively used nonverbal means of communication against Richard Nixon. If you compare their performances, Kennedy's arguments are balanced and objective, he shows confidence, and a tailored suit emphasizes his elegance. Nixon, on the other hand, is sweaty, pale, and unshaven, no makeup on his face, and his suit doesn't fit well. It was believed that the election debates played the most important role in the Kennedy's

victory in the election. It happened due to his body language: posture, facial expressions, gestures and personal charm.

In modern public administration the recent meeting of Donald Trump and Vladimir Zelensky (see Figure 2), which was actively analyzed in the media, can be a similar example.



**Figure 2.** Donald Trump and Vladimir Zelensky (2019)

In the course of business communication, both Presidents are very polite and courteous to each other, but if you point out that Donald Trump constantly looks at the floor and in different directions, it becomes clear that he is insincere in this public dialogue. If you pay attention to the poses Zelensky and Trump are sitting, you can say that they both feel uncomfortable, but Vladimir Zelensky is sitting in a more relaxed position and his hand gestures are more diverse than Donald Trump's ones, which show his artistic past and a nervous state when meeting at a high state level, which can be explained by a lack of diplomatic experience.

Analysis of scientific sources in the field of non-verbal communication in public administration shows that in this area there are the following modern risks:

1. The ability of modern people to observe is gradually being lost, which in our opinion is currently associated with people's smartphone addiction and prolonged immersion in social networks. This risk was described in the works of the great Russian scientist A. L. Chizhevsky, the founder of the noosphere doctrine, in the XX century. Human communication occurs through the interaction of speech and non-verbal communication channels. In the other words, we put an additional meaning, not expressed themselves, using the language of gestures, facial expressions, body movements, which carries more than 90% of the total amount of information reported, and can 'read' this meaning in the speech of the interlocutor on the conscious and subconscious levels.

2. Modern officials do not pay enough attention to this channel of communication in public activities. We believe that a future official needs to know non-verbal communication in business communication. Moreover, state and municipal management are impossible without a fine and clear

understanding of the psychology of subordinates and visitors, their motives, incentives, and goals. Therefore, the knowledge of the basics of non-verbal communication is an indispensable assistant in the management of an official. In our opinion, it is thanks to the knowledge of the features of nonverbal communication that effective management becomes possible.

3. An official's unformed competence in business communication may lead to incorrect construction of their business management strategy. Therefore, non-verbal communication becomes a key element that allows the state and municipal employee to formulate their management strategies correctly, as well as to adjust their actions clearly and timely depending on the constantly changing conditions of management (Rezer, 2019).

In our study, 186 students enrolled in the field of "State and Municipal Management", aged 28 to 35 years, among them 68.3 % were male. 78.8 % of respondents positively answered the question: "Do you know what nonverbal communication is?"

Due to the correct use of nonverbal communication, an official can solve managerial tasks and problems that arise in professional service activities effectively. Only 45 % of students gave the correct definition of nonverbal communication and 57.5 % of students showed only knowledge of the meaning of a smile.

It was interesting to analyze from the point of view of their security the following question about the person's response in a dialogue on allocating the eyes companion: self-doubt – so said for 56.3 % of students, and slightly more than a third of students (37.5 % of the respondents) suspected dishonesty of the interlocutor, that is, most of the students showed that poorly versed in non-verbal signals.

The risks outlined above require their resolution. In our teaching practice, we offer the following solutions to the identified problems.

In our opinion, the discipline "Nonverbal communication in public administration" is necessary for the educational programs for training future officials, which is of great importance in the modern public administration and political situation in the world.

Creating the image of a competent and erudite official also requires knowledge of the laws of nonverbal communication, which helps to organize the process of state and municipal management correctly, to recognize timely and to respond adequately to the constantly changing psychological climate in society in order to reduce the negative socio-psychological factors that affect people by decisions taken by state and municipal authorities, as well as maintain and regulate the psychological climate among colleagues.

## **7. Conclusion**

Thus, nonverbal communication has an emotional impact on us, determining how we feel about someone's words.

In fact, nonverbal messages tend to reflect and affect our internal state, whereas verbal messages are more associated with cognitive processes. The tone in which a person talks to others can have a huge impact on how their verbal message is "heard" and "received".

By learning to follow nonverbal keys and pay more attention to the internal state, you can use the patterns of "language tricks" much more effectively and use them to have a positive impact on the beliefs of others (Kuznetsova & Rezer, 2019).

Means of nonverbal communication as a kind of language of feelings are the same product of social development as the language of words. Appearance, facial expressions, looks, poses, gestures, touch, human behaviour in the surrounding space, smells, etc. are among such means. All these types of nonverbal messages interact, sometimes complement each other, sometimes contradict each other, so, they are extremely important to be known when conducting public administration.

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The validity and reliability of the results and conclusions contained in the article are confirmed by the consistency of the results with the theoretical sources and empirical results of the author obtained earlier in the study of information openness of public administration, as well as a comprehensive level of analysis of the phenomenon under study.

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