RESEARCH NOTE

NLP REVISITED: NONVERBAL COMMUNICATIONS AND SIGNALS OF TRUSTWORTHINESS

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A core principle of neurolinguistic programming (NLP) is that rapport and trust develop through synchronization of modes of communication between the sender and receiver. Nonverbal signals are a particularly important mode of communications in the NLP perspective. This study extends the NLP framework by incorporating findings from neuroscience into research about nonverbal signals and sensory representational systems. Three independent but related studies are used to identify nonverbal cues associated with the representational systems, to test if descriptions of these nonverbal signals influence trustworthiness assessments, and, finally, to test if these nonverbal signals trigger buyer's positive assessments of salesperson trust-building characteristics as well as trustworthiness.

Sales trainers, academics, and sales books consistently advise salespeople to build trust with their clients and customers without providing much practical guidance on how to initiate this relationship. The frequently stated goal of this rapport building is to establish a relationship with deep-rooted trust (Rousseau et al. 1998), which, as a wealth of research demonstrates, leads to positive outcomes for the relationship. However, the actual initiating behavioral correlates of rapport building are without theoretical underpinnings and lack empirical support (Tickle-Degnen and Rosenthal 1990).

Advocates of neurolinguistic programming (NLP)—an approach to human communications that combines cognitive theory, split-brain processing, and sensory perception—have long suggested that their approach holds the key to understanding rapport building. They propose that understanding rapport and trust begins with the investigation of communications as a process while ignoring any content in the message (Dimmick 1995). This perspective has led, in marketing studies of NLP, to a methodological emphasis upon the signals of the exemplar salesperson as a sender of messages and cues rather than a focus on the buyer as the receiver and interpreter of the signal (Dowlen 1996). Unfortunately, investigations based upon NLP have a history of inconclusive and contradictory empirical evidence (Dowlen 1996; Thompson, Courtney, and Dickson 2002). The inconclusive evidence of previous NLP studies may have resulted from the emphasis upon the sender/salesperson rather than the receiver/customer.

Findings from recent research suggests that buyers today continue to assess the trustworthiness of relationship partners based on their impressions from the initial face-to-face encounter (Chamberlin 2000; McKnight, Cummings, and Chervany 1998). Multiple studies in neuroscience suggest that these impressions are formed by perceptions of nonverbal cues (Puce et al. 2003; Winston et al. 2002). Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) techniques, these researchers map the structures of the brain that perceive and interpret a specific nonverbal signal both at the conscious and nonconscious levels. This evidence suggests support for the NLP perspective of the split-brain processing at the receiver level of the exchange.

This paper develops a conceptual framework of how customers perceive rapport and trust-building nonverbal signals by revisiting the underlying principle of NLP that receivers have preferred signals based upon one of the three primary sensory receptors. This research emphasizes nonverbal signals, because linguists note that the origins of man predated the origins of language by hundreds of thousands of years (Haas 1968). Even today, research related to salespeople indicates that nonverbal communication accounts for between 60 and 70 percent of all interpersonal communication (Dimmick 1995; Fill 1995). However, this research does not begin with the identification of exemplar salespeople but, rather, identifies some specific nonverbal cues to which a receiver/customer is attuned when assessing the signaler/salesperson.

This paper first uses a qualitative approach to determine those nonverbal cues of salespeople that relate to a representational system. These specific cues are ones that customers

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suggest signal trustworthiness. Incorporating these customer-identified cues into scenarios in an experimental design allows for tests of the significance of these nonverbal cues on a buyer's assessments of the trustworthiness of a salesperson in two field studies. It is managerially important in all boundary-spanning positions to understand any significant signals or cues that a receiver/customer uses and interprets when evaluating trustworthiness. This study provides empirical evidence of the nonverbal cues used by buyers when evaluating individual salespeople.

BACKGROUND

The decoding and interpretation of a sender's encoded message by the receiver is a theoretical underpinning of NLP's extension of the classic communication model. While the classic communication model was developed in a mass communication setting, this model has been adapted to include small group communications as well as interpersonal exchanges (Fill 1995). Further expanding the context of this communication model is the addition of the modes of message transmission. At the interpersonal level, these modes included verbal and nonverbal signals. The focus of NLP is at this interpersonal level and aims to understand the process of communication through elements of cognitive theory, split-brain processing, and linguistics as the expression of these mental processes (Dimmick 1995). However, the use of language for expressing the mental processes is not an emphasis of NLP, and, given the aforementioned estimates of nonverbal interpersonal communications at 60 to 70 percent, the direction of this study is to identify and verify those nonverbal signals that are significant to receivers/customers during assessment processes.

In addition to the previous communications research that demonstrates the significance of nonverbal signals, recent work in neuroscience suggests that perceptions of nonverbal signals, such as facial expressions, form the basis of impressions of personality traits (Puce et al. 2003). While the classic communication view might suggest that a smile is meant to convey positive intentions, that perspective fails to account for a receiver's decoding of the message and assessment of the intentions of the signaler. Results of fMRI studies suggest that the perceptions of nonverbal signals activate structures of the brain related to judgment and assessment of intentions of the signaler (Puce et al. 2003; Winston et al. 2002).

Research suggests that the ability to interpret nonverbal communications across all perceptual levels is present in all individuals (Montepare 2003a; 2003b). This ability to interpret a sender's intentions shifts the emphasis in nonverbal communications to the decoding and interpretation of messages, rather than the framing and transmission of sender signals. The intent of the signaler may or may not be benevolent.

This shift in the emphasis to the interpretation of nonverbal signals has particular importance to the NLP field.

The physiology or structure of the brain strongly influences communication behaviors of individuals according to the NLP perspective (Bracegirdle 1997). Adherents of NLP suggest that these brain patterns or thought processes match or map onto one of three primary but not exclusionary sensory representational systems (Nickels, Everett, and Klein 1983). In the NLP framework, it is proposed that these three—visual, auditory, and kinesthetic—sensory processing systems influence mental assessment processes even to the extent that the choice of words used to describe interpersonal assessments will reflect these sensory systems. However, the empirical evidence and the neuroscience perspective suggest that the nonverbal signals are still the predominant mode of communications, and, as suggested by NLP, language is only an imperfect articulation of these mental assessment processes (Dimmick 1995).

As can be seen in the personal selling field, emphasis on the signaler misdirected previous NLP-related research of the communications process. In sales research, this process has been outlined as a cycle of signals, perceptions of signals, and mirroring of customer patterns (Connell 1984; Nickels, Everett, and Klein 1983), followed by a connectivity that leads to salesperson and customer rapport (Hutton and Mulhern 2002). This establishment of rapport through mirroring leads to trusting behaviors (Nickels, Everett, and Klein 1983). Much of the training related to NLP has rested on identifying people effective in establishing rapport and "that by copying them you can be equally successful" (McDonnell 1993, p. 2).

However, previous research failed to find empirical evidence in support of NLP and its associated training techniques (Thompson, Courtney, and Dickson 2002). The inherent limitations of language expressions of mental processes as well as previous research's emphasis on exemplars of rapport building, such as salespeople, may explain these failures. Another key to the limitations of past research lies in a principle of the NLP framework; rapport is the desired but not measurable process, and trustworthiness assessments are the measurable outcomes of this synchronization of sender and receiver (Dimmick 1995). While the receiver/customer at the nonverbal level prefers one of the three sensory representational systems, it is likely that inferences about this synchronization effect must come from outcomes at the assessment level.

By accepting that nonverbal cues, as the neuroscience perspective suggests and research supports, are important in rapport building, then tests of a buyer's desired nonverbal signals should correlate with that buyer's trustworthiness assessments. This assessment process, inherent in humans through brain structure, means that micro-behaviors, such as nonverbal signals, are autonomically (without conscious control) generated as well as perceived and interpreted (Gladwell 2005).

For example, decades of research indicates that the outward expression of a smile may be fleeting (1/25th of a second) but is perceived by receivers on a nonconscious level (Ekman 1997; Gladwell 2005). Ekman (1997) found that the facial muscles controlling displays such as smiles and other feelings are generally beyond conscious control. Negative intents and feelings as displayed by these involuntary muscle movements cannot be totally hidden from receivers. Individuals intuitively and possibly instinctively perceive nonverbal cues. Conceptually, receivers use these signals to reach judgments about the intentions of the sender. For NLP, this implies that mimicry of the positive signals is insufficient. Building rapport successfully, the sender must have the positive intentions behind the nonverbal cues.

This conceptual view suggests that communication signals that initiate trust building likely match a buyer's desired perceptual and mental processing method. However, testing the direct matching effect is problematic. Recent research indicates that it is likely that pretesting subjects for representational systems will "prime" them to respond to the nonverbal cues (Gladwell 2005). Similarly, posttreatment indicators likely only measure the exposure to the cue. Neuropsychological studies suggest that fMRI mapping may indicate activation of that portion of the brain most closely associated with the preferred representational system during exposure to a cue (Winston et al. 2002). However, that method is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, in this paper, the match of a cue to a representational system is not directly tested. The set of nonverbal cues that develop during a qualitative study based on the NLP framework is tested. Using these nonverbal cues as the manipulated treatments does not imply synchronization of cue to representational system but, rather, tests them as stimulants of customer's assessments of salesperson's intentions and trustworthiness.

RESEARCH METHOD

Study One: Development of Cues

Given the general lack of empirical support for NLP and the suggestion that language imperfectly reflects mental processes, a first step in this overall study is an investigation into classifying individuals into one of the three representational systems. The classification into one of the three representational systems develops from their usage of words. NLP adherents suggest that certain words will indicate that an individual has a preferred sensory processing system.

A convenience sample from a civic group with a broad socioeconomic background was enlisted to participate in individual interviews. Participants were asked a series of open-ended questions about recent shopping experiences that involved interactions with salespeople. The interview began by asking participants to recall a recent shopping experience that involved a substantial purchase. Participants were asked to describe, if possible, both a successful and an unsuccessful shopping trip. The 58 participants came from two southeastern cities and had an average age of over 32 years, the majority had a four-year degree, and the average family income was $55,000. Sixty percent were married, and 54 percent of the participants were female. After obtaining informed consent and reviewing the instructions, responses to a series of open-ended questions about opinions and experiences for the successful and unsuccessful visit were solicited. The open-ended questions attempted to get the respondents to elaborate on their observations, feelings, and evaluations of the salesperson. Recording and transcribing responses created a written database.

Analysis and Results

Content analysis revealed that the representational system of a participant can be identified using an exact replication of the predicate words from Nickels, Everett, and Klein (1983). Using these words, participants are categorized into one of the three mental processing domains. The words in the database developed from participants' answers are clustered using TextSmart 1.1.1 (SPSS 1998). This word database of all answers allows for the creation of clusters of each predicate word by assigning synonyms as well as adaptations to the categorizing heuristic. For instance, "smile" is categorized with synonyms such as "grin" or versions such as "smiling."

Pattern analysis of the responses supports NLP in that 48 out of 58 participants could be clearly categorized into one of the three representational systems. Slightly over 15 percent of the participants had process words from more than one of the three groups of predicate words, indicating that individuals had preferred but not exclusive representational systems. One response could not be categorized because of the absence of indications of any of the three mental processing forms.

The next step in the qualitative analysis was to identify nonverbal cues that correlated with one of these three cognitive processing domains. Frequency counts were used to identify the top three salesperson nonverbal cues mentioned by participants. The most common nonverbal cue mentioned was the "dress and/or attire" cue, which appeared in 20 out of 58 responses. "Smile" was next, with 17 mentions in the group. The "pace of approach" of the salesperson was next, with 14 participants mentioning this particular nonverbal cue.

Using the nonparametric Kendall tau statistic (Hollander and Wolfe 1973), the level of independence between the representational systems and the use of one of the three most frequent nonverbal cues was assessed. In this analysis, a participant was either visual or not, auditory or not, and, finally,

kinesthetic or not. Similarly, the words related to the nonverbal cues were present or not. The result of this test of independence, Kendall τ = 6.781, p < 0.000, with degree of association of –0.566 is statistically significant.

Because the words typically found in the representational systems and the nonverbal cues were not independent, it appears that participants classified as visual thinkers have responses that significantly relate to the appearance cue of dress and attire. The auditory thinkers appear to focus on the smile, whereas the spatial thinkers significantly relate to the approach of the salesperson. It appears that typical buyer's cognitive processing leans toward one of the three representational systems and that perceptions focus on cues related to the individual's dominant processing frame.

Study Two: Experiment One

Building upon the nonverbal cue information developed in study one, two car shopping written scenarios were created. Each of the three nonverbal cues of smile, appearance, and approach were appropriately manipulated to either positively or negatively present cues. The use of written scenarios has a rich history in the sales literature and has been particularly appropriate in quasi-experimental designs in which an attempt to control other variables, such as age, ethnicity, complexion, hair color, and so on, is essential (Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002).

Although previous research suggests that perceptions of nonverbal cues are important in judging the presence of rapport (Grahe and Bernieri 1999) and that the goal for creating rapport is to foster trust (Nickels, Everett, and Klein 1983), this study directly examines if these subtle specific cues will affect trustworthiness assessments. Using all three nonverbal signals on all subjects regardless of their preferred representational system increases the findings relevance. It is as pragmatically likely that the signaler/salespeople will not be able to determine receiver/customer preferred representational style during the immediate initial encounter. This approach is consistent with the NLP perspective in that measuring trustworthiness is indicative of the development of rapport and not a direct indication of rapport.

Measurement of interpersonal trust has an extensive history in the personal sales literature. Researchers have used assessments of a salesperson's benevolence (Ganesan 1994), intentions (Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1995), credibility (Crosby, Evans, and Cowles 1990), ability (Swan et al. 1988), and approachability (Henthorne, LaTour, and Williams 1992) as indicators of trustworthiness. More recently, some view a positive assessment of trustworthiness as most likely a global construct captured by broad measures (Doney and Cannon 1997). For example, previous research related to customer evaluations of the trustworthiness of salespeople in a new

automobile purchase had superior internal consistency (Cronbach's α = 0.90) using five measures of trustworthiness (Ramsey and Sohi 1997). These measures are used with a slight adaptation as the indicators of the construct, salesperson trustworthiness.

This experimental design tests for the mean differences between 76 subjects (none participated in the previous study) from a southeastern city that randomly received one of the two car shopping scenarios (one subject failed to complete the questionnaire). Variation between subject responses is reduced by including a pretest measure of a predisposition to trust as a covariate (Hair et al. 1998). The inclusion of Rotter's scale (1967) is a control of the spurious effect of trusting dispositions on a posttreatment test of the following hypothesis:

> *Hypothesis 1: The presence of salesperson's nonverbal cues will positively influence the buyer's assessments about the trustworthiness of the salesperson.*

The subjects—60 percent of which are female, with an average age of 28, and a family income of $52,250—were given written instructions, which were also read aloud. A subject completed part one of the questionnaire, which consisted of Rotter's predisposition to trust scale as a pretreatment measure as well as items measuring demographics. The second part of the instrument consisted of one of the two versions of the scenarios. Following their reading of the scenario, the subjects completed part three, which consisted of the measures of trustworthiness.

Analysis and Results

For salesperson cues, the test of the difference in subject assessments of trustworthiness between positive and negative cue scenarios is $F(1, 72)$ = 103.90, p < 0.000. This outcome indicates that subjects' trustworthiness assessments are influenced by the presence of the nonverbal cues in the scenarios. The lack of significance of the predisposition to trust, $F(1, 72)$ = 2.27, p < 0.172, indicates that this particular attitude of the subjects does not influence trustworthiness assessment in this context. Statistically significant support is found for Hypothesis 1. Discussion of these results follows the analysis of study three.

Study Three: Experiment Two

Doney and Cannon (1997) found that numerous processes led to the positive assessments of trustworthiness. In the interpersonal sales domain, it appears that many of these processes are related to evaluations of specific traits of the salesperson. Traits such as approachability, expertise, and candor have been proposed as being important to buyers when making assessments about a salesperson's trustworthiness.

Content analysis of study one, as well as previous research, suggests that a buyer's perceptions of the traits of the salesperson are influenced by nonverbal cues. Further, these cues are related to the assessment of trustworthiness of salespeople.

Customer perceptions of the approachability and trust of a salesperson are generally viewed as being closely related. From the NLP perspective, the pace of body movements has an impact on both kinesthetic and visual processing (Dimmick 1995). Generally, increases in movements as well as increases in pace are viewed as a negative influence on the development of rapport. Previous research evidences that buyers perceive a salesperson's approachability as indicating benevolent intentions toward the buyer (Doney and Cannon 1997). Approachability, in turn, is connected directly to a customer's trust in a salesperson (Hawes, Mast, and Swan 1989; Nicholson, Compeau, and Sethi 2001). This research suggests that the nonverbal signal of pace of approach will influence assessments of benevolence and trustworthiness. This is examined in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The presence of the fast-paced approach will negatively influence assessments of benevolence and trustworthiness.

Assessments of capability also activate a trust-building process (Doney and Cannon 1997). Expertise or ability to excel at a task is a judgment that a salesperson has the resources required to complete an exchange (Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman 1995). Trust as an outcome needs positive assessments of salesperson ability to articulate and communicate information. Buyers seeking indicators of expertise will visually inspect salespeople for appropriate appearance. The salesperson's nonverbal communication of an understanding of context and proper presentation for that setting increases perceptions of competency and thus increases the positive assessments of a salesperson's trustworthiness.

Hypothesis 3: The presence of appropriate attire will positively influence assessments of expertise and trustworthiness.

Finally, the effect of a smile is investigated. Work in physiological psychology provides evidence that individuals will make assessments about the honesty of a person via the presence of a smile (Blum 1998; Winston et al. 2002). In this past research, it is common to either present the smile or omit mention of the smile as a manipulation. The presence of a smile leading to positive judgments about honesty may indicate a desire to process the oral words of the salesperson. In the absence of verbal cues, it is possible that the receiver focuses on the mouth as the area most related to expression of auditory signals. It is likely that a salesperson's smile will lead to positive buyer assessments of candor and trustworthiness. Thus, we hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: The presence of a smile will positively influence assessments of candor and trustworthiness.

Following the previous experimental design methodology, a new set of subjects were recruited to read a written scenario and respond to some questions. The scenarios are essentially the same as in study two; however, only one of the nonverbal cues is manipulated in each version. A single nonverbal cue is either present in the scenario or it is excluded. Thus, one scenario manipulates only the smile, one manipulates only the pace of approach, and the last manipulates only the attire of the salesperson.

Subjects came from the same southeastern city but did not include participants from previous studies. Random assignment of 25 subjects went to each of the six versions of the scenarios. This experimental design involved both the pretreatment/posttreatment questionnaire with disposition to trust the pretreatment measure. The subject pool had an average age of 26, with 65 percent married. Seventy-five subjects were female and 71 were male, with four subjects not responding. Twenty-five percent reported they had graduated from college, and subjects reported an average family income of $41,300.

Analysis and Results

The results of multivariate tests of benevolence, candor, expertise, and overall trustworthiness are shown in Table 1. Although each test was conducted as a separate experiment, for the sake of simplicity, the test results are in a single table. Each scenario used Rotter's (1967) measure of interpersonal disposition to trust as a covariate (Cronbach's α = 0.70).

After reading the scenario, all subjects responded to five items about the benevolence of the salesperson (Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1995) (Cronbach's α = 0.928) and the measures of trustworthiness (Ramsey and Sohi 1997) (Cronbach's α = 0.911). Similar to the results in study two, the predisposition to trust was not a significant covariate with either trustworthiness or benevolence. However, the means of the subject responses were significantly different on benevolence (F (1, 47) = 166.90, $p < 0.000$) and trustworthiness (F (1, 47) = 109.80, $p < 0.000$). Both parts of Hypothesis 2 are supported.

In the next scenario, the random assignment resulted in 23 subjects reading a scenario that negatively manipulated the salesperson's attire, and 27 subjects had a scenario with description of appropriate attire. Predisposition to trust was not a significant covariate. There was a difference between the two versions of the scenario on the mean of the four-item scale about the expertise of the salesperson (Swan, Trawick, and Silva 1985) (Cronbach's α = 0.951) and salesperson trustworthiness, as seen in Table 1. Hypothesis 3 is completely supported.

Table 1
Multivariate Analysis of Variance with Covariates
Between-Subject Effects

Source	Dependent Variable	*F*-Statistic	Hypothesis df	Error df	Significance
Pacing Cue	Likability	166.90	1	47	0.000
	Trustworthiness	106.80	1	47	0.000
Appropriate Attire Cue	Expertise	33.80	1	47	0.000
	Trustworthiness	39.80	1	47	0.000
Friendly Smile	Candor	34.40	1	47	0.000
	Trustworthiness	41.70	1	47	0.000

The final scenario had 22 of the subjects exposed to a "friendly smile" and 28 that had no mention of the smile. Test of this treatment resulted in a significant difference (F (1, 47) = 34.40, p < 0.000) in the means of subject responses on the four-item summated scale about the candor of the salesperson (Kumar, Scheer, and Steenkamp 1995) (Cronbach's α = 0.855) as well as the five-item construct about the trustworthiness of the salesperson (F (1, 47) = 41.70, p < 0.000). These results support the final hypothesis.

DISCUSSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Each of the above studies provides incremental evidence that the NLP framework of establishing rapport through nonverbal signals merits additional investigation. The first study finds evidence that words related to the representational systems are expressed by respondents during their reflections upon assessments of marketing situations. Findings of the second study indicate that the descriptive nonverbal cues developed in study one influence the trustworthiness assessments of receivers/customers. This outcome is consistent with the NLP perspective that assessments of trustworthiness develop from the establishment of rapport. Results of study three also suggest that receivers/customers have certain nonverbal signals that are important during judgments of the traits of candor, benevolence, and expertise. This evidence of the influence of these nonverbal cues upon trustworthiness assessments supports the proposed NLP framework.

There is evidence from the neuroscience discipline that sensory representational systems are integral structures in the brain that interpret nonverbal signals. The paper provides empirical evidence that individuals use the decoding of nonverbal communication during signaler assessments. The outcomes of the experiments further suggest that a specific decision area influenced by these particular nonverbal signals is the assessment of trust-related characteristics and trustworthiness on an interpersonal level.

The cumulative evidence of this paper emphasizes the importance of the immediate encounter between salespeople and customers. During the first instance of a meeting, the customer/receiver is perceiving and interpreting a number of nonverbal cues. Sales trainers and managers should emphasize that not only are nonverbal signals of the salespeople important to developing rapport, but also that these same nonverbal signals are sought out, perceived, and used by customers in their assessment of the trustworthiness of salespeople.

Salespeople likely have their own preferred representational system, and their nonverbal signals express that system. Salespeople should develop awareness of their nonverbal cues. They need to practice projecting those cues that they might not typically project so that they are matching all preferred representational systems. The findings of this study indicate to salespeople that all of their nonverbal signals will have an influence on the customer regardless of the customer's preferred sensory processing system.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND LIMITATIONS

I hope that this study will spur additional efforts to understand customer interactions based on NLP principles. The lack of previous empirical support for the principles of NLP has hindered continued research. The evidence of this study suggests there is merit to this line of investigation. In addition, a continued study of nonverbal cues, initial encounters, and the processing of assessments based on sensory representational systems would prove beneficial to the sales literature.

A possible extension of the conceptual model presented is direct examination of rapport. Likely indicative of the lack of rapport or synchronization in the NLP framework is a failure to move beyond the initial contact. This failure to "hit it off" with certain customers may have roots in the NLP perspective. Evidence of repeating incidents of "not connecting" possibly indicates problems not with sales technique but rather with a lack of synchronization. This lack of connection by salespeople may indicate that synchronization of signals with

a preferred representational system is not occurring. Controlled experiments moving beyond written scenarios may allow for tests of this effect.

While the study did identify some nonverbal cues related to initial exchanges, discovery of additional nonverbal cues and their associated representational systems could expand our understanding of the initial contact context as well as ongoing relationships. Moving beyond the initial exchange, verbal cues specifically related to the various assessments of trustworthiness such as honesty, dependability, and benevolence, along with their relationships to each of the representational systems could be explored. Using verbal cues in conjunction with nonverbal cues will allow for tests of interactions to further explore the robustness of the NLP framework. This study investigated the development of positive trustworthiness assessment during initial encounters, but research into developing and maintaining trust over time would benefit the sales area.

While the use of written scenarios could be viewed as a limitation, they are a critical method in this initial study. They helped ensure that subjects elaborated upon their preferred cues without confounds from the signaler's appearance. However, as a further extension of the research, it may be possible to use real-time interaction and introduce the element of deception. The receiver may detect having the signaler's feigning of positive intent. If the subject/customer detects the negative intentions, the result may be negative assessments.

Additional extensions of the research could eliminate some of the potential limitations of this paper. It is possible that the specific automobile or the overall retail setting has an influence on the attention given to nonverbal cues. Professional buyers may ignore nonverbal cues or may give the salesperson "the benefit of the doubt" and overlook the negative cues. It would also be important to investigate why some individuals continue with an exchange even in the presence of negative nonverbal cues. It appears that continuing research based on the NLP perspective has many fruitful and interesting avenues for additional endeavors.

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